

AMST BC 3703x-3704y
Senior Research Seminar in American Studies
2012-2013

<http://amstx3703-001-2012-3.wikispaces.columbia.edu>



Chinese American family c. 1897 / Beinecke Library, Yale University

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Course description

The Senior Research Seminar is designed to guide American Studies majors through the senior thesis project in a collaborative, structured and stimulating way. In the early weeks of the fall term, you will refine your topic in consultation with your adviser. You will then devote the remainder of the fall term to establishing a set of primary sources on which your thesis can be based, to exploring the secondary literature on your topic, and to drafting two chapters. By week 9, you will submit an 8-page section of the thesis.

In the early weeks of the spring semester, you will submit drafts of the remaining chapters of your thesis. The first full draft is due *before* Spring Break on **Friday March 8, 2013**. You will then have several weeks to refine and rewrite your thesis. The completed project, which should run about 40 pages (plus notes), is submitted on **April 16**. As you work on your own essay, you will also serve as a peer editor for your classmates.

Thesis writers work throughout the year, sometimes individually with their advisers, sometimes with their adviser and their peer editor, and sometimes with the entire seminar group. Since this is a yearlong course, grades are given to the

Registrar only at the end of the academic year. You will see a “Y” on your fall-semester transcript

Grading

Your grade for the course will be calculated on the basis of your success in the following areas:

Process: 40%

- meeting deadlines throughout the year (i.e. handing in specified assignments on the specified date)
- showing energy and ingenuity in research
- contributing actively to the learning process in seminar
- serving as an intellectually engaged and detailed peer editor

Product: 60%

- A grade on the quality of the thesis itself (**includes use of primary and secondary research materials, writing and editing and attention to formatting concerns.**)

Course wiki

This course will use a wiki, a collaborative website. The wiki will allow us to communicate between class meetings and will enable us to share drafts, ideas and suggestions. To join the wiki, please go to <http://amstx3703-001-2012-3.wikispaces.columbia.edu> You will be prompted from there. If you do not have automatic access to the wiki, please request access through the appropriate wiki link. Only students enrolled in the senior seminar can join the wiki. For instructions on setting up your participant page, visit the wiki’s “Seminar Members” page.

Twitter

All senior thesis writers are encouraged to follow @bcamstud on Twitter. When tweeting, please use the catchy AS senior thesis hashtag: #bcamstudthesis.

Required reference work

Kate Turabian, et. al., *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 6th ed. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2007.

Available for purchase at Book Culture, 536 112th St. at Broadway.

Office hours and consultations

You can sign up for an office-hour time slot or schedule an appointment with us at any time during the semester (and for whatever reason). To sign up for J. Kassanoff’s office hours (Wednesdays, 2:00-4:00), visit <http://kassanoff.wikischolars.columbia.edu>. Appointments outside of regular

office hours can be made by emailing your adviser. In your message, please list times that you could meet, including those before 10:30 a.m. We will email you an appointment time. As a policy, we do not discuss substantive matters pertaining to your academic work via email. If you wish to discuss something with either of us, there is only one way: by appointment. If you find that you cannot keep a pre-arranged office-hours appointment, please be considerate of others and cancel on your adviser's wiki as soon as possible.

Paperless drafts and comments

This year, we will be taking a paperless approach to class assignments. Rather than submitting a hard copy of your chapter(s), you will upload your work to your wiki page. We will then download it and use the Microsoft Word comments feature to mark the chapter. We will then upload your marked draft to the wiki. To help me keep your chapters organized, we ask that you use the following **file-naming system**:

- last name_chapter #_date.doc; or,
- last name_full draft 2_date.doc

For example, the file containing a second chapter would be called kassanoff_chapter 2_nov 30.doc). The file containing a first full draft would be kassanoff_fulldraft1_march 5.doc. Your marked essay will have either your peer editor's initials or your adviser's initials added to the file name (ex. kassanoff_chapter2_nov30_jak.doc). Please note that this system applies only to the file name: each chapter should have its own original title.

