

## **Guidelines for research projects**

### **1. Suggested topics for projects** (these are suggestions; there are many other topics)

Ebola and other hemorrhagic viruses

West Nile virus (global transportation of insect vectors)

Lyme disease (case study in how environmental change releases a disease)

Smallpox (how Europe conquered America?)

Plague (still endemic in the Western US)

Hanta virus (interesting local aspects)

AIDS (animal-human transfer of disease)

“Mad-cow” disease

Asthma

Popular media, environment, and disease: analysis of film and/or press coverage

Insect vectors and the price of control

Environmental causes of cancer – focus on a single cause or single cancer

Endocrine disruptors

The Pacific Yew: a case study of a cure from nature (many other possibilities in this area)

Fungal diseases

Antibiotic resistance

Cures from the rainforest

Media coverage of a particular disease

bioterrorism

the London “fog” of 1952

the threat of avian flu – apparent or real?

## 2. Writing guidelines

Your assignment is to write 8-10 typed, double spaced pages on your chosen topic. In addition, you will need to write an annotated bibliography of the sources you used to research your topic. You need to tell me your topic IN WRITING by April 17. E-mail is fine (my address is [guerrini@history.ucsb.edu](mailto:guerrini@history.ucsb.edu)). If I do not receive your topic by that date you will have 10% automatically deducted from the final paper grade.

Each student will write on all four aspects of the topic, as stated in the syllabus (scientific, social/cultural, political, past/future) – i.e. about two pages on each topic. Your essay should state a thesis about the topic and marshal evidence to support that thesis. The purpose of this assignment is for you to develop your research skills and to gain an in-depth knowledge of a topic that interests you. I expect to see your opinions in the essay as well as the opinions of your sources. Feel free to disagree with your sources, if you have evidence to back it up. Many of the topics in this course (for example, the origins of AIDS) are controversial, and you will find evidence for a variety of opinions. Do some reading, form an opinion, and *back it up* with concrete evidence.

You should use a variety of sources: books, popular magazines, scientific journals, newspapers, websites. You should have a minimum of 5-8 sources and a maximum of 20. No more than 25% of the sources should be web sites (if you have 20 sources, that's 5 websites; if you have 8, that's 2). Electronic journal articles do not count as websites since they are electronic versions of published works.

Search on a number of different search engines – on the library web page, click on “research” and then “article indexes and databases.” The other subheadings on this menu are also helpful. DO NOT use Google as your primary search engine – you will get a lot of garbage and a lot of irrelevant material. There is also no way to assess quality and authority of the source on Google. Google will often give Wikipedia as the first hit, and Wikipedia is not the most accurate source.

Don't simply use the first ten or twenty sources you come up with -- find the sources that are the most relevant to your topic. This may take a couple of searches with differing search terms. Ask a reference librarian if you do not know how to use the library's search engines.

You must document your use of sources: that is, any idea which is not your own MUST be documented: you must tell me where it came from. Plagiarism is a very serious offense and can result in expulsion from the university. DO NOT download paragraphs from the web and think that I will not catch it. The point of this essay is to develop your own opinions; simply copying someone else's ideas is not going to help you to do this. Please ask me if you do not understand what this means.

Documentation style is a parenthetical reference in the text, with a full bibliography of sources used (arranged alphabetically) at the end. This is simpler than footnotes. So a reference to page 27 of Marc Reisner's Cadillac Desert would look like this:

In the text of your paper, you put (Reisner, 27) at the end of the sentence in which you refer to or use this work. Be sure to include a page number!

Your bibliography will have an entry:

Reisner, Marc. Cadillac Desert. Rev. ed. New York: Penguin, 1993.

For internet sources, similarly give a short reference in the text (CDC report, 1/20/2001), with the full reference in the bibliography:

“CDC Report, 20 January 2001,” [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov), accessed 2 February 2001

You must give a citation in this manner for any direct quotations you use, and also for any ideas you use which are not your own, even if you give them in your own words.

Bibliography format:

All sources alphabetical by author, author listed last name first. Websites should be listed at the end. Italicize or underline titles. So, for example:

Reisner, Marc. Cadillac Desert. Rev. ed. New York: Penguin, 1993.

Callicott, J. Baird. “Whither Conservation Ethics?” *Conservation Biology*, 4:1 (1990), 15-20

For articles, you *must* cite page numbers. Cite electronic articles as if they were print articles. An editor of a volume is cited as the author.

Please DOUBLE SPACE the bibliography and put double spaces between entries.

In addition, you will compile an annotated bibliography of sources. This is due May 15. By “annotated,” I mean you should give a sentence or two about the nature of the source and your opinion of its usefulness (so for the CDC website, you might write, “Comprehensive source, funded by the federal government, on public health and infectious disease. Excellent for current information on epidemics.”). Do not write paragraphs on each source; keep it short, but show me that you have consulted the source and know what it is. Your grade for the project is based on both of these components. The bibliography assignment is worth 25% of the paper grade. However, if you do not complete both aspects of the assignment you will get a 0 for the entire assignment.

Papers are due in class on May 29. I am happy to read drafts given to me by May 20.