

HIS 245: Final Project Guidelines and Grading Guide

Overview

The final project for this course is the creation of a **research paper**. The purpose of this assignment is to show your ability to take the material presented to you over the course and make a decision on the most important event of the Cold War era. You will show your ability to research your given topic, synthesize an argument about your topic, and substantiate your claims with evidence from your sources. Emphasis will be placed on the importance of primary sources, and an ability to contribute something new to the available scholarship on your given topic. Analysis of sources is extremely important, as you will have to show your ability to question the available literature within the context of your thesis.

The project is divided into **two milestones**, which will be submitted at various points throughout the course to scaffold learning and ensure quality final submissions. These milestones will be submitted in **Modules Three and Five**. **The final submission will occur in Module Seven.**

In this assignment, you will demonstrate your mastery of the following course outcomes:

- Demonstrate an advanced knowledge of the development of American society since World War II
- Critically analyze ideas from both primary and secondary sources
- Develop arguments based upon primary and secondary sources and articulate those ideas in the written and spoken word

Prompt

The Cold War lasted for roughly 46 years, from almost right after the end of World War II, until 1991. The ideals of Western capitalism were pitted against those of the Soviet-led communist bloc. During this time period, many events fueled the divide between these two schools of thought, and contributed to the proliferation of conflict. You have been exposed to these events throughout this course. The final project for this course is the creation of a historical narrative. The research for this paper should be centered on some aspect of American society during the Cold War. Choose one event that you consider important during the Cold War and discuss its impact on American society.

Your topic should relate to one of the following:

- A major development
- A war
- Cold War politics

- Nuclear weapons
- The Space Race
- A major country or emerging power involved in the Cold War

You are then to construct a fully researched, thesis-driven narrative containing both primary and secondary sources. You will use these sources to shed light on your chosen topic without propagating any historical fallacies. While you should address one of the issues listed above as you select your topic, your task is to narrow your focus to a manageable question that can be answered in a coherent, thesis-driven fashion (the impact of the Korean War on Cold War politics, or how nuclear weapons technology affected the nature of Cold War politics, etc.).

Specifically, the following critical elements must be addressed:

- I. **Background:** Identify the aspect of Cold War history that will frame your essay. This must be a major event, trend, or development that shaped the history of American society since WWII. Is the major event political, military-diplomatic, social, economic, or cultural in nature?
- II. **Historical Argument:** Narrow your focus by creating a manageable question. Propose an argument that answers the question you have derived about the major event. This is your thesis statement and it must also be connected to historical evidence.
- III. **Historical Analysis**
 - a. **Factors:** What are the factors that influenced this event? Include the policies of the time period as well as any key confrontations and clashes.
 - b. **Individuals:** Assess the role of the individual(s) involved in the event. This might be involve leaders or other nations. Who is the protagonist? The antagonist? What significant actions did the central figure(s) take? Why did they do so? What was the response to such actions taken?
 - c. **Trends:** What trends did this event influence? Which new policies came about? What effect did these policies have? What themes originated—or were repeated—as such policies were enacted?
 - d. **Impact:** What impact did this event, the individual(s), and resulting policies have on Cold War era history? Who significantly benefited from these events and moments? How? Who dramatically suffered from these events and moments, and how?
- IV. **Source Analysis:** You must select sources to support your thesis statement. Ideally, you will include a mix of primary and secondary sources. Critically examine the resources in context with your essay topic. Remember this is not based on opinion, but rather this is your analysis of the historical content and context. Your source methodology supports your thesis statement.

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Milestones

Milestone One: Proposal

In **Module Three**, you will submit your final paper topic and proposed thesis for review and approval. Submissions should be roughly three paragraphs and outline your proposed topic with a clearly identified thesis statement that the paper will be based upon. **This milestone is graded with the Milestone One Guidelines and Rubric.**

Milestone Two: Rough Draft and Bibliography

In **Module Five**, you will submit the rough draft and a bibliography of your final paper. In the accompanying bibliography, you will itemize your sources, listing your primary sources first, and then secondary sources. Sources should be broken up further by type. Please view the Sample Bibliography document in the Assignment Guidelines and Rubrics Section of the course for further guidance. In the accompanying bibliography, you will list your primary sources first, and then secondary sources. **This milestone is graded with the Milestone Two Guidelines and Rubric.**

Final Submission: Research Paper

In **Module Seven**, you will submit your 8–10 page research paper. It should be a complete, polished artifact containing **all** of the critical elements of the final product. It should reflect the incorporation of feedback gained throughout the course. **This milestone will be graded using the Final Product Rubric.**

Deliverable Milestones

Milestone	Deliverables	Module Due	Grading
1	Proposal	Three	Graded separately; Milestone One Guidelines and Rubric
2	Rough Draft and Bibliography	Five	Graded separately; Milestone Two Guidelines and Rubric
	Final Submission: Research Paper	Seven	Graded separately; Final Project Rubric

Final Project Rubric

Guidelines for Submission: Submit assignment as a Word document with double spacing, 12-point Times New Roman font, and one-inch margins.

Critical Elements	Exemplary (100%)	Proficient (85%)	Needs Improvement (55%)	Not Evident (0%)	Value
Background	Meets “Proficient” criteria and uses relevant examples from research to establish the significance of the event	Accurately identifies an aspect of Cold War history that will frame the essay	Identifies an aspect of Cold War history that will frame the essay, but the aspect is inaccurate	Does not identify the aspect of the Cold War that will frame the essay	6
Historical Argument	Meets “Proficient” criteria and provides an insightful interpretation of historical thought that goes beyond existing research	Proposes a sensible argument that answers the question derived from the major event	Proposes an argument, but the argument does not sensible, and/or does not answer the question derived from the major event	Does not propose a sensible argument that answers the question derived from the major event	30
Historical Analysis: Factors	Meets “Proficient” criteria and uses relevant examples from research	Provides an accurate analysis of the factors that influenced the major event	Provides an inaccurate analysis of the factors that influenced the major event	Does not provide an analysis of the factors that influenced the major event	6
Historical Analysis: Individuals	Meets “Proficient” criteria and uses relevant examples from research	Provides an accurate analysis of the role of the individual(s) involved in the major event	Provides an inaccurate analysis of the role of the individual(s) involved in the major event	Does not provide an analysis of the role of the individual(s) involved in the major event	6
Historical Analysis: Trends	Meets “Proficient” criteria and uses relevant examples from research to establish the significance of the trends/new policies	Provides an accurate analysis of the trends/new policies that resulted from the major event	Provides an inaccurate analysis of the trends/new policies that resulted from the major event	Does not provide an analysis of the trends/new policies that resulted from the major event	6
Historical Analysis: Impact	Meets “Proficient” criteria and provides an original account of the impact that goes beyond existing research	Provides an accurate analysis of the impact that resulted from the major event	Provides an inaccurate analysis of the impact that resulted from the major event	Does not provide an analysis of the impact that resulted from the major event	6
Source Analysis	Meets “Proficient” criteria and includes clear supporting details for the historical context	Accurately identifies source methodology and relates each to specific historical context in which it was written	Identifies source methodology but identification is inaccurate and/or does not relate each to specific historical context in which it was written	Does not identify source methodology	30

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Articulation of Response	Submission is free of errors related to citations, grammar, spelling, syntax, and organization and is presented in a professional and easy-to-read format	Submission has no major errors related to citations, grammar, spelling, syntax, or organization	Submission has major errors related to citations, grammar, spelling, syntax, or organization that negatively impact readability and articulation of main ideas	Submission has critical errors related to citations, grammar, spelling, syntax, or organization that prevent understanding of ideas	10
Earned Total				100%	