

Final Paper Assignment

Due Date: This paper is due on **Monday November 29/2004 at 430pm** at the start of class. No late papers will be accepted without a compelling reason and overwhelming evidence provided to me in advance of the due date and time. Papers that are not submitted on time will receive a zero (0), resulting in a failing grade in the course. You must also submit work at the "stop points" listed below on the dates listed; failure to do so will result on failure on the paper assignment.

Guidelines: This paper is to be a minimum of **fifteen (15) full and complete pages in length**; there is no maximum page count, so write until you have completed your argument. Your paper is to be typed, double-spaced, with 1 ½" left and right margins and 1" top and bottom margins, on 8 ½" by 11" white paper, spell- and grammar-checked, proofread, and covered with a cover sheet, which will be the only place your name appears on the paper. All other listed requirements and deductions for missing elements for papers in this course, discussed on the course syllabus and elsewhere, pertain to this assignment. Please make sure that you fully and completely read the details regarding papers as listed in the syllabus and the "How to Write a Schaffer Paper" handout (available on Blackboard).

This is an outside research project that requires you to develop an analysis and response to the big question as listed below. You must utilize a combination of outside scholarly research and course readings in the development of your argument.

The required sources are as follows:

- Elements of the course readings, as appropriate to the particular topic you've chosen for this project;
- *At least two* scholarly books – at least one of these needs to be written by the social theorist you choose;
- *At least nine* scholarly journal articles (i.e., peer-reviewed or refereed articles in scholarly journals, *not* book reviews, opinion essays, or introductory editorial essays) – these can cover the social theorist and/or the social problem and/or the usual American response to the social problem in any combination;
- And at least three other sources you find in your research. You may use newspaper articles, web resources, and other resources to count for those, or you can find other sources meeting the requirements listed above.

You are required to cite all sources you utilize for this paper, and you are required to have a bibliography (following the format included in this handout) listing all sources you used. As this is a research project, you may *judiciously* use direct quotations from other sources; however, do not rely on these to make your argument for you or use them in a patchwork manner.

The Question: Your paper will be a research-based argument that responds to the following questions:

To what extent do current trends in African American social thought represent a substantial difference from the usual American societal approach to eliminating institutional racism? And to what extent would *your* approach substantially improve the situation of African Americans *and others* in the US?

The development of your research will incorporate the following three items; failure to include one of them will result in failure on the paper project. Other subjects may be pursued with my approval *in advance of the second stop point* (see timeline listed below).

Social theorist: You must research the works of one of the contemporary social theorists listed below and the ways in which their ideas derive from more classical African American social theorists we will discuss in this course.

Sociopolitical issue: You must research one social and political issue of major concern to African Americans today that reflects some aspect of institutional racism (or its absence), as well as how the social theorist you choose would deal with that issue. *Note: Your theorist may not explicitly deal with that issue. Thus, you need to be able to work up the analytic framework that theorist uses and utilize that to analyze the sociopolitical issue you're discussing.*

Usual American societal response to sociopolitical issue: You need to provide evidence of the ways in which American society – either through non-governmental means, such as social movements, or through political and public policy – attempts to address or redress the sociopolitical issue you discuss in the paper.

Social theorists that are fair game for this paper – others may be used upon consultation with me:

Cornel West	Amiri Baraka	Anita Allen
Drucilla Cornell	Roy Innis	Naomi Zack
Henry Louis Gates, Jr.	Eldridge Cleaver	Joy James
Paul Gilroy	James H. Cone	Laurence Thomas
William Julius Wilson	James Forman	Lucius Outlaw, Jr.
bell hooks	Imari Obadele	Bernard Boxill
William Whyte	Manning Marable	Robert Birt
Malcolm X	Howard McGary, Jr.	Kwame Anthony Appiah
Stokely Carmichael	Lewis Gordon	Kimberlé Williams
Bobby Seale	Michele Moody-Adams	Crenshaw
Angela Davis	Albert Mosley	Patricia Williams
Patricia Hill Collins	Tommy Lott	Kendall Thomas

Sociopolitical issues that are fair game for this paper – others may be used upon consultation with me:

