

Position Paper Requirements

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

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

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 5 to 7 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 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.

AVAILABLE TOPICS

1. POLITICAL POWERS: EGYPT AND MESOPOTAMIA

Kingdoms rose and fell in ancient Mesopotamia, but the regimes of Egypt seem much more secure, with only occasional changes in dynasty. Was Egypt actually more stable, and if so, why?

Suggested references: Paul Johnson, *The Civilization of Ancient Egypt* (Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 2000). J.N. and Nicholas Postgate, *Early Mesopotamia: Society and Economy at the Dawn of History* (Routledge, 1994). Harriet Crawford, *Sumer and the Sumerians* (Cambridge, 1991). ~ Aidan Dodson and Dyan Hilton, *The Complete Royal Families of Ancient Egypt: A Genealogical Sourcebook of the Pharaohs* (Thames and Hudson, 2004). Marc Van de Mieroop, *A History of the Ancient Near East ca. 3000 - 323 BC* (Blackwell, 2006). Gwendolyn Leick, *Mesopotamia* (Penguin, 2003).

2. COMMERCIAL POWERS: MYCENAE AND PHOENICIA

The Mycenaeans and the Phoenicians were both societies based on commerce—one Aegean, one Levantine. In what ways were they different? Were their falls related in any way?

Suggested references: Maria Aubet, *The Phoenicians and the West* (Cambridge, 1993). Michael Wood, *In Search of the Trojan War* (U. of California, 1998). Elizabeth French, *Mycenae: Agamemnon's Capital* (Tempus, 2002). George Rawlinson, *Phoenicia: History of a Civilization* (Tauris, 2005).

3. PERICLES

Pericles of Athens is sometimes given credit for creating or expanding democracy in Athens. Taking into account the contemporary Athenian perception of “democracy,” what was Pericles’s contribution to Athenian democracy—did he build it or endanger it?

Suggested references: Donald Kagan, *Pericles of Athens and the Birth of Democracy* (Free, 1990). K.K. Davies, *Democracy and Classical Athens* (St. Martin's, 1998). Christopher Carey, *Democracy in Classical Athens* (Duckworth, 2001). Edward M. Harris, *Democracy and the Rule of Law in Classical Athens: Essays on Law, Society, and Politics* (Cambridge, 2006). Primary sources: Thucydides.

4. THE GREEK GODS

The Greeks conceived of their gods both as very like humans, and yet as fundamentally unlike humans. How could they hold these seemingly contradictory views? What were the Greeks looking for in their gods? What is the fundamental nature of the divide, for the Greeks, between mortal and divine?

Suggested references: Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical* (Harvard, 1985). P.E. Easterling and J.V. Mui, *Greek Religion and Society* (Harvard, 1985). Robert Garland, *Introducing New Gods: The Politics of Athenian Religion* (Cornell, 1992). Jon D. Mikalson, *Ancient Greek Religion* (Blackwell, 2009).

5. THE FALL OF GREECE

Why does Greece hold off the Persian onslaught, but fall before the much less impressive might of Macedon?

Suggested references: Peter Green, *The Greco-Persian Wars* (U. of California, 1998). Peter Green, *Alexander of Macedon 356–323 BC: A Historical Biography* (U. of California, 1992). Tom Holland, *Persian Fire: The First World Empire and the Battle for the West* (Anchor, 2007). Paul Cartledge, *The Spartans: The World of the Warrior-Heroes of Ancient Greece, from Utopia to Crisis and Collapse* (Overlook, 2003). Victor Hanson, *History of Warfare: The Wars of the Ancient Greeks* (Cassell, 2002). Stephen V. Tracy, *Athens and Macedon: Attic Letter-Cutters of 300 to 229 B.C.* (U. of California, 2003). Herodotus. Thucydides.

6. THE RISE OF ROME

The small city of Rome was one of a scores of communities in western Italy, some of them much richer, older, and more established. What was different from Rome that enabled it to conquer and absorb all the others?

Suggested references: Gary Forsythe, *A Critical History of Early Rome: From Prehistory to the First Punic War* (U. of California, 2006). Arthur M. Eckstein, *Mediterranean Anarchy, Interstate War, and the Rise of Rome* (U. of California, 2007). Andrew Lintott, *The Constitution of the Roman Republic* (Clarendon, 1999). Richard Mitchell, *Patricians and Plebeians: The Origin of the Roman State* (Cornell, 1990).

7. THE END OF THE REPUBLIC

When did the Roman Republic end? Historians have blamed everybody, from the Gracchi brothers, Marius, and Sulla to Pompeius and Julius Caesar. The real question is: what ultimately characterized the “republic” for the Romans, and when did that end?

Suggested references: Eruch Gruen, *The Last Generation of the Roman Republic* (U. of California, 1995). Ronald Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford, 2002). H.H. Scullard, *From the Gracchi to Nero: A History of Rome from 133 BC to AD 68* (Routledge, 1982). Fergus Millar, *The Crowd in Rome in the Late Republic* (U. of Michigan, 1998). Michael Parenti, *The Assassination of Julius Caesar: A People's History of Ancient Rome* (Free Press, 2003). Plutarch's relevant biographies are collected in *The Fall of the Roman Republic: Six Lives* (Penguin). Tom Holland, *Rubicon: The Last Years of the Roman Republic* (Anchor, 2005).

8. THE GROWTH OF CHRISTIANITY

Between 50 and 350 CE, the number of Christians in the Roman empire rose from 1400 to nearly 34 million. What were the most important factors in that growth?

