CITIZEN Research Project

Purpose

As a class, create a well-researched, well-written resource website exploring the history or policy of American citizenship, voting, immigration or naturalization. Each person contributes one page to the CITIZEN site, http://citizen.digitalworcester.org/

Guidelines

You will design and carry out a research project over several weeks; this involves a lot of planning ahead and **COUNTS FOR OVER A THIRD (35%)** of your course grade. It is NOT something you can cobble together the week it is due. For that reason, I am grading the project in stages: you'll separately submit a proposal, a draft and bibliography, a final version ready for online publication, an abstract, and a short oral presentation. Since this is an upper-level seminar, the research project is an essential piece of your learning in the course and should demonstrate your critical thinking, information literacy and written/oral communication (all three are core outcomes of the Liberal Arts and Sciences Curriculum = LASC). The criteria for each of those are on the three attached rubrics which we'll use both for self-assessment and for project grading.[1]

PLEASE NOTE: If conducting research in the humanities & social sciences is unfamiliar to you or writing is not your strength, then please make use of my office hours, the library's reference desk assistance, and the University Writing Center early and often. Recommended reading: Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History,* available at the Writing Center (Sullivan 306).

GETTING STARTED: Although your project is substantially different from those done in previous semesters (a published web essay, not a term paper), you should still take a look at the abstracts posted on the course website to get an idea of the scope and level of analysis. Your project should connect to an issue, event, or topic of current relevance. If you are taking the course as HI 320, your project should be historically based or clearly situated in historical context. If you are taking the course as PO 320, your project should have a policy or political science angle. However you decide to proceed, you will need a command of relevant secondary sources and you'll need to involve primary sources in a way that's integral to your argument.[2] Don't take on too much – in general, deeper is better than wider. **The most important aspect of this project is that your work should be entirely original** – i.e. not merely derivative of the work of others, but asking

Schedule of Project Due Dates	Total 70 pts
Proposal – due 10/7	5
Draft + Bibliography – due 10/30	15
Final Draft – due 11/13 (Web-ready!)	30
Abstract – due 12/4 (150-200 words)	10
Lightning Round Presentation – due 12/4	10
Total of your Course Grade	**35%**

and answering a compelling citizenship-related intellectual question for yourself using your best research skills and critical thinking, and conveying your findings in clear, accessible language in the format of a permanent, public website.

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[1] These rubrics are adapted from the Liberal Education for America's Promise (LEAP) Value Rubrics, developed by the AAC&U. See http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/

[2] If you're at all unclear on "primary v. secondary" sources, see me for clarification before you begin research.

PROPOSAL - Due 10/7/14

This is NOT an expression of your initial ideas or what you "hope" to write about. This will be a polished proposal based on actual early research, laying out a core problem or question and indicating what sources you will be using for the project. In total, this shouldn't take more up than one side of a page. Submit in hard copy in class on October 7th

RESEARCH PHASE (until Oct 30), culminating in DRAFT AND BIBLIOGRAPHY – Due 10/30/14

Submit in hard copy, a draft between 1600 and 1800 words long (i.e. the final length), with all sources and quotations correctly cited as sequential bracket-number endnotes. Each note should contain the complete information for the source:

Complete Bibliographic Information is
Author's Full Name
Full Title of the Work (Article titles in quotations; periodical or book titles in italics)
City of Publication
Name of the Publisher
Date of Publication
The url if you accessed it online, correctly hyperlinked, as follows: url

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Self-Assess your Research and Drafting Process with the "Information Literacy" and "Critical Thinking" Rubrics

INFORMATION LITERACY CRITERIA

- Effectively define the scope of your research question and effectively determine key concepts.
- Access information using effective, well-designed search strategies and most appropriate information sources
- Communicate, organize and synthesize information from sources to fully achieve the project's stated purpose, with clarity & depth
- Clearly distinguish what parts are your own ideas, words, and conclusions by paraphrasing, summarizing and quoting from sources with integrity and correctly employing the citation conventions specified in these guidelines.
- Correctly use all of the following:
- Citations and references
- Choice of paraphrasing, summary or quoting
- Using information in ways that are true to original context
- Distinguishing between common knowledge and ideas requiring attribution
- Demonstrate a full understanding of the ethical and legal restrictions on the use of published, confidential and/or proprietary information

CRITICAL THINKING CRITERIA

- Topic is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding
- Information is taken from sources with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive synthesis or understanding. Viewpoints of experts are questioned thoroughly.
- Thoroughly (systematically and methodicially) analyze your own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluate the relevance of contexts when presenting a position.
- Your specific position, perspective or thesis is original, taking into account the complexities of an issue. Limits of your position are acknowledged. Others' points of view are synthesized.
- Conclusions, implications or consequences are logical and reflect your informed evaluation and ability to place evidence and perspectives in priority order.