Affirmative Action/Employment equity issues	poverty, welfare, employment, income distribution, and others
Relations between African American and white communities	Issues of environmental racism
Relations between African American communities and other visible minority communities	Social-ecological issues, including education, community welfare, visible pollution/graffiti
Issues pertaining to the law, formation of laws, and law enforcement	Family-related issues in African American communities
Issues pertaining to political representation of African Americans	Education-related issues, such as educational inequalities or voucher programs
Economic issues pertaining to African American communities, including	The commodification of African American culture and its place in American society

In order to fully and completely respond to the big question, your paper must do the following things, making sure to detail the evidentiary chain that enables you to make these claims:

- Detail the social-theoretical viewpoint of *one* contemporary African American social theorist, in particular with regard to issues surrounding conceptions of humanity, freedom, self-determination, the economic order, or another issue discussed in this course, as well as the ways in which their ideas derive from or contrast with the theoretical viewpoint of at least *one* “classical” African American social theorist discussed in the course;
- Using the analytic framework of the theorist you have chosen, analyze an instance of institutional racism in American society – one indicated by a particular social problem facing African American communities – to figure out how this example of institutional racism comes into being, operates, and detrimentally impacts on African American communities;
- Provide evidence of the usual ways in which American society – either through governmental means, such as public policy, or through non-governmental means like social movements – attempts to address the instance of institutional racism you’ve chosen, being sure to show how *and why* these attempts have not been successful;
- Extend the theoretical position discussed in the first section to show how the theorist you chose would figure out how to solve the example of institutional racism you analyze;
- Evaluate that argument with regard to its intellectual and/or political inheritance from other theorists discussed in this course;
- Utilize the argument developed thus far, as well as other ideas from the course, to extend the theoretical argument to show how *you* would solve the problem of institutional racism;
- And finally, use all of this evidence to clearly and directly respond to the big question.

Evaluation Criteria: All criteria for the evaluation of your papers are listed in this assignment as well as in the syllabus.

One thing you should note: **This paper is not about showing that you’ve read a bunch of stuff.** A “book report” or paper that simply shows you’ve done a bunch of research will not pass this assignment. Instead, as with all forms of knowledge, the point is to *do* something with it. This paper is your first – and hopefully not your last – opportunity to do so. If you are unclear about the requirements of the assignment or what would constitute an argument, PLEASE COME SEE ME ASAP. It is very likely that, with a fair amount of effort on your part and regular consultations with me regarding the project, you can receive an A – but you have to be sure to challenge yourself to do this.

Timeline: This schedule of “due dates” is intended to do four things: break down the scope of the project, help you improve your work, obtain feedback from me throughout the research process, and think about the research process in a different way. **These due dates are absolutely mandatory, and failure to submit the required element on a particular day will result in failure on the assignment.** Work submitted on these dates will be returned as quickly as possible, generally in the next class session.

W Sep 15: Final paper assignment handed out and discussed

W Oct 6: Research question, research topic due

W Oct 13: List of references, refinement of research question and delineation of topic due

W Oct 20: Sketch outline, path of argument due

W Nov 10: Full outline, path of argument due

M Nov 29: Final version of assignment due at the start of class

Term Project: Reference Sources, Citation Guidelines

Your best bet to find research materials for your term papers is through the MU Library web site, <http://library.millersville.edu>. There are two avenues for you there: The main library catalogue, searchable by author, title, or subject keyword; and the electronic resources. Most of the electronic information resources are subscription-based, meaning that you can only access them from the library's computers or through your Marauder account. The good news: Many of the electronic resources have full-text articles online, and most allow you to e-mail the entire article to your e-mail account for free, making it easy to print out.

