

Independent Research Assignment

Under the new ministry guidelines you will be required to do research on a question of your choosing and then write a research paper. Below are the expectations from the Ministry of Education.

Unit 5: Course Culminating Activities – Social Science Research Report and Written Examination

Time: 15 hours distributed throughout the course + 5 hours for presentations

Unit Description

Using ethical guidelines, appropriate methodology, and primary and secondary sources, students develop a position on a social issue of importance to anthropology, psychology, or sociology and, using a research design appropriate to the issue and discipline, carry out a research project in at least one of the disciplines.

Unit Overview Chart

Focus
Step 1 – 5 hours Choose topic, form hypothesis, research relevant sources, complete an annotated bibliography using APA format.
Step 2 – 3 hours Propose and revise a detailed research method.
Step 3 – 2 hours Conduct primary research and analyse data.
Step 4 – 5 hours Conference with teacher and submit written report.
Present social science research report orally. Write an examination.

While this may seem like a lot to take in, don't worry, we are going to work on it throughout the semester so you will have lots of time to prepare. We will also be going through each step one at a time so you understand how to conduct research and prepare a formal research report.

Part One: Choosing Your Topic! (Due: Wed, Sept 14/05)

When choosing a topic the key is finding a subject that **YOU** are interested in! If you don't like your subject you will not be motivated to study it. We want you to look forward to doing the research. Ask questions that you actually want to know the answers to. There are many interesting topics out there, you just need to take the time to discover what interests you. If, after much thought you still can't think of a subject come and see me and we will sit down together and find something that fits your interest areas.

Part Two: Complete an Annotated Bibliography (Due: Thurs, Sept 29/05)

An annotated bibliography is a list of citations to books, articles, and documents. Each citation is followed by a brief (usually about 150 words) descriptive and evaluative paragraph, the annotation. The purpose of the annotation is to inform the reader of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited.

Things to consider when completing an annotated bibliography:

- Author
- Date of Publication
- Edition or Revision
- Publisher
- Evaluative Reviews
- Intended Audience
- Objective Reasoning
- Coverage
- Writing Style

Part Three: State Your Hypothesis (Due: Fri, Oct 7/05)

What is a hypothesis? In your textbook on page 65, hypothesis is defined as, “ a proposition or principle put forth or stated merely as a basis for reasonable argument, or as a premise from which to draw a conclusion.” This means that you do not have to be certain that your hypothesis is correct. It is a statement that you hope to prove true. Once you complete your research and you know more about your subject you might have to modify your hypothesis.

Part Four: Develop Research Questions (Due: Thurs, Oct 7/05)

The purpose of this step is to gain a better understanding of the issues you intend to study. You can start to do this by asking focused, informed questions. These questions will help you to refine your research and put your hypothesis to the test. You should have 8 – 10 research questions that will help you to focus your research.

Research Method and Strategies:

This is the part where the rubber hits the road. You are going to get out and do the research. By this time you will have a hypothesis and 8 – 10 guided questions for your research. You should take the first period you are given in class to find as many resources as you can that could help you with your research. You should have a variety of sources to choose from ranging from books to scholarly journals, newspapers, magazine articles and websites. There are other sources as well that are worth investigating. We will go over our options in the library so you know where to start.

When you are doing research you need to know what you are looking for which will be covered in your guiding questions but you also need to understand another important aspect in research, **BIAS**.

Bias Rule (see pages 242-243 in your text for more information)

The Social Scientist's second rule is the bias rule. It says that every source is biased in some way. Documents tell us only what the creator of the document thought happened, or perhaps only what the creator wants us to think happened. As a result, historians follow these bias rule guidelines when they review evidence from the past:

- Every piece of evidence and every source must be read or viewed skeptically and critically.
- No piece of evidence should be taken at face value. The creator's point of view must be considered.
- Each piece of evidence and source must be cross-checked and compared with related sources and pieces of evidence.

There are many resources out there for you to choose from. Your job is to decide which sources best suit your needs and if they are valuable, objective sources. Methods to examine the value of these resources are listed on **Page 121** of your text titled, **Developing Research Strategies**.

In your research you should include (see page 137 in your text book):

- At least three general resources (encyclopedias, text books)
- Three more specific informational sources (magazines, newspapers)
- Four scholarly choices (books or scholarly journals)
- Any websites you might come across

While the internet has become many students primary source of research it is not the only way, nor is it necessarily the best way to do research. You can't always trust information on the internet because anyone can post to it and there is no quality control. If you do use the internet for your research be sure to **critically analyze** your source to see if it is valuable. When looking for sites the ones that tend to be the most valuable are sites that end with **.org** or **.edu**. Keep this in mind when doing your research.

Part Five: Developing your Thesis (Due: Thurs, Oct 20/05)

Once you have completed your research you are ready to begin writing your paper but before you can do that though you need to do a few things.

1. Re-evaluate your hypothesis – does your hypothesis still fit with your findings?
2. Organize your information – you want to organize your information in such a way that it is easily accessible and easy to find. You also want to be sure you have the resources they are from listed in each so you know where to source the information. This is essential from an ethical perspective to avoid plagiarism

- which results in a **ZERO!** Don't worry, we'll spend time going over sourcing so you are prepared when the time comes. You will be required to use **APA format** for this assignment.
3. You now need to sit down and compose a **thesis**. A thesis is a statement that clearly outlines the focus of your research paper and the direction you are going in.
 4. You must prepare an outline for your paper. This will help you to stay on track and remind you where you are going.

Part Six: The Outline (Due: Thurs, Nov 10/05)

In this part you will design your research paper by creating an outline. This is your opportunity to lay out how the paper will unfold itself for the reader. A good outline will make writing the essay a much easier process as you already know where you intend to put your focus.

Part Seven: The Research Paper Rough Draft and Conferencing (Due: Thurs, Dec 1/05)

This part is the final aspect of the paper. It is where you take all of the information you have prepared and you write it in the form of a formal research paper. While I could spend a great deal of time here describing this portion of the assignment, **it is covered quite thoroughly in the text book on pages 361-364**. Be sure to read this section carefully as it will provide you with many useful approaches to successfully writing a research paper.

Part Seven: Final Copy of your Research Paper (Due: Mon, Dec 19/05)