**US History**

Reddy

Spring Semester

**Annotated Bibliography**

***The Assignment***: In this assignment, you will complete an annotated bibliography, an alphabetized list of sources on a given topic. You will need to construct a clear and specific thesis that serves as the basis for your topic. The sources you select should help answer the thesis you create. Under each source you will write a paragraph describing the source and how it will contribute to a researcher’s understanding of that topic and thesis. The guidelines for the assignment are laid out below.

***Due Date:*** Your completed assignment must emailed to or shared with me before midnight on **Friday, May 24.** Late papers will be penalized five (5) points per 24 hours they are late.

**This assignment will be worth 150 points**. Your grade on this assignment will be based on both the quality of the sources (i.e. how well you have conducted research) and the quality of the citations themselves. See the detailed instructions below.

***Detailed Instructions:***

Imagine that you have been hired as a research assistant, and you have been asked to find useful sources of information for someone who plans to write a paper or give a presentation on a topic related to some aspect of American history between the end of WWII and May of 2013. A first step in such a process might be to create an annotated bibliography. The annotated bibliography is a list of citations to books, articles, and documents. Each citation is followed by a brief (usually 150 word) 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. An annotation summarizes the essential ideas contained in the document/book/site, reporting the author’s thesis and main points as well as how they relate to your own ideas or thesis.

There are two types of annotations, summative and evaluative. Summative annotations provide only a summary of the author's main ideas. Summative annotations include no statements of relevance or critical evaluation remarks. Evaluative annotations provide both a descriptive and critical evaluation of the source. Evaluative annotations usually begin with broad comments about the focus of the source then moves to more details. Your comments should move from the details of the text to your evaluation of the source. Annotations are typically brief (one paragraph) but may be longer.

Sources: [Cornell Library](http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/research/skill28.htm) [Purdue University Online Writing Lab](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/03/)

*The task:* Pick a topic related American history between 1946 and 2013. You can choose anything you want to research, as long as you receive my approval. You must submit your topic to me in writing by Friday, May 3. You will receive feedback (approval of or suggestions for how to change/narrow/broaden your topic) from me within 48 hours. You then must find at least 8 sources (see below for some specific requirements) that deal with your topic. For each source, write a an evaluative paragraph—this means that paragraph must include **both** 1) a *brief summary*, which could include a summary of the author’s thesis, and 2) *your evaluation* of this source’s reliability and usefulness in understanding the topic.

*Requirements*:

* You must have at least **eight total sources** but you may have more.
* At least two of your sources must be books.
* At least two of your sources must be scholarly articles from an academic database.
* At least two sources should be periodicals, newspaper or magazine articles (these may be in electronic format)
* At least two primary sources, but you may have more.
* At least two secondary sources (your textbook is not a secondary source).
* Of the 150 points for this assignment, 20 will have to be earned by submitting your daily class notes to me. You should have at least 10 submissions to me (2 points each). There are a little over 10 classes left in the semester, which means you will have a day or two free, but I need at least 10 note submissions for you to receive full credit.
* You will be required to write the opening paragraph of your paper with the last sentence as your thesis statement.

*IMPORTANT NOTES:*

* Encyclopedias (either print or online, e.g. Wikipedia) may NOT be used as one of your eight sources.
* Please see below for more information explaining guidelines for a good annotation, and guidelines for identifying useful web sites. Feel free to see me if you have any questions.
* The citations in a bibliography are always alphabetized by the first word of the citation, and are NEVER numbered. In terms of format, you should have the citation, then the annotation for that citation below it (single-spaced) before moving to the next citation.
* Read the following article for moral support: <http://chronicle.com/article/10-Tips-on-How-to-Write-Less/124268/>

**Format for citations: You must use the Chicago style for formatting your citations.** ***To get a good grade on this assignment, it is essential that your citations be formatted perfectly.***

There are several places on the web where you may find a summary of Chicago style, including these three:

* Chicago Manual: <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html>
* Chicago Manual summary: <http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/RES5e_ch10_o.html>

You may find useful sample bibliographies here:

* [Purdue University Online Writing Center](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/11/)
* <http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/RES5e_ch10_s1-0007.html> (the bibliography is at the end of the sample research paper)

You may also benefit from usingCitation Machine or[Easy Bib](http://www.easybib.com) to help you format your citations. The Gilman Library also subscribes to [Noodle Tools](http://www.noodletools.com/), a great way to format your papers. All three of these may also be accessed from the [Resources section of the Gilman library](http://www.gilman.edu/program/libraries/edward-r-fenimore-me)

**Guidelines for a good annotation**

Write a short paragraph for each source, describing the scope of the work, its reliability and its usefulness for a paper. Here’s an example for a project related to the Vietnam War:

***Bad:***

Duiker, William J. *Vietnam: Revolution in Transition, second ed.* Boulder: Westview Press, 1995.