Recommended software and materials

- Download RefWorks, bibliographic software available free from Columbia (see <http://www.barnard.edu/library/refworks&endnote.htm>) or Zotero (<http://www.zotero.com>)
- a flash drive and/or Dropbox account (www.dropbox.com) to back up your work (this is **essential!**)
- highlighter
- folders and/or filing system to keep track of photocopied articles
- post-its and/or adhesive page markers
- spiral notebook(s), index card boxes or software like Scrivener to help keep track of your research

Schedule of classes

FALL SEMESTER 2012

Sept. 11 - INTRODUCTIONS: SO WHAT IS A THESIS ANYWAY?

Seminar meeting. Advisers introduce students to the challenges that lie ahead, and students introduce themselves to each other. Over the course of the next two weeks, students should meet individually with their advisers to refine their thesis topics. Please sign up for next week's conferences on the wiki.

Assignment due: Create your own page on the course wiki. Click on "Get started" at <http://amstx3703-001-2012-3.wikispaces.columbia.edu>. Consult J. Kassanoff's sample wiki page <http://amstx3703-001-2012-3.wikispaces.columbia.edu/Jennie+Kassanoff> for copy-and-paste grids that you can use on your own page.

Sept. 18 - THESIS PROPOSAL AND INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES

Assignment due: Thesis Proposal (4-5 pp.) This should be an updated version of the proposal you handed in last spring.

Essential components of a thesis proposal:

- describe the questions you want your thesis to answer
- take the arguments you plan to make on a test drive
- identify the specific archive of primary materials you plan to examine
- specify the theoretical texts (think: junior colloquium) that might be relevant to your project

Each student should ask herself the following questions: Have I chosen an important, interesting, researchable topic, one that poses a clear question, and one that can be answered by primary sources and available evidence? (For guidance, see Appendix C to this syllabus, "Shaping an American Studies Senior Thesis Topic."). While your thesis proposal should primarily concern itself with "what, how and why" questions, you may also want to describe the inspiration for your topic. (Did you read a particularly provocative book or article in one of your classes that left you with more questions than it answered? Did some life experience stimulate your interest?) Please post your completed proposal to your wiki page.

Sept. 25 YOM KIPPUR - NO SEMINAR MEETING

Assignment due: Read the Model from the Past found on the course wiki, and answer the following questions. Post your answers to your wiki page.

Questions to Consider When Reading (and Writing) a Senior Thesis in American Studies:

1. Topic: A good topic should pose an interesting question that can be answered by available evidence. How well does the thesis do this?
2. Title: A good title is difficult to create. It should excite the reader's interest, while reducing the thesis's core idea to a few words.
3. Statement of Argument / Introduction: The introduction should draw the reader into the topic and make clear where the writer is going. The writer should pose an answerable question and map out the ways she will answer that question. Does the author accomplish these goals?
4. Discussion of the relevant scholarly literature: A good essay is part of a larger conversation among scholars. How well does the author define the scholarly discussion to which she wishes to contribute? Does the writer make clear what others have said on the subject? Does she make clear what her position is and what she is adding to the debate?
5. Primary sources: Perhaps the main requirement of the senior thesis is that it conveys a coherent argument that is centered on and driven by original research in primary sources. How well does the thesis satisfy this requirement?
6. Broader context: To be successful, an essay must provide sufficient context to make clear how the particular issues being explored relate to larger social, cultural, economic, political, or intellectual themes. Authors generally rely on secondary sources to establish this context. How rich is the secondary literature that the author has explored? Has the author provided adequate context? Has she struck the right balance between analysis and context?
7. Analysis of evidence: On what kinds of evidence does the author rely? Is the evidence used sufficient to satisfy the author's goals? Has the author constructed a convincing argument based on that evidence?
8. Organization: The longer a piece of writing, the more critical the organization. How well organized is this thesis? Do the chapter divisions make sense in terms of the overall argument?
9. Details: Is the note form (either footnotes or endnotes may be used) proper and consistent? Does the author effectively use notes to convey useful information tangential to the main argument? Are quotations over 35 words indented?

Oct. 2 and Oct. 9 - MEET WITH BARNARD RESEARCH LIBRARIAN LISA NORBERG OR SHANNON O'NEILL. POST NOTES ON YOUR CONSULTATION TO YOUR WIKI PAGE.

Schedule a consultation with Lisa Norberg (lnorberg@barnard.edu). or Shannon O'Neill (soneill@barnard.edu) the American Studies Personal Librarians Because Ms. Norberg and Ms. O'Neill are members of our wiki, they will be reading your thesis proposal in preparation for your consultation. Among other things, you can discuss specialized databases, reference works, archives and available scholarly websites.

