

Suggestions for the Short Paper

In this class you are asked to write a short paper (click [here](#)) based 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 both required books. However, you should do this in a coherent and judicious way. To put it bluntly: Simply drawing on both 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 two books, that would be fine. You may, of course, use other sources (including from the list of recommended books). But you should anchor your short paper in the required books.
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: Medea Benjamin in her chapter on the status of women in Iran says, "... Iranian women enjoy far greater freedom than women in many other countries in the region ..." (Benjamin, p. 101) Then continue with some more description—maybe a few more quotations--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 presented supported the conclusions or not, 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 Writing. 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, [here](#).
6. Citation and Writing Style Guides. You may use any commonly-accepted standard. For more guidance, click [here](#), and [here](#).
7. Ms. Lindsay Bush, Instructional Services Librarian (bushl@union.edu, 518.388.6612), the Library liaison person for this course, is an invaluable source of information. Please feel free to contact her for consultation.