History 201: The History of News

Spring 2018
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Outline of Research Paper

For Monday I've asked you to bring in the introduction and the topic sentences of your research paper.

This is a good reminder of the importance of the paragraph (the basic building block of your paper) and the topic sentence (your paper should make sense from a reading of the topic sentences). It will allow us to provide feedback on the writing of the introduction and the structure of your paper.

You can think of your paper as a paint-by-numbers project. Read on for the model that I explained in class last week and over Moodle in the last couple weeks. You don't have to follow it to the letter, but your paper should have a clear organization that includes all of these elements.

PART 1 – Introduction

¶1 - A hook that draws in the reader and announces your topic – and a statement of your historical question. (Of course, this could turn into two ¶s)

¶2 - The historiography. How have historians written about your topic? And how is your work going to build upon this work or go beyond it? "They say… I say…" (Of course, this could turn into two ¶s)

¶3 - Your approach. Explain how you are going to approach your historical question. With what primary sources, with what approach (quantitative study, close reading, analysis of biases, comparison, etc.)?

¶4 - State your thesis. In a 5¶ paper, your thesis statement might be a sentence. In an 10-12 page paper, your thesis statement should be a ¶

PART 2 – Background

¶5 – Historical context. You probably need to provide a bit more context – about the topic, the period you are examining, or the press you are studying… (Of course, this could turn into two ¶s)

PART 3 – Your Evidence and Analysis

Think about how to organize your evidence and analysis. A rather weak organization is just to present a set of paragraphs about a set of articles, with topic sentences that refer to each article. "This articles says x..." "This article says y..." "This article says z..." A better organization might be thematic or chronological or by the kind of sources (say a first part on the local news and a second part on the national news). Better topic sentences would deliver on the promise of the thesis paragraph, using examples from news sources to demonstrate the point at hand.

For example, this might look like:

¶6 – Evidence #1 – One piece of evidence

¶7 – Analysis #1 – Anaylsis of this evidence that ties this example back to the thesis

¶8 – Evidence #2

¶9 – Analysis #2

¶10 – Evidence #3

¶11 – Analysis #3

PART 4 – CONCLUSION

¶12 - Summarize what you have done in your paper in one paragraph (a mirror to your thesis paragraph).

¶13 – And then answer the so what question in a second paragraph. Help us understand the significance of your argument.