Suggestions for the Short Paper

In this class you are asked to write a short paper (see http://www1.union.edu/motahare/SRS200/Short%20Paper.htm) on the required readings. Here are some key things to keep in mind.

1. You should choose a topic that is sharply focused. As much as possible, base your paper on ALL three books. However, you should do this in a coherent and judicious way. To put it bluntly: Simply drawing on all three books in a haphazard way in an attempt to presumably maximize the appearance of having read all three books won't work. If you end up doing a great job basing your topic only on one of the three books, that would be fine.

2. Read very carefully and critically. It is essential that you read the material you are writing about several times. You should read with some questions in mind: what is the author saying? Does what the author is asserting make sense? How does this reading differ from others on this subject that I have read (or things I have heard in class, or know from other classes)? Does the author contradict him/herself? What evidence does the author draw on to support his/her point? Is the evidence convincing?

   Read for form as well as content. How does the author make his/her points?

3. Prepare a paper that focuses on a few points pertaining to your topic. You might note that the authors make a number of points, but you have concluded that there are two or three that are the most important for this short paper. Discuss what you think is important, the evidence the authors present for these points, and why you consider the point of relevance to our course.

4. Remember that organization is extremely important to your paper. Don’t hesitate to state things in very clear way: “This paper makes three key points. In the first place…Secondly,…Finally…” Then you might also mention the secondary points, but not elaborate on them.

5. The most important part of your paper is always the ANALYSIS (stay away from “opinion”). You are not being asked simply to describe the relevant sections of the readings. You, in fact, do not need to describe the reading in much detail. You need to present an analysis. Obviously, in order to present an analysis you need to do some describing. For example, after a bit of introduction to the matter at hand, you could say: Dabashi’s chapter on the Pahlavis discusses the context of the nationalization of the oil industry. He states that “Mossadeq (1882-1967) submitted to the parliament a bill seeking to liberate Iranian natural resources from this obscene colonial control.” (Dabashi, p. 125). Then continue with some more description, then do the analysis.
Nuts and Bolts of the Paper

1. Your paper should have a descriptive, crisp title. Also do not forget to paginate your paper.

2. The paper should have three parts, though this is NOT a rigid requirement for all cases: (a) a paragraph or two summarizing the material that you are describing; (b) a few paragraphs analyzing the main contributions from the readings (what is new and different, what sets the readings apart, what is controversial, what evidence the authors give); (c) a critique of the readings. (What was successful and what wasn’t, whether the evidence supported the conclusions, whether it was well-presented or not.)

3. Conclude your paper with a paragraph summarizing the salient aspects of the paper

4. References and other ancillary material, such as endnotes (if needed), photographs (if used), charts and tables (if used), etc., may be put on pages 4 and beyond.

5. Quality of Wring. The paper must be well-organized and well-written. You will lose points for spelling, grammatical, stylistic and similar errors. Please make sure to use the help provided by the Writing Center as soon as possible, and as frequently as needed. Check out their website at http://www.union.edu/Resources/Academic/writing/index.php

6. Citation and Writing Style Guides. You may use the following, or any other commonly-accepted standard. See, for details, http://libguides.union.edu/citationguides http://tinyurl.com/k8o7h46

7. Ms. Gail Golderman (goldermg@union.edu, 388.6624), our Library liaison person, is an invaluable source of information.