

## **RESEARCH PAPER PROJECT: GENERAL GUIDELINES AND SOURCES**

**M. Brown**

### **GENERAL DESCRIPTION**

Research paper with a maximum length of 6 pages (not including works cited page (required); any appendices (not required); and/or cover page (not required)).

Consists of four stages: 1) completion of LMC (academic research) Tutorial (10 points) 2) topic proposal (highly recommended but not required; 0 points) 3) presentation (50 points) and 4) final draft of the completed paper (50 points).

For additional details, please refer to the information below, as well as other course documents.

### **GENERAL FORMAT**

Name, class, and date must appear at the top of the first page of the document.

APA format for all bibliographic information, including: 1) Part IV of your Presentation assignment (not Parts I-III, where references are not required) 2) in-text citations in the final draft *only* and 3) the Works Cited page of your final draft. APA format is *not* required in any other way(s) in your submission (e.g., margins; cover page, if any; etc.).

Double-spaced, 12 point font.

White paper; no color or designs.

$\frac{3}{4}$  to 1" margins on all sides.

**Minimal, *if any*, use of direct quotations. If you find a direct quotation worth using, such as George Washington advocating the use of hemp, put it in. If you find a line of poetry that says something in such a profound manner that you cannot possibly replicate either the words or the spirit, put it in. Unless your situation is along these lines, though, do not use direct quotations; I want to see what you say, not what your source does. Paraphrase; do not quote directly unless absolutely necessary. Overuse of direct quotations may result in one or more of the following: 1) high score on Vericite, leading to a) issues pertaining to academic dishonesty b) a 0 grade on the assignment and/or requirement to redo the assignment, subject to all policies pertaining to late submissions 2) rejection of the assignment without opportunity for makeup *and* 3) reduction in grade on the assignment, even in the absence of any of the other, foregoing penalties.**

There must be a “Works Cited” page that lists every source to which you have cited in your paper. The format and style for all citations in your Works Cited page must conform to APA citation style. Students are responsible for researching and applying the APA citation style on their own, including via using available online tutors, tutorials, the on-campus writing center, and/or other resources; the instructor will not provide samples. Please note that a “works cited” page is *different* from a bibliography (a “works cited” page lists only the works you have actually used; in contrast, a bibliography lists anything and everything that you have looked at, regardless of whether you actually used it).

Separate paragraphs for each, separate idea. Indent each new paragraph without extra spaces in between paragraphs.

Introductory paragraph and conclusion paragraph.

The introductory paragraph must contain a clear, concise thesis statement. It must also provide a specific indication of what arguments you are going to make in the rest of the paper.

Topic sentences (first sentence in each paragraph of the paper) must tie into and support the thesis.

Strict adherence to grammar and to other rules pertaining to writing skills. If you have problems with writing skills, the time to fix them is before you turn in your paper.

You must submit the final draft of the Research Paper Project by the applicable deadline to the Research Paper assignment submission link.

## **SOURCES**

You must complete the LMC Tutorial (10 points) in order to familiarize yourself with the variety and quality of different types of sources. After completing the tutorial, you must print the proof of completion page and email it to the instructor by the deadline on the syllabus.

There must be a minimum of 10 in-text citations. As a general rule, every single time you are inspired by an idea from something you have read or seen, you must cite to it.

The citation format for both 1) in-text citations and 2) the works cited page needs to be in APA. Samples of APA formatting for citations are available from a wide range of sources on the web, and it is the student’s responsibility to learn about and apply them in this assignment.

There must be no more than five of any type of source. Examples: no more than five url’s referring to web sites; no more than five books; no more than five encyclopedias; and so on. Note: a citation to a book, etc. appearing on the web counts as a web site citation; it does not count as a citation to a book, etc. within the meaning of this paragraph. A book, newspaper article, etc. that appears in print but which you have accessed via the internet will be counted as an internet source; if it comes from the student sitting in front of their computer, then it is an internet source, period. Please note that one goal of this assignment is to get students to physically enter and do research in a real library; this cannot be accomplished by doing all research sitting in front of a computer.

Contrary to widespread beliefs, even in today’s world, the internet represents only a tiny fraction of all the different kinds of information that are available. The list below provides a glimpse into

the huge amount of information that is available for research that is rarely on the internet. Limiting research to sources on the internet will necessarily limit your access to information, limit your ability to do precise research on your specific topic, and severely hamper the depth of thought and sophistication in your analyses, leading almost invariably to simplistic and shallow ideas and arguments.

There must be at least three types of sources including, but not limited to, the following:

- Internet/web-based sources
- Encyclopedia
- Dictionary
- Book
- Scholarly/academic journal article (example: *Harvard Law Review*)
- Popular journal/magazine (example: *Time*)
- Newspaper
- Newsletter
- Interview
- CD Rom
- DVD
- Letters
- Government documents
- Statute
- Theses
- Dissertations
- Hearings
- Committee meeting minutes
- Practice manuals
- Causes of Action
- Case reporters

Please keep in mind that the guidelines here on sources represent the minimum requirements. There is a vast difference between research that just barely satisfies the minimum and research that goes beyond the minimum. The final grade depends on a wide range of factors, but **an “A” paper will never come out of “C-” research.** In other words, the quality of your sources and the skill with which you use them will affect the quality of the paper and, of course, the grade. In general, excessive reliance on internet sources is the number one factor behind poor quality research and superficial analyses of your topic in the finished paper (and, of course, the overall quality of the paper).