Term Paper Writing Guidelines

1. Audience

Identify your readers. What are their expectations? Towards what approaches or themes are they likely to be skeptical or sympathetic? Do not pander but argue for and justify your approach and conclusions.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Audience</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>Class participants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term Paper</td>
<td>TA/Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's thesis</td>
<td>Advisor and committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dissertation</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article</td>
<td>Research Field</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book</td>
<td>Scholarly community</td>
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2. Title and Topic

Define the title of your paper by limiting yourself to one specific topic.

Example: Not "Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel," but rather the "Architectural representation in Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel" (though even this is quite broad)

Not: "Leonardo and science," but "Leonardo's understanding of hydraulics" (this topic, too, could be further specified).

Tip: Research generally, though not always, proceeds from the general to the specific. Consult a wide range of sources, focusing on articles and essays as you specify your topic. For further reference, see:

http://www.library.upenn.edu/cgi-bin/res/sr.cgi?community=37
http://www.library.upenn.edu/cgi-bin/res/sr.cgi?community=27
http://warburg.sas.ac.uk/library/links/image/history-of-art/
http://aleph.mpg.de/F?func=file&file_name=find-b&local_base=kub01&con_lng=eng
3. Set up a writing schedule

Do not begin a writing assignment the night before the deadline--the rushed quality of writing and caffeinated anxiety are apparent to any reader, especially the instructor. Slow and steady wins the race. Begin with your deadline first and identify the steps you will need to take “backwards,” i.e. in descending order.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Task</th>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Edit final version / Turn in paper</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Edit draft</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Begin writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Research specific articles and books</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Read widely about your research topic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Choose theme / brainstorming</td>
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4. Formulating a question

Formulating a specific question is half of the work (in my experience, for longer research projects such as articles or books it can weeks, if not many, many, many months to articulate a well-thought out question). The most interesting research questions not only address "who," "when," and "where," but "why" and especially "how." You might, for instance, examine not just what Titian painted in his pastoral scenes, but how he painted these episodes, the means by which he assembled the composition, his sources, indications of his artistic ambitions in relation to his predecessors, contemporaries, junior colleagues, etc. etc. Remember: it is often more compelling to ask not what an image means, but how it means, in what way, by what means, to what effect.
5. Crafting an argument

This task can take a number of scenarios. Put in a schematic way, the most common are:

- The image (or source) has not yet been published. My paper lays out the significance of this heretofore unknown material and offers future directions for research.

- The image (or source) has received some attention, but there still remain some aspects which have yet to be treated and clarified. My paper considers these aspects and indicates their significance and relation to previous research.

- The image (or source) has received a great deal of attention. However, I will offer new perspectives on this material by implementing a new method or theory so as to reorient the terms and direction of scholarly debate (this last scenario is, understandably, difficult to do!)

6. Structure

Scholarly prose can (though must not necessarily) follow the structure below:

→ Introduction
  - statement of topic
  - statement of question

→ Visual analysis

→ Literature Review

→ Main Body of text

  Construction of a paragraph
    - Claim
    - Evidence 1
    - Evidence 2, 3, 4, 5, etc...
    - Counterclaim: "Yet," "however," "nonetheless," "notwithstanding"
    - Evidence for Counterclaim 1, 2, 3, 4,
    - Revision of original claim
Ask yourself if each sentence and paragraph logically connects with the next. Does sentence A lead to sentence B to sentence C? Do not expect the reader to provide the premises or assumptions you take for granted in your mode of argumentation!

7. Revise and proofread

While errors can creep in any piece of writing, do make an effort to re-read and revise your paper at least once, if not twice, before submission. It often helps to mark up the printout by hand (errors sometimes magically appear when ink hits paper). Have two friends read your paper, one a fellow class participant, the other not—both should be able to find your paper clear, coherent, and interesting.

For further advice on writing your paper, please see the document entitled “Kim_Term Paper_Template.” And by all means, please schedule a visit at the Penn Critical Writing Program at http://writing.upenn.edu/critical/. Good luck and most of all, enjoy the process! While writing is difficult for everyone, there are few experiences more satisfying that seeing a well-laid out process of reasoning and insight unfold over pages that you yourself have written.