

# A Writing Guide for US/W 40: New World Orders? From the Cold War to Contemporary International Relations



# A Writing Guide for US/W 40: New World Orders? From the Cold War to Contemporary International Relations

by Professor Mary Sarotte and Colleen Anderson

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# Paper Guidelines

## Paper Guidelines

### I. Assignment

The final paper is the capstone of USW 40. It allows students to work in-depth and consistently on one topic. As such, it is a whole-semester assignment: you will be required to submit components of it throughout the term. You may choose a topic from any time period covered in the course, so consider all of your options, not just the topics mentioned during the first few weeks of class (although those are fine if they interest you).

The body of the final paper should be 2000 words, but there is no limit for the notes and the bibliography. The paper will be Times New Roman, 12-point font, double-spaced, and have proper citations. It will count for 40% of your grade.

#### *Writing Timeline*

- (a) Topic and initial source list. Due February 20.

You are free to choose any question about twentieth and twenty-first century international history relevant to the course's themes, but you must submit your topic question and initial source list to the instructor(s) in hard copy no later than the start of your February 20 lecture in week 4 in order to receive approval for it. Be sure to put some thought into your selection, since you cannot change it after February 20.

- (b) Draft. Due April 15.

Next, you must submit a complete draft of your paper, including citations, at the start of lecture on Tuesday, April 15 in week 11. This draft must also be in hard copy. Format the citations according to the required Rampolla book. Please note that you can only submit one draft and that it must be on time; the goal of the assignment is to give both the instructor(s) and yourself time to edit the draft. The instructor(s) will not read late drafts; they will read the final paper instead. Email and/or other online submissions are not acceptable.

*A note on the grading of these preparatory assignments:*

*The paper preparatory work, namely (a) the topic statement and initial source list, and (b) the draft, will be marked both (1) on time/not on time (OT/NOT) and (2) acceptable/not acceptable (A/NA). If all of your preparatory work is acceptable and on time, there will be no deductions to your final paper grade. If your preparatory work is late and/or not acceptable, the instructor(s) will make deductions from your final paper grade. Unapproved topic changes may also result in a deduction. The amount will depend on the severity of the problems with your preparatory work. Please see the attached grade-sheet for specific deductions.*

- (c) Final Paper. Due May 6.

The final paper is due in the professor's mailbox in the Center for European Studies in hard copy no later than 12:00 p.m. on Tues., May 6, 2014. It must be 2000 words in length (not including notes and bibliography). Put the word count on the cover page, and, as with the draft, format the citations according to the Rampolla booklet. You must submit the final paper in hard copy; email

and/or other online submissions are not acceptable. After 12:00 p.m., the paper will be late and will immediately receive a one-letter-grade reduction until you hand your instructor(s) a hard copy. After 24 hours, it will receive another one-letter-grade reduction, and so forth, until it automatically becomes a failing grade. These one-letter-grade reductions will be in addition to any reductions caused by failure to submit acceptable preparatory work, as described above.

Plan to have your work ready at the very latest the day before the due dates, in order to prevent any last-minute problems (illness, printer issues) from causing you to submit your hard-copy work late. Since the paper is a whole-semester assignment, the instructor(s) will not accept last-minute excuses as sufficient reason for failure to submit the final paper on time.

## II. Starting the Paper. What makes a good research question?

Your paper will be graded on whether you make a clear argument based on the examination of primary sources. A good argument is the answer to a good question. These questions develop from a close reading of primary sources and engage with the questions and approaches found in secondary literature. They cannot be answered with ‘yes’ or ‘no.’

In coming up with a topic, it makes sense to read primary sources that inspire questions and to look through secondary sources that discuss major debates or questions within the discipline. Go through the attached list of collections at Harvard to inspire you.

After you complete your initial research, think about what you have discovered. Have you found something surprising? Have you noticed an apparent contradiction? Have you found an overlooked source base? Do you have a new question to add to the scholarly debate, or a new way to approach established questions? Initial finds such as these discoveries often lead to good questions and thereby good arguments.

Above all, try to keep your projects **focused**. 2000 words is relatively short: you don’t have space to do justice for the entire century of history that we cover in the course. Choose a topic that has clear parameters, such as a short time frame, or the close reading of a small collection of primary sources.

## III. Researching the paper. Where to find sources?

Harvard University is blessed with amazing resources, both online resources and library resources, which you should use to the fullest. While these online sources can be incredibly useful, **do not neglect to use books**. Part of our assessment of your work will be on the **scholarly quality of your research**. You should use HOLLIS to compile a relevant bibliography. In addition to Widener and Lamont, consider using the Houghton Rare Books Library, the Law Library , the Harvard Archives, the Schlesinger Library, and the Government Documents available in Lamont.

The teaching staff of USW 40 and the Harvard research librarians have worked together to create a research guide on the major collections at Harvard that might be useful for your research. Take some time to look at the guide and see what collections inspire you and lead you to engaging questions and arguments.