Good resources to use (all available through the MU library computing system):

ABI/Inform (now ProQuest Direct – major business journals, on the order of 1300 of them)
Anthropological Index Online (free on WWW)
CARL Uncover
Chicano Database
Congressional Quarterly (CQ) Library
Cross-Cultural CD-ROM (available only in Library North 106)
EconLit
Environmental RouteNet
Expanded Academic ASAP (my favourite – many full-text articles, and can be e-mailed)
FactSearch (statistical statements on current social issues – goes back to 1984)
Index to Legal Periodicals and Books
JSTOR (by far one of the best – many journals have their entire post-WWII catalogues on here as full-text)
LEXIS-NEXIS Academic Universe
NTDB/STAT-USA Internet
PapersFirst and ProceedingsFirst (conference papers and proceedings published online)
Social Sciences Abstracts (gives you the abstract of the article, which allows you to decide if you want to xerox it)
Sociological Abstracts (same kind of thing – used to be SOCIOFILE)
Ulrich's Periodicals Guide (SilverPlatter – guide to major periodicals)
US Government Periodicals Index
Women's Resources International (available only on campus)

Your use of these resources should be determined by your topic. Each of them can be searched by author, title, or subject keyword. Just make sure to choose your references carefully. If you have any questions about using these resources, see me or the reference librarian.

Citation Guidelines: In the bibliography, be sure to alphabetize references by author's last name, with multiple entries by the same author sorted chronologically from earliest to latest.

In-text: (Author Year: Page) (note: for web sites, use paragraph number instead of page number)

Book: Author. Year. *Title of Book*. City of publication: Publisher.

Book section: Author. Year. "Title of section." In Editor (ed.), *Title of Book*. City of publication: Publisher.

Journal article: Author. Year. "Title of article." Pages in *Journal Title*, volume #: issue #.

Web site: Author. Year of last update. <Organization's name> web site. URL (the address of the page you reference)

Evaluation Guidelines: Your work on this assignment will be evaluated based on the following criteria, treated in decreasing order of importance:

- The strength and cohesiveness of the argument made in response to The Big Question;
- Utilization of the evidence found to support your response to The Big Question;
- Accuracy and presentation of the materials found during your research;
- Presentation issues;
- And meeting the minimum requirements of the paper assignment as listed.

In general, grades on papers indicate the following (and note that failing to meet these criteria will generally result in a failing grade):

- "A" – directly answers the assigned question; well-argued in a logical order, making clear how the evidence presented is utilized
- "B" – evades answering the assigned question; fairly well-argued, but reasoning process or analysis of the evidence weak
- "C" – no attempt to answer assigned question; paper reads more like a book report than an analysis; assumption that the evidence will make the argument for you.

Potential deductions: Failure to follow the guidelines listed here and on the syllabus will result in the following immediate deductions:

- Not using minimum number of sources: -1/3 letter grade per source you're short;
- Not including a full and complete bibliography: -1 full letter grade;
- Not citing all references to outside texts: -1 full letter grade;
- Not proofreading your work: -2 full letter grades;
- Not meeting minimum page count: -1/3 letter grade per page the paper is short;
- Plagiarism: immediate failure on this paper, probable failure in the course, and referral for disciplinary proceedings.

A Final Note: This assignment is where everything comes together - your knowledge, your increased theoretical and analytic sophistication, and your own ideas of how the world should work. You can do amazingly well on this assignment - the easiest way is by embarking on it now and consulting with me as soon as any question or issue comes to mind for you. This paper is also one of the few times in your university career in which you'll be able to say how it is that you think the world should run and be able to defend that claim, so you should do your best to enjoy the challenge presented to you here. As always, I am here to help you do the best work you're capable of; please feel free to utilize me as a resource for improving your work.

That said, I cannot emphasize the importance of working regularly on this assignment. As the timeline indicates, you are expected to submit your work on this paper as you proceed through the course. My regular feedback as you proceed through this research will enable you to write the best paper possible, and this is not the kind of assignment you can wait until the last minute to write. It requires you think through *and beyond* the people whose works you're reading, and to pursue a fair amount of research on a topic that you're interested. Think about what has troubled you in other courses (and in this one) in terms of what goes on in our society; think about the ideas discussed so far in the course that have spoken to you in some kind of way; and keep yourself on a schedule in terms of doing work on this assignment - these will be the things that keep you on track to doing the best work you are capable of doing and more.

I wish you luck, and look forward to reading what you have to say.