The book provides an overview of the history of Vietnam going back approximately two thousand years.

***Good:***

Duiker, William J. *Vietnam: Revolution in Transition, second ed.* Boulder: Westview Press, 1995.

This book, written by a professor of East Asian Studies at Penn State, provides an overview of Vietnam’s geography, society, and economy, with a particular focus on events in the twentieth century. He argues that to understand Vietnam’s history, one must pay attention to the importance of regional differences, and the history of Vietnam’s fights against external invaders. Endnotes at the conclusion of each chapter demonstrates that the author’s research is well-documented. Since it is a secondary source and rather broad in focus, it would be a useful starting point to learn about Vietnam, before going into more detailed primary and secondary sources about the war itself.

*NOTE: The first entry does not tell me anything about the scope of the book, its usefulness for the topic or the reliability. The second entry provides a much better description of the source and how it is useful.*

**Helpful Hints** in evaluating sources for scope and use:

* Look at the dust jacket of book.
* Look at table of contents to see how the book is organized.
* Check the index to see if keywords for your topic are listed.
* Skim an introduction or conclusion if you think the whole book will be helpful. Skim the chapter or section if only part of it fits your topic.
* Look at websites closely. Is it devoted solely to your topic? Is it detailed? Does it cover the same ground as print sources? Do you trust it? Do you know anything about the author?

**Reliability:** Not always an easy thing to determine, but this is an important skill to develop. It is obvious that you should take care with websites, since we know that people can put whatever they want on the web. BUT, you should also look at your print sources critically. Some things to think about – Do you know anything about the author? When was it written? Does it have footnotes/endnotes and a bibliography so that you know where the author got his/her information? If you have questions about a source, ask me.

**Five Criteria for Evaluating Web pages**

Source: Dr. Mike Kelly, via Library of Congress Web Site

**1. How to interpret the basics**

Accuracy of Web Documents

Who wrote the page and can you contact him or her?

What is the purpose of the document and why was it produced?

Is this person qualified to write this document?

**Accuracy**

Make sure author provides e-mail or a contact address/phone number.

Know the distinction between author and Webmaster.

**2.** **Authority of Web Documents**

Who published the document and is it separate from the "Webmaster?"

Check the domain of the document, what institution publishes this document?

Does the publisher list his or her qualifications?

**Authority**

What credentials are listed for the author(s)?

Where is the document published?

Check URL domain.

**3. Objectivity of Web Documents**

What goals/objectives does this page meet?

How detailed is the information?

What opinions (if any) are expressed by the author?

**Objectivity**

Determine if page is a mask for advertising; if so information might be biased.

View any Web page as you would an infommercial on television.

Ask yourself why was this written and for whom?

**4. Currency of Web Documents**

When was it produced?

When was it updated?

How up-to-date are the links (if any)?

**Currency**

**How many dead links are on the page?**

**Are the links current or updated regularly?**

Is the information on the page outdated?

**5. Coverage of the Web Documents**

Are the links (if any) evaluated and do they complement the document’s theme?

Is it all images or a balance of text and images?

Is the information presented cited correctly?

**Coverage**

**If page requires special software to view the information, how much are you missing if you don’t have the software?**

Is it free, or is there a fee, to obtain the information?

Is there an option for text only, or frames, or a suggested browser for better viewing?

**PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER**

**Accuracy.**

If your page lists the author and institution that published the page and provides a way of contacting him/her, and . . .

**Authority**.

If your page lists the author credentials and its domain is preferred (.edu, gov, .org, or .net)…and

**Objectivity**. If your page provides accurate information with limited advertising and it is

objective in presenting the information, and . . .

**Currency.** If your page is current and updated regularly (as stated on the page) and the links (if any) are also up-to-date, and . . .

**Coverage**. If you can view the information properly—not limited to fees, browser technology, or software requirement, then . . .