Assignment due by Oct. 19: Post detailed notes on your consultation with Lisa Norberg or Shannon O'Neill to the course wiki.

Oct. 16 - SEMINAR MEETING: *REVISED* THESIS PROPOSAL and TWO-PART BIBLIOGRAPHY

Each student should bring to class and be prepared to discuss the following:

- revised thesis proposal (developed from the assignment due on Sept. 18)
- two-part bibliography (see below)

Your bibliography should contain a total of twelve items and appear in **two sections**:

- a. Section 1: an **unannotated** bibliography of approximately six primary sources that the thesis will examine.
- b. Section 2: an **annotated** bibliography that contains at least six secondary sources. Each bibliographic entry in this section should include a 2-3 sentence annotation that both summarizes the argument of the source and briefly describes its relevance to your own analysis. (For guidance on preparing the bibliography, see *Appendix B* of this syllabus). Choose secondary sources that take different approaches to your topic.

Based on the material in her annotated secondary bibliography, each student should be prepared to give a brief, focused presentation on her research to date, any significant discoveries she has made, her sense of the scholarly discussion surrounding her topic and her plans for further research.

On this date, each student will be assigned her first peer editor as well as the first peer writer whose work she will edit. Being a good editor is essential to the "process" portion of the senior thesis grade. To be a good editor, you must become sufficiently acquainted with your author's topic to be able to give meaningful advice. Refer to *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* when in doubt about some aspect of the editing process. Each student should post her peer's edited draft to the peer's wiki page by Oct. 23.

Assignment due: Revised thesis proposal and bibliography of six primary sources and six annotated secondary sources. Bibliography should be double-spaced and follow *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Be prepared to give a brief, focused presentation your research to date. Post revised thesis proposal and bibliography to your wiki page.

Oct. 23 - SEMINAR MEETING - PROPOSED TABLE OF CONTENTS AND DISCUSSION OF THESIS PROPOSALS

Having carefully edited their authors' proposals, students meet in their seminar groups; each editor presents the work of her author. Students will discuss ways of strengthening each other's work.

Each student will also submit a proposed Table of Contents for her thesis. The Table of Contents should be divided into approximately five eight-page chapters. Of those five sections, one chapter should be the project's introduction. Please make sure that the title of each section adequately describes the focus of each chapter.

Assignment due: Edited copy of peer writer's thesis proposal and a draft of your own Table of Contents. Post edited draft and comments to your peer's wiki page. Post Table of Contents to your own wiki page.

Oct. 30 - OPTIONAL CONFERENCES WITH ADVISER

Students begin writing an 8-page section of their theses. Any section will do - beginning, middle, or end - but experience has shown that students have the greatest success when they choose a section/chapter from the middle of their thesis, since beginnings and endings are always the hardest to write. One portion of this draft must deal with the analysis of a central primary source: reliability, point of view, how it must be or will be read, how it will be used within the thesis.

All drafts must include properly formatted footnotes (or endnotes) and a full bibliography. Authors will meet with their adviser to discuss progress and problems.

Nov. 6 - FALL BREAK - NO SEMINAR MEETING

Nov. 13 - ★★SUBMISSION OF FIRST 8-PAGE SECTION★★ (NO SEMINAR MEETING)

Students will be assigned a new peer editor. Each seminar member should post the draft and the revised Table of Contents to her wiki page. Editors will have a week to edit and prepare comments on their author's work.

Readers should keep in mind the following questions as they edit:

1. Has the author made clear how her primary sources relate to the larger issue being explored in her thesis?
2. Does the author paraphrase when she should paraphrase and quote when she should quote?
3. Is each quote properly analyzed?
4. Is proper note form followed, both for the primary source and for any secondary sources relied on for context?
5. Are there any grammatical lapses? How might the writing be improved?

Nov. 20 - PAIRED CONFERENCES

Students meet with their editors and advisers to discuss their first 8-page drafts.

Nov. 27 - OPTIONAL CONFERENCES WITH ADVISER

Dec 4. - ★★SUBMISSION OF SECOND 8-PAGE SECTION★★ (NO SEMINAR MEETING)

Post a copy of your second 8-page draft to your wiki page. Update your Table of Contents on the wiki.

