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History 20101: Craft of History: History of the News

Local Television News and the Reporting of Racial Violence

The purpose of this sample paper is simply to demonstrate the format of a paper for History 201. This is a format typically used for short papers in history, a simple version of Chicago-style format with footnotes or endnotes. Use one-inch margins and an easy to read 12-point font. Include your name, date, and class information in the upper left hand corner. Include a title, centered above the text, without bold or italics or question marks (unless you are indeed quoting someone). The best titles will grab your reader's attention and convey the main point of the paper.

The text should be double-spaced and left justified, with the first line of paragraphs indented. If you include a quotation of five lines or longer, you should "block indent" the quotation: indent one half inch on the left and right margins. Some ask for single space, some for double space. I will accept either. Here is an example:

Look here. This is what a block-indented quotation looks like. It's at least four lines. Look here. This is what a block-indented quotation

looks like. It's at least four lines. Look here. This is what a block-indented quotation looks like. It's at least four lines.

If you want to indicate that the lines that follow the block-indented quotation are part of the same paragraph, you should not indent the text after the quotation.

Let me offer some general remarks on notes and citations. When should you use a citation? You should use citations to identify the source of direct quotations, to identify the source of important ideas, to point to other books or articles, to give essential background that does not belong in the text, or to develop interesting tangents that do not belong in the text.¹ As you can see, citations can do a lot of different kinds of work, but the most essential is this: they take your reader directly to the sources you are discussing.

There are a handful of different citation forms. Typically, they vary by discipline. Psychologists and sociologists have their preferred style of citation, as do historians. For these papers, you should cite your sources with footnotes or endnotes, following the example of the *Chicago Manual of Style* from University of Chicago. You will see the details in Chapter 7 of Mary Lynn Rampolla, esp. 7d and following.² An easily accessible alternative for the simplest of questions is the Chicago Manual of Style website.³ I include enough details to get you started here.

¹ Al Franken, in *Lies (and the Lying Liars Who Tell Them)* (New York: Dutton, 2003), has a brilliant send-up of the ways that popular authors use footnotes to give their work false authority. See Franken, *Lies*, 12-16.

² Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, 5th ed. (Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007), 104.

³ "Chicago-Style Citation Quick Guide," http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html (accessed January 13, 2014).

Footnotes are placed at the bottom of each page; endnotes, which are otherwise formatted in the same way as footnotes, are included at the end of your text. You do not need to include a bibliography or a works cited page in a paper using full footnotes or endnotes unless you are asked for one.

A few other details to get you started on the right foot (excuse the pun). Notes should be numbered sequentially through the paper. Do not reuse numbers. The reference should be placed at the end of the sentence, generally speaking, and always after any marks of punctuation. The first reference to a book or article should provide a full reference. After this, it is enough to use the author's name and a short title. The note should specify the page in question, unless you are making general reference to a work. You can indicate a page and the following page by adding "f" to the page number (eg, 53f). You can indicate a page and the following pages by adding "ff" to the page number (eg, 53ff), though it is best to indicate the complete range of pages if you can. The bibliographical information should be taken from the title page of the work in question. So, if no author is listed, you can simply write "Anonymous" in place of author. You can indicate that no publisher information is provided ("n.p.") or that date of publication is missing ("n.d."). Here's an example from our text.⁴ Here's an example for a later reference to the same text (but a different page).⁵

⁴ William Hitchcock, *The Struggle for Europe: The Turbulent History of a Divided Continent, 1945 to the Present* (Anchor Books, 2004), 40-43.

⁵ Hitchcock, *Struggle*, 44f.

Some other examples? Let me share a sample footnote to a journal article.⁶ A document in a reader.⁷ A newspaper article.⁸ And an example of one of our films.⁹ But note: for the purposes of these papers (and this is standard practice in film criticism), you only need one reference to the film in your paper. You may refer to scenes in the film and quote characters (using quotation marks of course) without further citation.

What else can I say about the mundane requirements of formatting? A few further mechanical points are worth pointing out. You must include page numbers for every page after the first page. For a research paper, number the first page of full text as page 1. You may use either italics or underlining in your paper, but not both. Underline or italicize the titles of books. Put the titles of articles in quotation marks. Learn the distinction between the hyphen (“-“ for hyphenating compound words) and the dash (“—”, for setting off a parenthetical remark. If you are turning in a hard copy of your paper, feel free to print your papers double sided and be sure to staple the pages together.

As for the writing, I might just set out a few guidelines for history papers. Avoid the “I” in history papers. Do not use contractions in formal papers; thus, you should never write “it’s” (the contraction of “it is”) in a college paper. Use the full

⁶ Melvin Leffler, “The Cold War: What Do ‘We Now Know’?” *American Historical Review* 104 (1999): 501-524. The following footnotes would appear as: Leffler, “Cold War,” 523.

⁷ Sir William Beveridge, “New Britain,” address to Oxford University (December 6, 1942), in *University of Chicago Readings in Western Civilization*, vol. 9, ed. John W. Boyer and Jan Goldstein, 503-515. Following: Beveridge, “New Britain,” 505.

⁸ “Urgent Tasks,” *Times of London* (June 30, 1947), p. 5.

⁹ *The Third Man*, directed by Carol Reed (UK, 1949; Criterion Collection, 2007, DVD).

name of persons on your first reference. Include, in parentheses, the date of primary sources and films the first time that you refer to them.

I have much more to say about the minutiae of formatting. I have lectured elsewhere on: “The Semicolon: Poster Child for Abused Punctuation Marks”; “Sticklers Unite!—A Hyphen is Not a Dash”; “Behind Every Good Paper is a Good Outline”; “How to Use the ‘I’ in History Without Getting Personal”; “It Would Be Much Easier To Write This Paper If I Knew What I Wanted To Say.” And much, much more.