Additionally, you might want to check out some of the other Harvard research guides:

- American Studies Index
- Government Documents
- Government and Political Science Index
- Harvard Newspaper Index
- History Index
- International Relations Index

Finally, there are also some useful databases online, including:

- Historical Documents: Foreign Relations of the US
- Wilson Center, Digital Archive
- European Union
- Presidential Libraries, such as the Harry Truman Library
- European integration
- Imperial War Museum, Online Documents and Private Papers

*A note about sources:*

- Use a variety of sources, primary and secondary, some of which must be academic **books**.
- Primary sources should be from the best edition or translation. This will be the one cited by academic books and journal articles. If you need help finding a standard edition or translation, consult your teaching fellows and we will be happy to help you.
- Footnotes should be consistent, accurate, and correctly formatted. We require that you use the Rampolla citation method. Points will be deducted for incorrect or incomplete citations. Note that links to JSTOR articles are **not** full citations: you must include the full bibliographic information.

#### IV. Writing the paper. What makes a good paper organization?

Every paper will ask different questions and use different sources, so there is no one formula that always provides the best way to present an argument. However, keep the following in mind:

- Interesting introductions are great. Engaging historical stories, apparent contradictions, and surprising sources grab your readers' attentions. However, make sure that your introduction also serves your argument. Interesting stories that do not relate to your argument can confuse more than help.
- Make your argument clear at the beginning of your paper.
- Include the research from other scholars. What arguments have historians and political scientists already given for your topic or related ideas? And how does your work relate to their claims? Does it refute them? Offer a new set of

sources that corroborates their findings? Or does it introduce a new way of thinking about the problem?

- Structure the body of your paper so that it clearly and logically leads your reader through your argument. Use topic sentences to introduce your paragraphs.
- Conclude by restating your argument. You can also use the conclusion to relate your argument to bigger ideas in American history or in contemporary international relations.

For all papers, it is crucial that you write **clearly** and **concisely** and that you leave plenty of time to **proofread**.

## V. Tips for Success

- Use the best versions of primary sources, not the versions that are most easily accessible. We will be happy to guide you to standard editions. Hint: academic journal articles will usually cite the standard editions of major sources.
- The smaller the better: 2000 words is not much time to discuss grandiose themes (no matter how interesting they are!). A close examination of a particular question can shed a huge amount of light on a wider historical development and the contemporary world. Focus your research on a specific primary source or a specific group of primary sources. In your conclusion, you can connect what you draw out from these sources to larger ideas in American international relations.
- Focus on what people said, not what they might have said. Prediction is notoriously difficult, and near impossible in a historical paper. Avoid asking whether individual thinkers were ‘proved’ right or wrong.
- Beware of comparisons. Comparing just for comparison’s sake is risky. Only offer a comparison if there is some fundamental connection between the two subjects or if comparison sheds light on the main focus of your paper.

## VI. Collaboration Policy

Discussion and the exchange of ideas are essential to academic work. However, you should ensure that any written work you submit for evaluation is the result of your own research and writing and that it reflects your own approach to the topic. You must also adhere to standard citation practices and properly cite any books, articles, websites, lectures, and/or any other items that have helped you with your work. The required Rampolla reading provides the citation rules. If you receive any help with your writing (feedback on drafts, etc.), you must also acknowledge this assistance.

Submitting work that you completed in other high school or in college courses (whether at Harvard or elsewhere) is not acceptable. Submitting work copied, plagiarized, taken, or purchased from other students or any other source at any time is an academic integrity violation and also not acceptable. Students who do not observe these requirements will fail the course and be subject to academic integrity violation proceedings.

# Grading Rubric

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>Quality of research:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of primary source(s)</li> <li>• Quality of secondary sources</li> <li>• Quality of any other sources</li> <li>• Incorporation of sources into paper</li> </ul>	50		
<b>Argument, analysis and logic:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarity of writing (clearly asks and answers a question about international history)</li> <li>• Clear conclusions (draws argument to conclusion, shows its significance)</li> <li>• Development of thought (goes beyond chronology to develop ideas)</li> <li>• Use of evidence (choice of sources appropriate to research question)</li> <li>• Sophistication and logic of argument (goes beyond description of others' ideas)</li> </ul>	50		
<b>Final Score before Deductions, if any:</b>			

## Potential Deductions

<b>Preparatory work, maximum deductions:</b> <i>Topic Question and Initial Source List: 5. Draft: 5.</i> (Maximum of five = 2 points for “not on time,” 1 point deduction for “not acceptable,” 2 more points if not submitted at all) <i>Unapproved Topic Change: 10.</i>	20		
<b>Presentation, maximum deduction:</b> (for poor grammar, punctuation, and/or spelling; sloppy, unstapled submission; no page numbers, other drawbacks)	5		
<b>Technical aspects, maximum deduction:</b> (for no footnotes or endnotes, or notes not formatted according to Rampolla)	20		

**Final Grade after Deductions, and Additional Comments, if any:**

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