Please keep in mind that two assignments – the seed of your introduction and the next eight pages of the thesis – are due in *the first two weeks of the spring semester*, and that the completed first draft of the thesis is due at the beginning of in March.

WINTER BREAK 走

SPRING SEMESTER 2013

Jan. 22 - SEMINAR MEETING: YOUR INTERVENTION IN THE SCHOLARLY DEBATE

By this point, each student will have written enough of her thesis to have a sense of her own overall argument. In order to identify the significance of that argument, each writer will need to identify the intervention that her thesis is making in some wider scholarly debate.

For instance, if the writer wanted to explain some aspect of the rise of the predominantly white, middle-class woman's movement in mid-nineteenth-century America, she would find vigorous disagreement among scholars. Some have emphasized the growing similarities between women and men in educational attainment and work experience as critical to women's heightened aspirations. In contrast, others have pointed to the growing differences between men and women (some speak of "separate sexual spheres") in economic life as the key factor that enabled a vanguard of middle-class women to act on their own behalf. The thesis writer would need to explain these contrasting interpretations to your classmates and come to some provisional conclusion about how your own particular research might contribute to this debate.

Occasionally, a student chooses a topic about which there appears to be very little prior discussion in the scholarly literature. If you find yourself in this position, you should ask what larger debates among scholars might incorporate your interests. *Remember: every topic fits into some larger scholarly discussion.* Here are some examples: debates over the causes of the rise of the modern state; debates over the meaning of sexuality in different historical epochs; debates over the ways in which national identities come to be constructed; debates over the meaning of consumption in modern culture. Identifying pertinent debates is a key element in your developing understanding of your topic.

Students give a brief presentation to the group that characterizes the scholarly debate and that describes her own intervention in that discussion.

Assignment due: In 3-5 pp., identify at least one scholarly debate to which your thesis is making a contribution. In footnoted detail, describe the various elements of that debate and introduce your own argument –your intervention into the debate. Because these pages will form the seed of your introduction, you will want to make sure to give this assignment serious attention and consideration.

Jan. 29 - ★★SUBMISSION OF THIRD 8-PAGE SECTION★★ AND SEMINAR MEETING

Each seminar member posts her third 8-page chapter plus her updated Table of Contents to her wiki page. Students meet as a group to discuss peer suggestions for the 8-page section that was submitted on Dec. 4.

Feb. 5 - PAIRED CONFERENCES

Students meet with their editors and adviser to discuss the third 8-page chapter.

Assignment due: Peer editors post comments on third 8-page section to writer's wiki page.

Feb. 12 Optional individual conferences to discuss WORK IN PROGRESS ON FOURTH 8-PAGE SECTION (YOUR INTRODUCTION)

Feb. 19 - ★★SUBMISSION OF FOURTH 8-PAGE SECTION - THE THESIS'S INTRODUCTION★★

Each seminar member should post a draft of her fourth 8-page section (the thesis's introduction) plus an updated Table of Contents to her wiki page.

Feb. 26 - PAIRED CONFERENCES

Students meet with their editor and adviser to discuss the fourth 8-page section - the introduction.

Assignment due: Peer editors post comments on fourth 8-page section to writer's wiki page.

Friday, March 8 - ★★SUBMISSION OF COMPLETE FULL DRAFT OF THESIS★★

Each student should post a copy of her first full draft to her wiki page. Complete drafts should be properly footnoted or endnoted and should include a full bibliography.

Mar. 12 - SPRING BREAK 🚲

Mar. 19 - NO SEMINAR MEETING

Mar. 26 - SEMINAR MEETING: PEER PRESENTATIONS

Each peer editor presents the work of her author, and students discuss how each thesis might be further strengthened.

Assignment due: Peer editors have read, edited and critiqued peer writer's thesis. In commenting on each other's theses, use the "Questions to Consider When Reading (and Writing) the Senior Thesis," found on p. 5 of this syllabus. Post comments to your writer's wiki page.

April 2 - INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES

Students meet with their advisers to discuss progress and problems as they **revise their theses**. This is the period of the year that students usually find the most rewarding, for it is only after an author has completed a full version of her thesis that she can really refine what she wants to say and gain mastery of her material.

What you should be doing: Continue to revise thesis. Make sure that both footnotes/endnotes and bibliographic citations are complete. Prepare any images you wish to include. Consult *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* for correct citation of images. Proofread overall thesis for form.

