

HISTORY 404 RESEARCH JOURNAL ASSIGNMENT

Requirement

Students must post at least five (5) separate entries at the course website documenting their progress toward a final paper:

- General constitutional reflections (due Oct. 2)
- Topic proposal (due Nov. 24)
- Secondary source literature review (due Nov. 24)
- Primary source finding aid (due Dec. 7)
- Research Questions (due Dec. 7)

Assignment Details

- **General Reflections (Friday, Oct. 2)**
Prepare a concise response essay to some element or elements from your reading of Richard Beeman's *Plain, Honest Men* that might eventually generate a final paper topic. Please include text, at least one properly credited image, and some examples of relevant links or embedded multi-media. See the model post under [Methods / Topic 3: Arguing](#).
- **Topic proposal (due Nov. 24)**
Prepare a concise proposal essay that lays out a concrete idea for pursuing a final paper topic. Proposals should explain a narrative topic that would analyze a significant moment of constitutional change AFTER 1787, such as a constitutional amendment, landmark Supreme Court case, or battle over separation of powers. Proposals should also address the questions outlined in the handout on [How To Frame a Question](#).
- **Secondary Source literature review (due Nov. 24)**
Prepare an annotated bibliography of at least six (6) leading secondary sources on your topic. Make sure to weigh your choices carefully, considering factors such as relevance (to your topic), date of publication (more recent is generally better), diversity of views (especially contrasting diversity of interpretation), and influence (i.e. frequency of citation). Use [this model from the Osborne Center](#) for formatting specifications.
- **Primary Source finding aid (due Dec. 7)**
Prepare an annotated bibliography of at least six (6) of the most important primary sources for your paper. Make sure to weigh your choices carefully, considering factors such as relevance, availability and diversity of views.
- **Research Questions (due Dec. 7)**
Prepare a concise post that outlines a series of questions that can inform your research and help shape a potentially powerful thesis statement for your paper. Consult handouts on [How to Frame a Question](#) and [Write a Thesis Statement](#).

There is no minimum length or rigid format expectation, but each post should provide a clear snapshot of the student's research process undertaken for the final paper. The posts should also be written with the expectation that they might eventually be shared with other students. Late journal entries will be penalized 5 points per day.