With your draft, attach a memo to me that explains anything that's still unresolved, difficult, or "under construction" in the draft. The draft and bibliography will get a quick glance by me and a peer review during class on 10/30. If you want or need more than this quick check-off, I can read and comment on drafts during the week of 11/3-11/7. Individual conferences are HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. I am unable to read or comment on a draft after 11/7.

A Note on Sources

You may ask, "how many sources should my notes contain"? There's no magic number, but you should consult both primary and secondary sources as needed to address your question, privileging peer-reviewed and other scholarly publications. Wikipedia is not a source you should cite in your paper, although consulting Wikipedia might lead you to other reliable sources, especially if you use the Notes, References and External Links at the bottom of the article. *Then again, it might not.*

FINAL DRAFT – Due 11/13/14

Your final essay should represent your best effort and be READY for web publication. Length will be 1600-1800 words, plus Notes and a Further Reading section.

As you incorporate paraphrasing, summary or quotations from your sources, remember the following: direct quotations should be properly "framed" or introduced so the reader knows whose quote this is and how it contributes to your argument. Keep them as brief as possible, since you are on a tight word count. *Every* quotation needs a citation. Our citation format will be a modified Chicago Style, using sequential bracket numbering instead of superscripted numbers, like this.[1]

[1] For Chicago Style guidelines, I recommend Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History,* available at the Writing Center (Sullivan 306).

To format the essay for the web, make sure all hyperlinks within the text are properly formatted with html tags, as well as any other formatting like underlining, italics, or bold. Use the resource page on the course website to help you digitally format your text. If there is some reason you cannot have your name published online, please see me to work out an alternative.

Self-Assess your Final Draft with the "Written Communication" Rubric
▪ Demonstrate a thorough understanding of context, audience, and purpose that is responsive to the assigned task and focuses all elements of the essay.
▪ Use appropriate, relevant and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject, conveying your understanding and consistently shaping the entire essay.
▪ Demonstrate detailed attention to and successful execution of the writing conventions of history and/or these assignment guidelines, including organization, content, presentation, formatting and stylistic choices.
▪ Demonstrate use of high-quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of this essay.
▪ Use graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually error-free.

Submission options:

1) Submit the completed essay as an electronic Word document (.doc or .docx) emailed to me before start of class on the due date. Include YOUR LAST NAME in the filename so I can identify your work easily.
OR
2) If you feel confident with Wordpress, I can grant you guest access so you can post it to the web yourself – let me know if you would like to take that option.

REVISION – If Needed

The deadline is early enough in the term so it won't conflict with final papers and projects in other classes. But it also allows a couple of weeks for possible revision before the end of the course. Sometimes successful web publication takes more than one try. Although I hope it will be rare, revision may be an option if we both agree the final draft has fatal flaws or cannot be published as is. In such cases, you'll work with me to craft a solution and a timetable for revision, and your overall final project grade may be adversely affected.

ABSTRACT – Due 12/4

An abstract is a 150-200 word "short version" of your longer essay. I'll provide some resources to help with writing an abstract as that date gets closer. The abstract will be published on our course website in the virtual "gallery" of student research from this course. Just like the abstracts in a scholarly journal—which are a permanent record—yours should contain keywords that would help a researcher trying to find your webpage and be a reliable, neutral brief version of your overall work. Submit it electronically, via email.

LIGHTNING ROUND PRESENTATION – Due 12/4

On December 4th, we will have a "Lightning Round" presentation day for your research projects, possibly in front of a small audience of interested scholars from across the university. Each presenter will have precisely 2 minutes (120 seconds) – so you'll need to be engaging and concise.

You have two options:

- A 120-second oral presentation. PRACTICE to make sure you can do it in exactly 2 minutes!
- A 6-slide mini-*Pecha Kucha* presentation. Pecha Kucha is a Japanese word, originally coined for a stylized presentation method of 20 slides, each shown for 20 seconds. To do this option, prepare 6 slides and create a timed Powerpoint slideshow in which each one appears on the screen for exactly 20 seconds. As you speak, the presentation should flow from slide to slide, ending as the last slide fades. PRACTICE AHEAD.

Your lightning round presentation will be assessed on 1) the quality and clarity of your presentation's content; 2) how polished & practiced it seems; and 3) whether you present for 2 minutes – no more, no less.