

# Group Research Project

The poster project for First Year Seminars this semester asks that you explore issues of justice by researching a meaningful question with your project partners and sharing your findings with a good-sized audience, at the Thursday, December 7 presentation. That presentation will involve a large poster board\*, with information and visuals you assemble in advance.

## Exploratory & Planning Phase

Decide on the topic you want to pursue. It must involve issues of justice and it helps that all of you started your conversations with thoughts about gender. To establish your research question, think small – you are going to be detectives helping those of us in the present think about the nature and legacy of justice in the period 1800-1920, based on primary sources.† Your topic must fit within that time, and its period can be very short. Think about what sources you would like to use. Explore what sources you can get and whether they can give you what information you want, and *then* determine the actual research question you are going to go after.

You and your group-mates need to handle these following steps. All of you need to be sure that they get done and properly represented on your worksheet and to the class on 10/23/17.

- Learn about the context of the topic you are researching. Using such databases as Gale Virtual Reference Library learn the terminology and important dates for your topic. Using the America: History and Life database or similar source, find one scholarly article, one that is peer reviewed, that the whole group will read for an interpretation of the issue and statement of the context. Other sources may prove useful, but you definitely need one secondary source that is 6 pages long. Everyone in the group must read, understand and master your chosen article. The required length is adequate for a significant argument, but not too demanding. You must discuss with the professor any shared secondary source that does not meet this requirement.
- Identify one or more collections or kinds of primary sources that seem promising about your topic. Start to explore those sources. No research project will be convincing unless it has a significant amount of evidence to back it up. It is safe to say that if you don't have 1500 words of text that you are analyzing, you are probably trying to make a claim about far too little. It isn't necessary that you sift through all of your primary source information before you make your preliminary presentation on 10/23, but you need to know what it is you are going to be studying, searching through and analyzing.
- Decide what worthy research question you are going to ask of your primary sources.
- Decide on the steps of your research process and what you believe the kinds of information you will give in the poster board presentation. Think about the visuals you can provide (they can include maps).

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\* The FYS program provides the printout onto a poster board of what you provide in the powerpoint you submit on November 20. It is not **absolutely** necessary that yours be a poster board. If your question, research and interpretation lend themselves to another kind of presentation, discuss with your SASP coach and me, and probably you may have a different format. There can only be 6 posters for your class.

† You will share research from sources from that time, not recent reactions to issues of that period.

- Maintain your Individual Research Project Log: In the notebook you use for class, handwrite each occasion where you are pursuing this research project. Meetings (in person, or by phone), searching for potential sources, reviewing related articles. You will be submitting your project log to me and also to your teammates.
- Be ready to share with the class on October 23 a 5-minute presentation, including what you have learned so far and why you and your group should be one of the ones that goes forward. If the exhibition space continues to only permit our class to have six that can continue fully, creators of the 3 plans that are not going forward, experienced researchers, will be re-assigned to the 6 “surviving” teams.

Team (# \_\_\_) Members: \_\_\_\_\_

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### 10/23 Presentation Worksheet

What is the title, author and main argument of the scholarly article that you all are reading?

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What question about justice / equality (and gender) are you pursuing with this research? (Your starting point was the activities of women who attempted to address problems in the U.S. despite not having political rights.)

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What primary and secondary sources are you drawing on to find answers?

Primary:

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Secondary (not required if your first article provides enough context for your project): \_\_\_\_\_

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What have you learned, toward an answer to your question, so far?

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What visual images are you thinking of providing? (They can include maps). Graphs will be great if you can quantify things you look at – number of cases, prevalence or timing of relevant legislation, frequency of front page newspaper articles.

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Has the group shared the workload evenly? \_\_\_\_\_ If not, what kind of changes have to be made? \_\_\_\_\_

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