

History Department Junior Research Paper Guidelines

The Junior Research Paper is a graduation requirement for all history and history/social science majors beginning with students who entered Wheaton under the 2003-2004 catalogue. This requirement applies to all majors, transfer students as well as beginning freshmen. The paper is a central element of a core research sequence within the major that includes three components: (1) HIST 295, Introduction to Historical Inquiry; (2) the history research paper, completed as an option in the regular class assignments of 300- or 400-level history classes; and (3) HIST 494, Christianity and Historical Study, which is the department's capstone seminar.

Please note the following guidelines: HIST 295 normally is completed during the sophomore year; the research paper usually is written during the junior year and is submitted to the department by February 1 of that year or by September 15 of the senior year. Students should enroll in HIST 494 during the senior year. Students must complete HIST 295 before the semester in which they write the research paper.

Objectives for the Research Paper

The research paper offers students an opportunity to do historical research in an area of interest to them and helps them to measure their progress in developing the skills and abilities of a competent historian. It gives the faculty of the history department a way to evaluate our progress in preparing students as history majors. It also satisfies a number of performance standards for students seeking secondary teaching certification in History/Social Science. In addition, the papers will provide a foundation for the discussion of interpretive issues in HIST 494. With student permission, selected papers may be used as case studies in HIST 494.

By completing the Junior Research Paper, students will know and/or be able to do the following:

- Apply the skills they learned in HIST 295 to conduct research in history, analyze and interpret evidence, and present their findings in a form that conforms to accepted standards for history writing.
- Engage in independent research, using both secondary and primary sources to explore a specific topic in history appropriate to the class for which the paper is originally written.
- Develop proficiency in critical thinking and clear writing, which are foundational to a liberal arts education.

Deadlines

Papers that conform to the criteria outlined below must be submitted to the History Department secretary by **February 1** (for papers written during the fall semester) and **September 15** (for papers written during the spring semester). Papers may be submitted before the deadline, for example, before Christmas break. The deadline simply allows time for revision after the conclusion of the semester. Papers submitted after the deadlines will not be considered until the next deadline.

Criteria

The paper should be 4000-4500 words in length (13-15 double-spaced pages), not including footnotes or endnotes and bibliography. It should conform in style and form to the guidelines in Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, fourth or fifth edition. The paper should be printed in 12-pt type (Times New Roman font), double-spaced, with standard one-inch margins. The bibliography should be appropriate to the subject of the paper and should include a minimum of eight sources, not more than two of which come from academically sound Internet sites. The paper should have at least fifteen endnotes or footnotes. Finally, the paper should conform to the specific criteria included on the Research Paper Checklist (attached).

Procedure

Writing the Paper

During the fall or spring of the junior year, students should write their research paper in either a 300- or 400-level history class of their choice. (All 300- or 400- level courses will include a research paper option or requirement as part of the standard class requirements. You may also write the paper in HIST 292.) Students should select and narrow a topic for the paper in consultation with the instructor of the course. You should be sure the professor is aware that you are using the assignment as your Junior Research Paper. *A Pocket Guide*, by Rampolla, provides an excellent, brief review of the appropriate steps in writing a history research paper. The Wheaton College Writing Center also is a good source of help for the actual process of writing. **We strongly encourage students to seek the help of the Writing Center, either in writing or revising their papers.** The paper should be written and submitted for **course credit** following the guidelines and deadlines in the syllabus. It should also conform to the Research Paper Checklist. To be submitted as a Junior Research Paper, the paper **must receive a minimum grade of B** in the class for which it originally was written. Please note that receiving a B or above does **not** guarantee that the paper will receive a passing grade as a Junior Research Paper. The paper may also be written as part of the normal requirements for a 4-credit Independent Study course (HIST 495), as long as the independent study meets standard department guidelines.

Revising the Paper

The Junior Research Paper should represent a History or History/Social Science major's best work at the point in his or her college career when the paper is submitted. Students should plan to make at least one careful revision of the paper before submitting it to the History Department. **Revisions are primarily the student's responsibility.** You should work closely with your professor during the initial writing process rather than during revisions. Typically, these

revisions will be made after the paper is graded by the instructor in the class for which it is written, upon being returned. In some classes, usually in 400-level seminars, the instructor may require substantial revisions as part of the classroom process of writing the paper. When that happens, revisions made after the paper has been graded probably will be less extensive. After the graded paper from the class is returned to the student, he or she should make any corrections or revisions indicated by the professor who graded it. The student also should reread the paper carefully and seek to improve his or her initial work. Finally, the student should proofread his or her paper once more to be sure it conforms to the standards on the Research Paper Checklist. The “mechanics” of each paper – margins, footnotes or endnotes, quality of printing, etc. – must conform to checklist standards.