April 9 - NO SEMINAR MEETING

What you should be doing: Final revisions. Proofread carefully. Check your footnotes and bibliography for accuracy and form. Write your acknowledgments. Think about your title. Allow enough time to have your thesis bound.

April 16 - ★★SENIOR THESIS DUE★★

Each student submits two (2) printed copies of her thesis, bound in plastic covers at Village Copier or any similar store, to her adviser. She also **posts the complete senior thesis as a PDF to her wiki page**.

April 23 - SENIOR THESIS PARTY 🍷

Student presentations of theses to one another and to American Studies faculty. All faculty and students are invited to celebrate the completion of their work together. Time: 4:10-6:00; Room: TBA.

A NOTE ON GRADING:

One external faculty reader from the American Studies program will read each thesis and determine its grade. The student's overall grade for the course will be calculated on the basis of her success in the following areas:

1. meeting deadlines throughout the year (i.e. handing in specified assignments on the specified date)
2. showing energy and ingenuity in research
3. contributing to the learning process by serving as a peer editor [total, 40%]
4. the quality of the thesis itself [60%]

Criteria used for grading the thesis can be found on pp. 2-3 of this syllabus.

APPENDIX A: FOOTNOTES

WHEN TO USE FOOTNOTES:

Direct quotations from both primary and secondary sources must be identified in a note. (Direct quotations from *secondary* sources should be used very sparingly. Rather than quote directly from secondary texts, it works better in almost every case to frame the point you are taking from a secondary author in your own (concise) words and then to note the source(s) of your paraphrase, giving the author, work, and page from which you are drawing in the note, just as you would with a direct quotation.) You must provide notes for ideas and interpretations that you have discovered in reading your sources, as well as for direct quotations. You should not, however, provide sources for facts that are widely known. If you wish to quote a primary source that you have found in a secondary work, you should give credit to the author of the secondary work. [Example: Charles H. Cooley, "Reflections upon the Sociology of Herbert Spencer," *American Journal of Sociology* 26 (1920): 129, as quoted in Richard Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought* [1944] (New York: Beacon Press, 1955), 33.]

WHERE TO PLACE THE NUMBER OF A FOOTNOTE:

Place note numbers *at the end of the sentence* (after the period and/or closed quotation mark) in which cited material appears. The number should appear slightly above the line in the text and should not be enclosed in parentheses. If your note contains more than one source, list them in the order in which they are cited in the text.

WHETHER TO USE FOOTNOTES OR ENDNOTES:

If you were to submit your essay for publication, you would be asked to double-space your notes at the end of the text. For the purposes of this thesis, however, you should print your notes in single-spaced form at the bottom of each page, as they would appear in print.

PROPER FORMAT FOR FOOTNOTE REFERENCES:

The first time you use any source, cite it in full. You need to use a full citation only the first time you cite any work. Every time thereafter, you should use the abbreviated **short title form** (see the section under this heading below).

FULL BOOK CITATIONS

Author's full name

Complete title of the book

Editor, compiler, or translator, if any

Name of series in which book appears, if any, and volume or number in the series

Edition, if other than the first

Number of volumes

Facts of publication - city where published, publisher (if you wish), date of publication

Page number(s) of the particular citation

EXAMPLES OF FULL CITATIONS FOR BOOKS:

Author: The first time an author's name appears it should be written in full. For footnotes, place the first name first and the last name last. (Only in the Bibliography should you place the last name first.)

¹ Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 136-140.

All book titles must be *either* italicized or underlined (Choose one or the other, and then be consistent throughout.)

Punctuation: There must be a **comma** after the author's name, a **comma** between the place and date of publication, and a **comma after** the parenthesis containing the publication place and date (but **no** comma before this or any other parenthesis), and a **period** at the conclusion of every note.

Editors, translators and multiple authors: The names of editors and translators appear after the title, unless that person had primary responsibility for preparing the book for publication. If a work has more than three authors, use the first author's name and follow it with "et. al.":

² Marc Bloch, Feudal Society, trans. L. A. Manyon (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 69.

³ Thomas W. Copeland, ed., *The Papers of James Madison*, 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 49.

⁴ Deborah L. Rhode, ed., Theoretical Perspective on Sexual Difference (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 257-260.