Suggested references: Peter Brown, *Authority and the Sacred: Aspects of the Christianization of the Roman World* (Cambridge, 1996). John Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital: Rome in the Fourth Century* (Oxford, 2000). Keith Hopkins, *A World Full of Gods: Pagans, Jews, and Christians in the Roman Empire* (Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1999; Free Press, 2000). Antonia Tripolitis, *Religions of the Hellenistic-Roman Age* (Eerdmans, 2002).

9. ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL

Medieval Europe developed directly from the Roman world, yet from the fifth century on medieval states and ideas about society were dramatically different. What do we really mean when we say “the medieval” is unlike “the ancient”? What is the nature of this difference, and how did it happen?

Suggested references: J.H.W.G. Liebenschuetz, *Decline and Fall of the Roman City* (Oxford, 2001). J.M. Wallace Hadrill, *The Barbarian West 400–1000* (Barnes & Noble, 1998). Peter Wells, *The Barbarians Speak: How the Conquered Peoples Shaped Roman Europe* (Princeton, 1999).

10. COURTLY LOVE

Some historians credit the art of courtly love with taming the medieval nobility. Do you agree? What effects did “courtly love” have? Were other factors important in transforming the noble elite?

Suggested references: Frederic Cheyette, *Ermengard of Narbonne and the World of the Troubadours* (Cornell, 2001). Malcolm Vale, *The Princely Court: Medieval Courts and Culture in Northwest Europe 1270–1380* (Oxford, 2001). James A. Schultz, *Courtly Love, the Love of Courtliness, and the History of Sexuality* (U. of Chicago, 2006). Andreas Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love* (Columbia, 1990). Don A. Monson, *Andreas Capellanus, Scholasticism, & The Courtly Tradition* (Catholic U., 2005).

11. THE CRUSADES

Only the First Crusade can be considered anything like a success. Evaluate either the Second, Third, or Fourth Crusades: what factors prevented the Franks from successfully establishing power in the Holy Land?

Suggested references: Thomas Madden, *A Concise History of the Crusades* (Rowman and Littlefield, 1999). John France, *Western Warfare in the Age of the Crusades* (Cornell, 1999). Francesco Gabrieli, *Arab Historians of the Crusades* (U. of California, 1984). Jonathan Phillips and Martin Hoch, *The Second Crusade: Scope and Consequences* (Manchester, 2002). Odo de Deuil, *De profectioe Ludovici VII in orientem* (Norton, 1948) (in English and Latin). Helen J. Nicholson, *Chronicle of the Third Crusade: The Itinerarium Peregrinorum Et Gesta Regis Ricardi (Crusade Texts in Translation)* (Ashgate, 2001). James Reston, *Warriors of God: Richard the Lionheart and Saladin in the Third Crusade* (Faber and Faber, 2002). Geoffroi De Villehardouin, *Memoirs or Chronicle of the Fourth Crusade and the Conquest of Constantinople*. Jonathan Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade and the Sack of Constantinople* (Penguin, 2005).

12. REASON AND FAITH

Why would Christian thinkers embrace the rationalism of the Aristotlean tradition, and see it as supportive of, not antithetical to, faith? What did Aristotle and his pagan colleagues have to offer the medieval Christian?

Suggested references: Edward Grant, *God and Reason in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2001). M.T. Clanchy, *Abelard: A Medieval Life* (Blackwell, 1997). James Sheppard, *Christendom at the Crossroads: The Medieval Era* (Westminster John Knox, 2005).

13. GENDER ROLES

Choose two particular medieval women and two women from ancient Greece or Rome with a similar position in society, and explore their ability to live freely and exert influence. Do you think medieval women were more or less free than their ancient counterparts?

Suggested references: You'll need to consider particular women about whose lives we know some detail. Some possibilities: Earl Richards, *Reinterpreting Christine De Pisan* (U. of Georgia, 1992). Anne Clark: *Elsabeth of Schönau: A Twelfth-Century Visionary* (U. of Penn., 1992). Margaret Howell, *Eleanor of Provence: Queenship in Thirteenth-Century England* (Blackwell, 1998). Ben D. Kennedy, *Maid of Heaven: The Story of Saint Joan of Arc* (RLK, 2007). Maria Dzielska, *Hypatia of Alexandria* (Harvard, 1996). Joyce Salisbury, *Perpetua's Passion: The Death and Memory of a Young Roman Woman* (Routledge, 1997). Sue Blondell, *Women in Ancient Greece* (Harvard, 1995). Anthony A. Barrett, *Livia: First Lady of Imperial Rome* (Yale, 2004). Frederic Cheyette, *Ermengard of Narbonne and the World of the Troubadours* (Cornell, 2001). Mary Erler, *Women, Reading and Piety in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge, 2002). David Herlihy, *Operis Muliebra: Women and Work in Medieval Europe* (Temple, 1990).

14. CITY LIFE

Why does city life promote different kinds of recreation, use of leisure, and charitable activity than does life in the country?

Suggested references: Paul Hohenberg and Lynn Lees, *The Making of Urban Europe 1000–1994* (Harvard, 1995). Barbara Hanawalt and Katherine Reyerson, *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe* (U. of Minnesota, 1994). David Herlihy, *Medieval Households* (Harvard, 1985).

15. RENAISSANCE

How do you explain the surge of renewed interest in the Greek and Roman classics in the Italian Renaissance?

Suggested references: Peter Burke, *The Italian Renaissance: Culture and Society in Italy* (Princeton, 1987). Ingrid Rowland, *The Culture of the High Renaissance: Ancients and Romans in Sixteenth Century Rome* (Cambridge, 1998). Ronald Witt, *In the Footsteps of the Ancients: The Origins of Humanism* (Brill, 2000). Patricia Fortini, *Venice and Antiquity: The Venetian Sense of the Past* (Yale, 1997). Anthony Grafton, *Commerce with the Classics: Ancient Books and Renaissance Readers* (U. of Michigan, 1997).