

MMW3, Spring 2008
Third Writing Assignment:
Research Log #3 and Revised Research Question

Length: 2-5 pages

Due date: Tuesday, April 22, or Wednesday, April 23, in section

As you have gotten more involved in your research project and learned more about the topics that interest you, it is likely that your research interests have changed and gained focus in response to the new information you have collected. At this point in the process you should be concentrating on a single compelling research topic. This assignment asks you to record your progress by writing a third research log and proposing *one* open-ended research question about which you plan to write your final paper.

The assignment:

- **Type up, in one sentence, the research question you plan to pursue in writing your paper.** Contextualize your question by adding a few sentences that specify the historical period you will be examining as well as (when appropriate) the geographical region, institutions, and particular person or group of people relevant to your topic. Add an additional few sentences in which you outline the facts or issues that have led you to ask the question, and explain why the question interests you and why you think it is worth pursuing.
- **Type up a research log containing at least five entries, one for each *new* source that you've read.** Each entry should include: a complete, MLA-format citation; an indication of the material addressed in the source; and at least a few sentences summarizing the source's content and main argument, as well as its potential relevance to research on your topic. At this point in your research you should not rely on specialized encyclopedias or websites, although you may continue to consult them. You should meet the five-source minimum with scholarly books and journal articles, relevant primary texts, and scholarly sources that are available in electronic form. *Note: at this point you should have narrowed your research to one question, so all of your new sources should be relevant to that question.*
- **Make sure that at least one of your new sources is an article in a scholarly journal.** You may substitute an essay taken from a book of collected essays if you get prior approval from your TA.
- **Photocopy the title page (or first page, for a scholarly article) of each source that you cite.** When you submit your research log and research question, you must submit these photocopies as well. If you quote or paraphrase any of your sources, please also submit a photocopy of the page(s) to which you refer. As always, you should make sure

that title pages contain complete citation information, and that each of your other photocopies is labeled with the source's author and title.

Note that this assignment does not ask you for a thesis. You should be at the stage in your research where you are still learning and still speculating about what you are learning. If you already have enough information to formulate a complete thesis, you are most likely working on a question that is too narrow or too obvious. Since your final paper must include some discussion of alternative hypotheses, part of what you should be doing right now is generating a number of alternative answers to your question, both by exploring the available evidence and by considering the arguments proposed by scholars writing in this field. Give yourself time to think things through before you commit yourself to a thesis—that is, before you decide how you're going to answer your research question.

This assignment, the third of six writing assignments, will be worth 3% of your final grade. You must complete all six writing assignments in order to pass MMW3. Remember to keep the graded copy of this assignment; you will be required to turn in a portfolio containing all of the assignments at the end of the quarter.