⁵ Hutchins Hapgood, *The Spirit of the Ghetto* [1902], ed. Moses Rischin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 9-12.

Edition: References should generally be to a hardbound edition. If an edition other than the first is used, the number should be given:

⁶ John W. Hazard, *The Soviet System of Government*, 4th ed. rev. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 25.

Reprint: If you are using a book that has been reprinted, include the original date of publication, as well as the date of reprinting:

⁶ Gunnar Myrdal, *Population: A Problem for Democracy* [1940] (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1956), 15.

If a work has more than three authors, use the first author's name and follow it with "et. al."

Multivolume works: Works of more than one volume should be identified in notes by the number of volumes in the work and the number of the volume from which a quote has been taken. Some multi-volume works have a general title and individual titles for each volume; in that case, list the general title and then the particular title to which the note refers. Notes for books that are part of a series should list the title of the book in italics, followed by the title of the series in roman letters:

⁷ Edward T. James et. al., eds., *Notable American Women: A Biographical Dictionary*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), 1: 119.

⁸ Fernand Braudel, *The Identity of France*, vol. 2, *People and Production*, trans. Sian Reynolds (New York: Harper Collins, 1990), 237-238.

⁹ James Losh, *The Diaries and Correspondence of James Losh*, ed. Edward Hughes, 2 vols., Publications of the Surtees Society, vols. 171, 172 (Durham, England: Andrews & Co., for the Society, 1962-63), 2: 200-212.

FULL CITATION FORM FOR ALL ARTICLES

(To be used **only** the first time a work is cited. Every time thereafter, use the **Short Title** citation form outlined below.)

Author's full name
Title of the article
Name of the periodical
Number of the volume or issue
Date of the volume or issue
Page number(s) of the particular citation

EXAMPLES OF FULL CITATIONS FOR ARTICLES

Articles in a Scholarly Journal:

¹⁰ Mary Louise Roberts, "Samson and Delilah Revisited: The Politics of Women's Fashion in 1920's France," American Historical Review 98 (1993): 657.

Punctuating citations for articles: First name first; **comma** after the author's name; **comma** after the title of the article (should be placed *inside* the quotation marks); the name of the periodical must be placed either in

italics or underlined (choose one, but be consistent); **comma** after the name of the periodical; **comma** (or semicolon) after the date of the periodical in parenthesis; **period** at the conclusion of the footnote.

CHAPTER IN A BOOK

¹¹ Patricia O'Brien, "Michel Foucault's History of Culture," in Lynn Hunt, ed. *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 25.

ARTICLE IN A MAGAZINE

¹² Lucy Eisenberg, "Scientists vs. Animal Lovers: The Conflict Never Ends," *Harper's*, November 1966, 101-10.

CITING A NEWSPAPER

¹³ *New York Times*, 11 August 1965, p. B3.

CITING A GOVERNMENT PUBLICATION

¹⁴ U.S. Congress, Senate, *Congressional Record*, 9 October 1987, pp. 14011-12.

CITING A COURT CASE

(Complex citation. Please follow carefully the form you have found in the secondary works you have consulted.)

CITING A BOOK REVIEW

¹⁵ Ronald M. Radano, review of *The Creation of Jazz* by Burton W. Puretti, *Reviews in American History* 21 (December 1993): 671.

CITING A WELL-KNOWN REFERENCE BOOK

¹⁶ *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th ed., s.v. "Prayers for the Dead."

CITING DISSERTATIONS

¹⁷ Anna Louise Bates, "Protective Custody: A Feminist Interpretation of Anthony Comstock's Life and Laws" (Ph.D. diss., State University of New York at Binghamton, 1991), 34.

UNPUBLISHED PAPERS

¹⁸ Poshek Fu, "Struggle to Entertain: The Ideological Ambivalence of the Wartime Shanghai Film Industry, 1942-1945" (paper delivered at the 108th

Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association, San Francisco, California, January 8, 1994), 15.

FULL CITATIONS FOR UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPTS

Title of document, if any, and date
Folio number (or box number)
Name of collection
Depository and city where located

Examples:

¹⁹ Lawrence E. Skelly to Joseph L. Hetzel, 6 March 1947, American Civil Liberties Union Papers, Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ.

²⁰ Diary of Lewis Tappan, 23 February 1836, Tappan Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

²¹ Joan Hayes, "Abortion Law: A Case History," January, 1970, Box 3, National Abortion Rights Action League Papers, New York Public Library, New York, NY.

