

# Position Paper Requirements

SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD  
CORE 2.2 WILSON SUMMER 2010

A position paper is a paper in which you express an opinion about a topic, and use evidence to back up that opinion. In other words, you're taking a side on some question or controversy, and you use reasoning and research to support your side of the argument.

## REQUIREMENTS

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The position paper is done in three stages.

### Proposal

You must submit a proposal. This consists of:

- ▶ A statement of the Problem — the question you're writing about
- ▶ Your Thesis Statement — your answer to the question
- ▶ A preliminary outline

You'll get a handout about how to do them, and we'll talk about it in class as well.

### Optional Draft

I strongly urge you submit a draft of your paper. What I'll give you is a general evaluation, not a detailed critique; but if you're having trouble with your paper, submitting a draft and getting feedback on it may improve your final work. Submitting a draft on time will be worth 5 extra points on the total paper grade.

### Final Paper

The paper will be due by beginning of class on the date scheduled on the Assignment Schedule. Papers will be evaluated for (a) the argument and evidence you bring to bear on your topic (we'll be discussing both of these in class, as well as research strategies), and (b) clarity of presentation.

As stated in the syllabus, late papers will be marked down ten points per class meeting. You can submit your paper electronically, but it doesn't "count" unless you get a reply from me.

## INSTRUCTIONS

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Take a position on one of the following topics and state it in your introductory paragraph. In the body of your paper, work through all of the arguments in favor of your position, using information and authority judgments you've gathered from your own research. Make sure to include opposing arguments – use your research and conclusions to refute them. Conclude with a summary paragraph restating your position and your strongest arguments in support of it.

This paper **MUST**

- ▶ Be typed, double-spaced, in 12 pt. Times or Arial, with one-inch margins on all sides. Please spellcheck and, if you're not sure about your writing, have a friend read it. I will not mark down for grammar, but clarity is very important.
- ▶ Have a cover page with the title, your name, my name, and the date, and page numbers on each page after the cover.
- ▶ Run 4 to 5 full pages, not including the cover page. Papers that are too short will be marked down!
- ▶ Have all direct quotations, indirect quotations, and ideas from other sources footnoted according to the style discussed in class. **THIS IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT**; failure to do this will seriously affect your grade.
- ▶ Have a Bibliography with at least 2, and ideally 3, distinct works.
- ▶ Use **NO INTERNET SOURCES** apart from scholarly journals.
- ▶ Use **NO TERTIARY SOURCES** (encyclopedias or textbooks).

Copying or plagiarism will result in a zero, so don't do it. I want your analysis, not someone else's.

Finally, choose a topic you're interested in and have fun with it. Make it wacky, make it provocative – anything is fine as long as you make an argument regarding your chosen topic and support it with facts.