Submitting the Paper

The student should submit three things: 1) a clean, printed copy of the revised version of his or her paper along with a completed copy of the Research Paper Checklist; 2) a copy of the Junior Research Paper on CD or floppy disk (Microsoft Word); and 3) a copy of the graded paper from the class—the first version of the paper. **Attach a completed copy of the Research Paper Checklist to the hard copy of your paper, and then submit with the disk and the first version to the secretary of the History Department by the deadlines indicated above.** You should also keep a copy of everything submitted to the Department.

Evaluation

The secretary of the History Department will maintain a file of all papers that have been submitted prior to each deadline. She will assign each paper a number, and will check the “mechanics” of each paper to confirm that margins, notes, and quality of printing conform to checklist standards. A rotating committee of three History Department faculty members will evaluate papers on a “blind review” (anonymous) basis. The committee will evaluate all papers within thirty days of each deadline. Papers will be evaluated on a Pass/Fail basis according to the Research Paper Evaluation Criteria. To pass, a paper must receive 80% of the possible points. Both students and the Registrar will be notified that the paper has satisfied the graduation requirement. Papers that do not satisfy the requirement will be returned to students with an explanation. **As appropriate, the committee will also select up to three outstanding papers to be honored at the spring department chapel.**

Appeals/Resubmissions

Students are allowed one resubmission of a revised version of a paper that did not satisfy the graduation requirement. The paper must be submitted by the February or September deadline following its return (or other deadline approved by the committee) and must show evidence that student has carefully addressed the areas of concern. Resubmit **both** the original Junior Research Paper and the new, revised version. If a student thinks he or she has specific cause, the student may appeal the committee’s decision to fail a paper in writing to an appeals committee made up of the Department Chair, another faculty member in the History Department (not on the original committee), and a faculty member in the Humanities from outside the Department. The appeal must be made within thirty days after the student was notified that the paper did not pass. The appeal may be made either for a first submission **or** for a revised submission. The appeals committee decision is final.

Plagiarism and Academic Honesty

The Junior Research Paper should be the student's own work, written specifically for an upper division history class. A paper on a historical topic written for a non-history class may not be submitted. Plagiarism "is simply unacknowledged copying," from someone else or even from oneself.¹ All sources used in writing the paper must be properly attributed. If a student uses words that are not his or her own, those words must appear in quotation marks. A student who engages in plagiarism or any other dishonest practice to write his or her paper will fail the Junior Research Paper requirement.

Papers Written for Transfer Credit Courses

With the approval of their History Department adviser, students may submit papers written for upper division history classes accepted for transfer credit at Wheaton College. Such papers should be revised and submitted as the Junior Research Paper after the student has completed HIST 295. Please note that courses completed at junior colleges or community colleges will probably not be considered upper division courses. Transfer students or students with transfer summer school credits who intend to use this option should seek their adviser's approval as soon as possible, preferably during the fall semester of the junior year.

Waivers or Modifications

The History Department Chair must approve in writing any waivers or modifications of the above procedures. Students should realize that such waivers or modifications will rarely be granted, and only in cases where compelling extenuating circumstances apply.

Transcript Record

The Junior Research Paper will appear on student transcripts as "HIST 000 Research Paper," with a Pass or Fail grade indicated.

¹ Richard A. Posner, "On Plagiarism," *The Atlantic Monthly*, April 2002
<<http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/2002/04/posner.htm>>, quoted in Jeffry Davis, "Recycling a paper: Plagiarism in Disguise?" *Writing at Wheaton*, May 2003.

Research Paper Checklist

For more information, consult the sections cited in Rampolla, *Writing in History*, 4th edition.

1. Mechanics (technical quality)

- Put your name, student number, identification as Junior Research Paper, word count for the body of the paper (not including notes and bibliography) and date in the upper left corner of the first page. This is followed by the title of the paper, centered on the page, followed by the paper itself. (See sample on page 7.) Do not attach a separate cover page.
- 4,000-4,500 text words (13-15 double-spaced pages, not including footnotes or endnotes and bibliography)
- 12-pt type, Times New Roman, one-inch margins, readable print quality.
- Pages are numbered. Do not put a name or other “header” with the page number.
- Footnotes or endnotes conform to style for history papers (Rampolla 7b, 7d-1).
- Bibliography conforms to standard style (Rampolla 7b, 7d-2).
- Author has completed spell-check and has carefully proofread the paper for spelling and typing errors.