²² Thurgood Marshall, Interview with Ed Edwin, February-June 1977, Washington, D.C., Columbia Oral History Program, Columbia University, New York, NY.

SHORT TITLE CITATIONS

After the first reference to a particular source of whatever kind, **all** subsequent references should be shortened.

The shortened reference to a **book** should include only:

Last name of the author
Shortened title of the book (underlined or in italics, but be consistent)
Page number of the reference

Example 1:

Book, Full Title

Christopher Newfield, *The Emerson Effect: Individualism and Submission in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 105.

For all succeeding citations use the

Book, Short Title

Newfield, *Emerson Effect*, 108.

Example 2:

Book, Full Title

Deborah L. Rhode, ed. Theoretical Perspectives on Sexual Difference (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 257-260.

Book, Short Title

Rhode, ed., Theoretical Perspectives, 257-60.

SHORT TITLE CITATIONS FOR ALL ARTICLES

The shortened reference to an **article** should include only:

- Last name of the author,
- Short title of the article,
- Page numbers of the reference.

Example:

Article, Full Title

Frances E. W. Harper, "The Triumph of Freedom - A Dream," *Anglo-African Magazine* (Jan. 1860): 21-22.

Article, Short Title

Harper, "Triumph of Freedom," 21-22.

A shortened reference to a manuscript source should include only the title and name of the collection.

APPENDIX B: BIBLIOGRAPHY

FORM: At the end of your thesis, you should provide a list of the books and other references you have used. You may find it convenient to divide your bibliography into categories, such as Manuscripts, Interviews, Books, and Articles. Within each category, works *should be arranged alphabetically* by the author's last name.

SOME TYPICAL BIBLIOGRAPHIC ENTRIES: The basic information given in a bibliographic entry parallels that given in a footnote, but note the differences in format. Note, for instance, that lines after the first are indented.

Books by a Single Author:

Cafe, William H. *Never Stop Running: Allard Lowenstein and the Struggle to Save American Liberalism*. New York: Basic Books, 1993.

Books by Two or More Authors: Note that only the first author's name appears in inverse order, and that the semi-colon is used with three or more names.

Adler, J. H., et. al. *The Pattern of U.S. Import Trade since 1923*. New York: Federal Reserve Bank of New York, 1952.

Crews, Frederick, and Sandra Schor. *The Borzoi Handbook for Writers*. 2nd ed. New York: McGraw Hill, 1989.

More than One Work by the Same Author:

Mead, Margaret. *Blackberry Winter: My Early Years*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972.

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APPENDIX C: SHAPING AN AMERICAN STUDIES SENIOR THESIS TOPIC - SOME PRELIMINARY REMARKS

Most of the time, topics (questions) are made, not born. You begin with a fuzzy notion of something that interests you, something that seems worth investigating, and you proceed from there. But how? How do you get from something broad and incoherent to something defined and doable?

Follow your curiosity. Conceiving your topic in the form of a question often helps. Work continually to focus your question. You can never produce the whole answer to any large historical or critical question - nor should you try to. Think of yourself as making a **finite, limited, yet trustworthy contribution** to the larger field of your subject.

Once you have your topic, begin to recognize its parts and to break it down into manageable pieces. Visualize how it can be divided into chapters and what the headings of those chapters might be. It is almost always easier to work on a topic part by part than to attack the whole directly.

Your question needs to be one that can be asked and answered both critically and historically. It helps, for all sorts of reasons, if you locate your subject in a period that has, in some sense, “closed,” so that what you’re writing about is not completely open-ended and lacking in form. In fact, “form” and “shape” are aspects that you should be considering when constructing your topic.

Practitioners of American Studies are generally less concerned with discovering universal truths and constructing seamless systems than they are with investigating **disjunctions**: pieces that don’t seem to fit; evidence that raises questions; beliefs and actions that have a certain strangeness to them and thereby indicate shifts in social, political, intellectual and cultural life in the United States over time.

