

FINAL PAPER PROMPT:

ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER ON TOPICS IN AMERICAN FASHION AND BODY HISTORY

Paper due on Monday, 5 December 2016.

(4-6 typed pages [recommended, not required], 1" margins, 12-pt. Times New Roman, double-spaced).

*Paper should be submitted **ELECTRONICALLY** via Canvas by 11:59pm.*

Please use .doc or .docx format.

OVERVIEW

For your final assignment, you will produce an original research paper on a major movement or development in American fashion and body history. More specifically, you will:

- Build an original argument based on digitized, word-searchable historical newspapers (hosted on databases accessible via the UF Libraries' website);
- Supplement your original argument using relevant secondary scholarship and popular writing (accessible via the UF Libraries' physical holdings, library databases, interlibrary loan, and the internet at large), and;
- Develop your argument in a creatively-argued, effectively-structured, well-written essay.

REQUIREMENTS

- Your paper must focus on a topic in fashion or body history dating from 1985 or earlier (more recent phenomena are unlikely to be the subject of meaningful secondary scholarship).
- Your paper must focus on a topic that is **NOT** covered in the course syllabus.
- Your paper must focus on either:
 - A topic or trend whose history is no more than ten years in length (the 1950s vintage fur coat craze, for instance), or;
 - A period of ten years or fewer in the history of a longer-lasting phenomenon. (You may choose to write about socks, for example. But please limit your discussion of this topic to a ten-year period in socks' venerable history.)
- Your paper must be based upon no fewer than **TEN** robust primary sources (i.e. historical newspaper articles or advertisements) and **TWO** secondary sources (i.e. published scholarly books or articles). Your secondary sources may **NOT** include assigned class readings (except under extenuating circumstances in which an assigned text is absolutely essential to your work).
- Your argument must be original **TO YOU**. You cannot, in other words, **knowingly** advance an argument that has already been made in published or unpublished secondary work. (That said, if you unintentionally advance an argument that, while original to you, has already been made by another scholar, you will **NOT** be penalized. On the contrary, I will praise you earnestly and enthusiastically for your brilliance.)
- Your paper must:
 - Have a title that addresses / summarizes the topic, argument(s), and theme(s) of the paper;
 - Provide an adequate introduction to your topic (i.e. describe your topic, situate it historically, and tell readers whom it concerned and/or affected);
 - Have a well-defined thesis statement (addressing your topic's significance to fashion and body history; its social, cultural, political, economic, and/or environmental significance;

its relevance to the present; and its aesthetic merit [optional]). **N.B. Your thesis need not, and almost certainly cannot, be a single sentence in length.**

- Be effectively organized;
- Show evidence of careful proofreading;
- Contain strong paragraph/section topic sentences/statements that summarize the content of the following paragraph/section, and demonstrate strong, clear links to the overall argument of the paper;
- Describe your topic's significance to fashion and body history (at greater length);
- Discuss your topic's social, cultural, political, economic, and/or environmental significance (at greater length);
- Analyze your topic's relevance to the present (at greater length);
- Reflect on your topic's aesthetic merit (at greater length) [optional], and;
- Cite all sources according to the MLA or Chicago style guidelines.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Do preliminary research on three or more topics and/or time periods that interest you. Determine your final topic and/or time period based on **the availability of quality primary sources**. (You may believe that neckties are a fascinating topic, for instance. But if you can't find quality sources that address their history, please find another subject to write about.)
- Take careful, detailed notes (including bibliographic data and database search terms) on any and all primary sources that strike you as interesting. You'll regret it later if you do not.
- Consult secondary research materials only **after** a preliminary argument begins to take shape in your mind. Otherwise, you may get bogged down in secondary reading before your topic even begins to take shape.
- Get to work early. This is not an assignment that you can leave until the last minute. Looking for quality sources is a time consuming process. While search engine finesse will help you find identify useful materials, much of the process will come down to old-fashioned elbow grease.
- Ask questions early! I am willing and eager to talk through ideas, discuss roadblocks, and offer topic suggestions. Numerous people at the UF Libraries (including project collaborators Melissa Espino and Sarah "Moxxy" Moczygemba, as well as history liaison librarian Shelley Arlen) are also more than willing to help. Just ask!
- Have fun! This is a rigorous, challenging assignment. But, far more importantly, it is an invitation to spend time with historical newspapers, which are some of the richest, most-surprising, and most-entertaining documents you'll ever have the privilege to consult.

STYLE GUIDELINES

- Do not try to sound smart (i.e. write in an affected academic fashion). You *are* smart. And that will come across. Bloated vocabulary will only make you sound desperate (and more often than not, students who try to inflate their vocabulary end up using words incorrectly).
- Consider writing your essays by hand before typing them. Students often write more clearly and effectively when they trade in the keyboard-and-screen for pen-and-paper.
- Outline your argument first, then translate it into prose. This will help you figure out the structure of your essay before you have to worry about word choice, grammar, and spelling. Please do not

dismiss this as a juvenile exercise! Many, if not most, pieces of professional writing begin with detailed outlines.

- Read your essay aloud to yourself. If and when you stumble over a sentence or phrase, rewrite it. Repeat this process until you stop stumbling.
- Most importantly, consider making use of UF's many writing-related resources. These include the UF Writing Studio: <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

While I am unable to read full drafts of these assignments either via email or in office hours, I will gladly answer any and all pointed questions that students bring to my attention.