2. Topic and sources

- Topic is workable and appropriate, with available primary and secondary sources (Rampolla 4a).
- Content of the paper, bibliography, and notes reflect an appropriate use of both primary and secondary sources to support the author’s thesis and develop his/her argument (Rampolla 1a, 2a, 2b).

3. Thesis – The paper has a clear, significant thesis statement (Rampolla 5a-2) included in the introduction.

4. Introduction – The paper has a clear introduction that puts the topic of the paper in context and includes the thesis statement (Rampolla 5a-2).

5. Body of the Paper (Rampolla 5a-3)

- Paragraphs are well organized to present evidence and interpretation supporting the thesis in a logical, coherent fashion.
- Paragraphs are linked with transitions and summary statements.
- Research cited (evidence) is thorough and supports the thesis.

- Anticipated objections to the thesis or argument are addressed.
- Primary and secondary sources are interpreted carefully.
- Quotations are used selectively and appropriately (Rampolla 4c).

6. Conclusion (Rampolla 5a-4)

- Adequately addresses the “so what” factor (states the most important conclusion and its significance).

7. Clarity of expression/thought (Rampolla 5b)

- Sentences are clear, complete, and engaging.
- Paper is written in the past tense.
- Author uses the active instead of passive voice as much as possible.
- There are no errors in standard English usage, punctuation or spelling.
- Word choice is careful and appropriate.
- Tone of the paper is appropriate for the subject and the audience.

Permission

As the author of a Junior Research Paper titled:

I consent to the reproduction and use of the paper or selected portions of it by the History Department at Wheaton College for educational purposes, including on the department’s web site. The content of the paper will not be altered.

Check One:

- Please maintain my anonymity as author of the paper or the portion used.
- Please credit me as author of the paper or the portion used.
- You may do whichever is appropriate for educational purposes.

Name (Please print): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Samuel Student #123456
Junior Research Paper
Word count: 4100 words
Sept. 15, 2006

Your Paper Title Centered Here

The first paragraph of your paper should begin here. You do not need a special cover page. You do not need a binder. Simply staple your paper in the upper left corner.

Paper Number: _____

Research Paper Evaluation Criteria

1. **Mechanics (technical quality):** correct font and size, format, notes, bibliography (10% of grade)

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------|-------------------------|------------|--------|----------------|-----------|------|---------------|
| 3* | 3.5 | 3.75 | 4 | 4.25 | 4.5 | 4.75 | 5 x 2 = _____ |
| Unacceptable | Minimally Acceptable | Acceptable | Strong | Very Strong | Excellent | | |
| | "C" | "B-" | "B" | "A-" | "A" | | |

Comments:

2. **Topic and Sources:** Workable topic with appropriate sources (5%)

| | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------------|------------------------------------|--------|----------------|----------------------------------|------|---------------|
| 3* | 3.5 | 3.75 | 4 | 4.25 | 4.5 | 4.75 | 5 x 1 = _____ |
| Unacceptable | Minimally Acceptable | Acceptable | Strong | Very Strong | Excellent | | |
| (poor choice of topic, inappropriate sources) | | (appropriate topic and sources) | | | (excellent topic and sources) | | |

Comments:

3. **Introduction (with thesis):** Draws the reader in, sets the context for the paper, states the thesis (15%)

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------|-------------------------|--|--------|----------------|---|------|---------------|
| 3* | 3.5 | 3.75 | 4 | 4.25 | 4.5 | 4.75 | 5 x 3 = _____ |
| Unacceptable | Minimally Acceptable | Acceptable | Strong | Very Strong | Excellent | | |
| (nonexistent) | | (exists, but could be more effective) | | | (draws reader in, sets context, includes thesis) | | |

Comments:

4. Main Body

- a. **Organization:** Paragraphs support the thesis in a logical, coherent way (15%)

| | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------|---|--------|----------------|---|------|---------------|
| 3* | 3.5 | 3.75 | 4 | 4.25 | 4.5 | 4.75 | 5 x 3 = _____ |
| Unacceptable | Minimally Acceptable | Acceptable | Strong | Very Strong | Excellent | | |
| (unrelated collection of information) | | (some organization, but weak transitions, weak logic) | | | (strong transitions & good logical development) | | |

Comments:

b. Quality of Research: Quality and use of sources, appropriate citations and quotation (15%)

