

Final Project/Paper Guidelines

For the last assignment of the course you will be asked to produce a final project or paper on a topic of your choosing. This topic should relate in some way to the history of sexuality and gender in the United States, and to the major themes we have addressed in class over the course of the semester.

An informal, ungraded paragraph describing your final project, and the kinds of materials you might analyze to produce it, will be due by Week 10.

Requirements

All projects must include analysis of primary sources related to your topic. These sources can include newspaper articles, advertisements, diaries, memoirs, oral histories, manifestoes, government documents, popular cultural productions like tv shows or films, or a wide variety of other materials. You will be responsible for locating these sources, but I will be happy to assist you in your search.

Final projects can take many forms (see the below list of potential final projects). Regardless of what format you choose, all projects should provide evidence that you have thought carefully about assigned course materials and themes. Projects should also present one or more original ideas or arguments. These ideas or arguments should be unique (of your own making), compelling, (they should communicate something interesting or important), and clearly articulated (a reader/viewer should have no problem identifying your contributions or claims). In crafting your project, you should draw on lectures, discussions, and readings from class, as well as your own ideas about the history of sex, sexuality, and gender developed over the course of the term.

Final projects in the form of paper should be 1800-2500 words in length, double-spaced, and written in a 12-point font. They should include page numbers, properly formatted footnotes with accurate citations, and a title that reflects the paper's argument. Final projects that take other forms should reflect an equivalent amount of work as a paper that is 1800-2500 words long. I will chat individually with students who choose not to write formal papers in order to make sure that projects fulfill the basic requirements of the assignment.

Late submissions from students who have not contacted me in advance will receive a penalty of one third of a grade for each day the paper is late after the official due date.

Projects will be graded according to:

- The relevance of the project to course themes
- The quality, clarity, and originality of the ideas or arguments presented
- The strength of the evidence marshaled in support of those ideas
- The caliber of analysis of primary sources
- The clarity and quality of written or other forms of expression (for papers, this includes style, grammar, and proper citation)

Potential Final Project Options

This list is not exhaustive – students who would like to pursue other options should contact me

Analytical Essay: This classic option is much like the Short Paper, assigned earlier in the semester. Instead of drawing only on assigned readings from class, a final analytical essay should include original research based on primary sources selected by students from any number of sources. A list of online databases that house primary sources can be found at the end of this document.

Short Fiction: Students may write a piece of short fiction that is relevant to course themes and that draws on primary historical materials. If you select this option, you will need to include a brief bibliographic essay or annotated bibliography that describes the sources and materials you have drawn on to craft your narrative.

Review and Analysis of Popular Cultural Productions: For this option, students should draw on knowledge gained in class and additional independent research to analyze one or more popular television shows, films, websites, or books. A great number of recent popular cultural productions depict either historical periods or key themes we have studied in class. Do these productions present accurate accounts of the eras they depict? Why or why not? What do they miss? What kinds of historiographical claims do they make?

Video Lecture: Using PowerPoint, Prezi, or some other program, students should produce a video lecture that introduces and explains an historical event, person, social movement, or phenomenon that we did not discuss in class (or that we discussed only briefly). This lecture should include visual and/or media sources and a discussion of why the topic you have chosen matters to the history of gender and sexuality. This option is a good alternative to the analytical essay if the sources you hope to analyze are visual in nature, or if you would like your research to reach audiences beyond our course. Be sure to cite all of your sources (even visual ones) in the lecture or in a bibliography at the end.

Oral History: For this option, students should conduct an informal oral history interview with one or more willing interlocutors who were alive *for at least two decades* during the twentieth century. These interviews may focus on a particular event or topic (a good option if you interview more than one person), or they can focus on a single individual's experience of change in the realms of gender and sexuality over the course of their lifetime. After completing any interviews, students should craft an essay that places the experiences of their interview subject(s) in historical context. These essays should include citations and a bibliography that describes the sources you have drawn on to contextualize your interview(s).

Manifesto: Drawing on examples from class, students who select this option should craft a manifesto that provides a platform for future activism in the realms of gender and/or sexuality. Students who select this option should include citations and a brief bibliographic essay or annotated bibliography that describes the sources and materials you have consulted to craft your manifesto.

Guide for Social Activism in the Twenty-First Century: This option is similar to the Manifesto option above. Rather than state specific goals and demands, however, this final project option should offer analysis of social movements from the past with a focus on what worked (or did not work) in movements that attempted to create social/political/cultural change in the realms of gender and sexuality. It should also offer some kind of vision for what you think is necessary to create lasting and successful movements in the future.

Selected Online Databases Housing Primary Source Documents

This list is not exhaustive – students who hope to use databases not listed here should contact me

MIT Libraries WGS Site: <https://libguides.mit.edu/c.php?g=175868&p=1160561>

Includes links to several primary source databases offered through the MIT Libraries, as well as online.

Out History Archives: <http://www.outhistory.org/>

Discovering American Women's history Online:
<http://digital.mtsu.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/women>

Chicago Women's Liberation Union History Online: <http://www.cwluherstory.org/>

Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History Digitized Collections:
<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/hartman/digitized>

This is a particularly rich resource. I went to "Ad*Access," then clicked the "Subject" tab, then selected "Beauty and Hygiene," and got access to over 2,300 digitized ads from 1911-1955!

ACT UP Oral History Project: <http://www.actuporalhistory.org/interviews/index.html>

AIDS Education Posters Online: <http://aep.lib.rochester.edu/>

Before Roe v. Wade: Voices that Shaped the Abortion Debate <http://documents.law.yale.edu/before-roe>

Digital Transgender Archive: <https://www.digitaltransgenderarchive.net/>

Feminist Majority Foundation Feminist Chronicles, 1953-1993:
<http://www.feminist.org/research/chronicles/chronicl.html>

Digital Public Library of America – LGBT:
[http://dp.la/search?q=lgbt&subject\[\]=LGBT&utf8=%E2%9C%93](http://dp.la/search?q=lgbt&subject[]=LGBT&utf8=%E2%9C%93)

Women's Liberation Movement Print Culture: <http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/wlmpc/>

Lesbian Herstory Archives - Mabel Hampton Oral History:
<http://herstories.prattinfoschool.nyc/omeka/exhibits/show/mabel-hampton-oral-history>

MIT OpenCourseWare
<https://ocw.mit.edu/>

WGS.110J / 21H.108J Sexual and Gender Identities in the Modern United States
Spring 2024

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