**HSCI 3023 RESEARCH PAPER: DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS**

I refer in these instructions to the Class Bibliography and to the Writing Tutorial Videos. Both are accessible through the Content module “Research Paper.”

STEP 1. Pick a topic on science in the 18th-century Royal Society. You might pick a particular British scientist you find interesting, or a topic, like chemistry, electricity, surgery, etc. You can get even more specific – medical experiments involving electricity, smallpox innoculations, chemical analyses of soil. Search the *Phil Trans* archives by keyword to find a source or sources on the subject you’re interested in. Pick AT LEAST ONE source (on article) from the *Phil Trans*. You can pick up to five. Pick whatever sounds interesting to you for whatever reason. It doesn’t have to be the primary source that you contributed to the first class forum on Enlightenment science.

STEP 2. Read your primary sources. I strongly suggest that you download them, and PRINT THEM OUT. Read through the primary source carefully, underlining passages that seem interesting, important or confusing, and making notes to yourself about points to follow up on. I strongly recommend that you watch the Writing Tutorial Video “Reading and Note-taking” which describes how to read and take notes on a primary source.

STEP 3. Make up a list of questions that you need to answer about the primary source. These questions might include: Who wrote this source? In what context? (that is, is it a response to someone else’s argument or experiment? a follow-up on earlier work by the author?) What was the author hoping to achieve, or what questions was he hoping to answer in his experiment or observation? These questions are about the CONTEXT as well as the content of the source. And to get at context you will need to find relevant secondary literature.

STEP 4. Look at your list of questions, and pick AT LEAST FIVE relevant secondary sources from the Class Bibliography. You may need to actually look at the secondary source to know whether or not it has relevant material to help you make sense of your primary source. I suggest making a preliminary bibliography of about ten books and articles and then winnowing down to the best five. If you don’t find what you need on the class bibliography, go back to databases I had you use in the class forum on finding secondary sources and look for relevant articles/books.

STEP 5. Access the secondary sources. To find out whether OU Libraries actually owns the secondary sources that you want, go to the OU Library Catalog. Log in with your 4x4 and password.

1. You can look up books by either title or author or both. If the library has the book, you should be able to check it out, unless it is held in a non-circulating collection like the History of Science Collection. If it is in the HSCI Collection, you will have to read it in the Library. If the Library does not have the book, it is possible to order it through interlibrary loan. For books, this takes about a week, so you can’t wait until the last minute!
2. You can look up articles by the journal title. The Library may own an electronic copy of the journal. If so, there will be a link in the catalog record to the on-line version, and you should be able to access the full text of the article on-line. The Library might own a paper copy of the journal, but not an electronic copy. In this case, you will have to go into the Library and pull the journal from the shelf. You can scan or xerox the article you want, or read it in the Library. Finally, if the Library does not own the journal you can request the article through interlibrary loan. For articles this usually only takes 48 hours. You will receive a scanned version of the article and be notified via email.

STEP 6. Read at least five relevant secondary sources. Makes notes on these sources and how they relate to your primary source.

STEP 7. Decide what your thesis is. A good thesis should answer the question: What is exciting/interesting/significant/surprising about the primary source I have chosen? What can this source tell me (and my readers) about science in the 18th century? A good thesis should have a CLAIM (something that your source does) as well as an indication of the SUPPORT you will marshal to support this claim. I strongly suggest you watch the Writing Tutorial Videos “Thesis and Introduction” to get more advice and tips on how to write a good thesis and introductory paragraph.

STEP 8. Make an outline of your paper. What evidence are you going to use to support your thesis? How are you going to organize it?

STEP 9. Write the paper. I strongly urge you to watch the Writing Tutorial Videos on “Structure” and “Using Quotations.” Include IN TEXT CITATIONS as well as a BIBLIOGRAPHY. You make use MLA, APA, or Chicago style for references. You can find guides for each of these on the OU Writing Center Website.

Please contact me if you have questions.