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---|---------------|------------------------|------------------|---|---------------|
| 3*----- | 3.5----- | 3.75----- | 4----- | 4.25----- | 4.5----- | 4.75----- | 5 x 3 = _____ |
| Unacceptable | Minimally Acceptable | Acceptable | Strong | Very Strong | Excellent | | |
| (very weak, little evidence of research) | | (adequate research, some inappropriate sources) | | | | (strong sources, evidence of thorough research) | |

Comments:

c. Interpretation: Explains significance of research to support the thesis, addresses objections (15%)

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|--|---------------|------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| 3*----- | 3.5----- | 3.75----- | 4----- | 4.25----- | 4.5----- | 4.75----- | 5 x 3 = _____ |
| Unacceptable | Minimally Acceptable | Acceptable | Strong | Very Strong | Excellent | | |
| (no interpretation) | | (interpretation supports thesis, but has weaknesses) | | | | (sound historical interpretation) | |

Comments:

5. Conclusion: Summarizes the argument and significance of the paper (the “so what” factor) (10%)

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|--|---------------|------------------------|------------------|--|---------------|
| 3*----- | 3.5----- | 3.75----- | 4----- | 4.25----- | 4.5----- | 4.75----- | 5 x 2 = _____ |
| Unacceptable | Minimally Acceptable | Acceptable | Strong | Very Strong | Excellent | | |
| (no conclusion) | | (conclusion general, some points not well supported) | | | | (conclusion well supported, signifi- cance is clear) | |

Comments:

6. Clarity of expression/thought: Paper is well written (15%)

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|--|---------------|------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| 3*----- | 3.5----- | 3.75----- | 4----- | 4.25----- | 4.5----- | 4.75----- | 5 x 3 = _____ |
| Unacceptable | Minimally Acceptable | Acceptable | Strong | Very Strong | Excellent | | |
| (poor writing, problems with word choice) | | (occasional weaknesses, grammatical errors) | | | | (well written, engaging) | |

Comments:

Total points/percentage: _____

Points/percentage require to pass : 80/80%

* A score of “3” is equivalent to 60%. Scores below “3” are possible in rare cases if evaluator provides specific justification.

**Addendum for History/Social Science Majors
IBSE Standards Addressed by the Junior Research Paper**

STANDARD 2

The competent social science teacher understands the use of analysis, interpretation, and evaluation.

Knowledge Indicators - The competent social science teacher:

- 2A. understands the value of informed opinion based on systematic analysis of evidence.
- 2B. understands the strengths and weaknesses of primary and secondary sources of evidence.
- 2C. understands the importance of multiple sources of information.
- 2D. understands the complexity of causation.
- 2E. understands the tentative nature of interpretations about human actions.
- 2F. understands the difference between fact and conjecture and between evidence and assertion.

Performance Indicators - The competent social science teacher:

- 2G. demonstrates the ability to compare and contrast.
- 2H. differentiates between facts and interpretations.
- 2I. analyzes cause-and-effect relationships.
- 2J. compares competing narratives and multiple perspectives.
- 2K. identifies the central questions addressed in a narrative.
- 2L. analyzes data from a variety of sources before reaching a general conclusion or interpretation.

STANDARD 3

The competent social science teacher understands how to use the tools of social science inquiry to conduct research and interpret findings.

Knowledge Indicators - The competent social science teacher:

- 3A. understands the tools of social science research.
- 3B. understands the use of research in reaching conclusions and developing interpretations.
- 3C. understands ethical approaches for conducting research and interpreting findings.

Performance Indicators - The competent social science teacher:

- 3D. gathers data, using appropriate methods and technology.
- 3E. assesses the credibility and authority of sources and research findings.
- 3F. formulates appropriate questions by observing and analyzing evidence.
- 3G. organizes and presents findings in an appropriate format.

NCSS Disciplinary Standard 2.1: History

Indicators of Capabilities for Teaching History

Teachers of history at all school levels should provide developmentally appropriate experiences as they guide learners in their study. They should:

Guide learners in practicing skills of historical analysis and interpretation, such as compare and contrast, differentiate between historical facts and interpretations, consider multiple perspectives, analyze cause and effect relationships, compare competing historical narratives, recognize the tentative nature of historical interpretations, and hypothesize the influence of the past.

Assist learners in developing historical research capabilities that enable them to formulate historical questions, obtain historical data, question historical data, identify the gaps in available records, place records in context, and construct sound historical interpretations.