

English 6330 (Spring 2018)
Haunted by History: The Deep Eighteenth Century
Project Proposal and Annotated Bibliography (Version 1)

Due Date: Wednesday, February 14 at 11:59 a.m.

Submission: Submit your proposal through Canvas as a .doc or .docx file

Goals

This assignment will allow you to refine your chosen topic for your final project exhibition and begin organizing the research you will continue to conduct throughout the semester. It will also provide an opportunity for me to offer early feedback to help guide your research as it progresses.

Furthermore, this assignment will give you practice writing in two useful genres. Research proposals are often required to apply for grants, fellowships, and other forms of external funding. The annotated bibliography, while less often required in formal contexts, is a useful tool for organizing your own thinking, and one that will serve you well for many kinds of projects. I use them for my research all the time, and I frequently go back to annotated bibliographies I prepared years ago to plan courses (including this one!), launch new research projects based on dropped threads from old ones, or simply remind myself of the main points of an article or book without having to re-read it in full.

Assignment Description

You will pitch your final project to me in the form of a research proposal, with an accompanying annotated bibliography that suggests the kinds of sources you intend to use. Your goal is to convince me that your topic is rich enough to sustain a semester's worth of research, narrow enough to result in a focused exhibition, and relevant to the overarching exhibit theme: "Haunted by History: The Deep Eighteenth Century." You should also aim to demonstrate your topic's potential interest to a broad array of readers, keeping in mind that you are writing for an educated general public. Avoid specialist jargon!

Your proposal may answer some or all of the following questions:

- What's interesting and important about your topic from an academic perspective? From the perspective of the general public?
- How does your topic reflect the "deep eighteenth century"? What resonances between past and present are you hoping to draw out?
- What kinds of materials do you expect to include in your exhibition? (archival newspaper clippings? playbills? title pages of printed books? engravings, paintings, or illustrations? video or audio clips?)
- What is the current state of scholarship on your topic? How might your project intervene in existing critical debates? How might you fill a gap in our understanding?
- How will this project enhance or propel your own research agenda (e.g. for your thesis)?

Your annotations should provide the following information for each source:

- The database you used to access the content (in the citation)
- An overview of the content, focus, and/or argument of the piece

- Any particularly juicy quotations you want to remember
- For primary sources: interesting formal features or historical contexts you wish to consider
- For secondary sources: points of agreement and disagreement between yourself and the writer
- A sketch of how this source will be useful to your project as a whole

At the bottom of this prompt is a sample proposal I submitted for a grant from the Center for Women and Gender at USU. While this document was prepared for a different context, it nonetheless illustrates some of the broad principles of proposal writing. The sample annotation comes from a bibliography I prepared for myself later in the process; it was not submitted as part of the grant application. Please do not circulate these documents beyond this class.

Length

- Proposal: 750-1000 words
- Number of Sources:
 - at least two primary sources (published 1660-1800), taken from databases like those listed on the project prompt
 - at least three secondary scholarly/critical sources, taken from databases like *MLA International Bibliography*, *JStor*, or *Project Muse*, which should be relatively recent (post-2000) and reflect the current state of the field
- Annotations: 150-200 words each
- NOTES:
 - You must annotate at least two primary and at least three secondary sources; however, you are more than welcome to include citations without annotations for as many as you like.
 - You are welcome to include additional primary sources not published 1660-1800, but at least two of your primary sources (the two you annotate) must fall into that date range.
 - You will have an opportunity to update and revise your proposal based on feedback from me; the revision will be due February 28.

SAMPLE PROPOSAL (DO NOT CIRCULATE)