

MMW₃, Spring 2008
First Writing Assignment: Research Log #1

Length: 2-5 pages

Due date: Tuesday, April 8, and Wednesday, April 9, in section

This quarter you will be writing a ten- to twelve-page research paper on a topic relevant to general MMW course concerns and to the period and topics covered in MMW₃. Your *ultimate* goal will be to research and to write about a scholarly question that interests you. Your *immediate* goal is to find a direction in which to start. The first writing assignment asks you to compile a log of the sources you consult during your preliminary research and your observations on those topics.

The assignment:

- **Identify ideas, problems, and/or topics relevant to MMW₃ that you find intriguing.** In order to do this you should talk with your TA and to your professor, read the class syllabus, skim through the course reader and the assigned texts, and consult the online list of MMW₃ research areas. Please note that you should confine your research to the period between 100 BCE and 1200 CE. Select at least two different topics on which to conduct your preliminary research.

- **Assemble one or more sources on each topic; you will need at least five sources total.** Acceptable sources include scholarly books and journal articles, including journal articles available in electronic form, relevant primary texts, and articles contained in specialized encyclopedias. You may consult web sites and generalized encyclopedias if you wish, but they will not count toward the five-source minimum. Please consult your TA if you are unsure whether an electronic source is appropriate for this assignment. Be sure to take advantage of the MMW₃ reserves; there are over 80 books on reserve at Geisel for MMW₃ students to use when researching their topics. You will also find a number of specialized encyclopedias and other reference books on a cart next the MMW tables in Geisel; these books, too, have been reserved for your use. Read through each of your sources and take notes on its content.

- **Type up a research log containing at least five entries, one for each source that you've read.** Each entry should include: a complete MLA-format citation; an indication of the topic addressed in the source; at least a few sentences summarizing the source's content and main argument; and at least a few interesting facts or issues presented in the source.

- **Photocopy the title page (or first page, for a scholarly article) of each source that you cite.** When you submit your research log you must submit these photocopies as well. If you quote or paraphrase any of your sources, please also submit photocopies of the pages to which you refer.

Note that this assignment asks you only to conduct research. While the second assignment will require you to propose potential research questions, your goal here is to learn as much as you can about the topics that most interest you. It is only after you know something about those topics that you will be able to ask interesting questions about them.

This assignment, the first of six writing assignments, will be worth 2% 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 graded copies of all of the assignments at the end of the quarter.