Critical argument is different from the political and courtroom argumentation we see so much of in our culture. Our job is not to construct an air-tight brief or to discount and devalue evidence that does not fit. Our job is more difficult: to capture the richness and complexity of our topics while at the same time working to isolate and clarify particular aspects of a particular inter-disciplinary subject. Once we have isolated and clarified, we are in a position to suggest how the pieces fit together or work together in their historical context. Good American Studies scholarship proposes and tests hypotheses - it makes a case for the answers it provides - but it doesn’t presuppose that there is only one “right” answer, or only one way to read the pieces, or only one way to reconstruct the way they worked together in their original context.

It is likely that the full outline of your topic will emerge only after you have had a chance to familiarize yourself with the primary and secondary sources. The more you do this, the more you are likely to see what areas require further examination and explication. This recognition, in turn, helps you to sharpen and focus the questions you are asking. You start out with a question, a problem, an issue, on a subject that you’re interested in, and then proceed to refine it by working dialectically. You approach your sources; the sources as it were talk back to you, and the process continues until you sense that you have arrived at a question that is working for you and leading you into interesting territory.

Some general considerations of a practical nature need to be taken into account from the outset. If you are planning to use primary sources (and all of us will for this project), ask yourself whether they are locally available and accessible (and in a language you can read). What about the secondary literature? Is it available and accessible? And, of course, how much do you

know about the subject? Is it something you're going to have to learn from the ground up? If so, do you have the time to learn enough of the basics before you proceed to the more sophisticated aspects of the topic? Or is it something you already know about in some detail (perhaps something you've studied in an introductory course or seminar) and can approach from a position of less than total ignorance?

The best American Studies papers always give the reader a general idea about the body of sources available on the particular question as well as the sources actually consulted. This can be done either in a series of notes as each particular source is introduced, or in a general historiographical and/or theoretical within the text itself, or both. A section on historiography, for instance, might consider the following: What are the particular questions raised by this body of sources? Which sources are most trustworthy; which have to be approached with caution and why? Through which lens(es) should the modern reader look at them, and why? It is good to begin thinking about these historiographical questions right from the start of your project.

At some point (and it is better if this happens sooner rather than later), you will come to the realization that you cannot afford to reinvent the wheel. You don't have all the time in the world, and you need to find an efficient and economical way of getting at your subject. **Don't spend your time and energy simply recapitulating the information you have gotten from your secondary sources.** Rather, look for openings, questions, points that have not been considered to your satisfaction, problems that have been raised by the information you have found in the primary and secondary sources. Often your reader will need *some* broad, preliminary information in order to understand where you are coming from and where you are heading. Providing contextual information may be necessary at various points in your paper, **but get to the meat of *your* topic and *your* interpretation as soon as and whenever possible.**

We understand your desire to tell the "whole story" of whatever aspect of American culture you choose to discuss. **But resist this temptation.** It is necessary for you to learn the general terrain of your subject in order to do your work, but it is not your task to reiterate this information. You've got to choose **one limited aspect of the story** on which to focus - one focused area in which to make a real contribution to the subject through your **particular** reading of available primary sources. **The most successful papers work from the particular to the general.** Think of yourself as a **contributor** to a much larger project. You are responsible for illuminating your piece of the puzzle, and for getting it right so that others coming after you can use it.

You will not be able to exhaust your subject if it's a good one. Selection is the key: pick a topic that is defined enough so that you can say something about it in detail (the history of women in the nineteenth century, or the city in

American literature are good examples of bad topics in this sense). Consider your topic in relation to the length of the paper you are going to write, and don't worry if the topic you end up with is not quite what you had in mind when you began.

The questions you ask may not be resolved in any ultimate sense; indeed, your conclusions may be fairly tentative. American Studies critics often use language that can seem maddeningly evasive - "on the whole," "for the most part," "nevertheless," and so on. That is not to say that you should avoid taking positions but rather that all positions are provisional, and it is appropriate to recognize this and be fairly upfront about it.

If you have done things correctly, you will find that not of all your research can be used. Do not regard this as a mistake; it is a normal part of the process. Trying to stuff everything you've found into a paper can lead to real problems.

It should be apparent by now that the rules of this game are not hard and fast (every third word seems to be a qualifier). Many of the considerations outlined here are practical rather than theoretical. You have enormous latitude within which to maneuver - perhaps in your mind too much latitude. Remember that this is a process. Persevere and you will see your topic gradually take shape around your interests, your sources, and your understanding.

As you proceed with the writing of your paper, it may help to check your work against the criteria for a good thesis, listed in this syllabus.