French 277: France and the Middle Ages  
Final Term Paper  
Instructions & timetable

Content

Each student will prepare a 7-9 page research paper examining one aspect of French culture or history in the Early or Central Middle Ages (c. 700-1200 CE). The content must be beyond the scope of material covered in class, although it may certainly be related to points we have discussed. Try to find a topic you find particularly interesting. If you are uncertain whether a topic is appropriate or not, please consult Prof. Engelhart. The paper constitutes 15% of your final grade for the course.

The paper must include the following elements:

1. an introduction defining the topic and stating the intent of the paper
2. a contextualization of the topic
3. a summary of general historical information pertinent to the topic
4. an analysis of the implications of that information
5. a conclusion to the topic, including a brief discussion of its import and relevance to understanding France in the Middle Ages
6. a complete bibliography

NOTE: This is a research paper. Personal opinions and/or reactions to the material are not relevant. Essentially, the word “I” should play no role in this paper.

Sources

You must use at least four separate sources for your research. Only two of the four may be a website source without permission of the professor. Consultation of at least one primary source is strongly encouraged but not required.

You will need to start pursuing sources as soon as possible as very few materials regarding the Middle Ages are available on the Fox campus, although many are easily accessible through the interlibrary loan system. Our campus librarians can be very helpful directing you to research databases and other useful materials.

Elements of a good research paper

- The topic should be well defined and narrowly focused. This is a short paper, Do not try to cover too much material or include too many details.
- The content must be well organized and follow a logical progression.
- Use of relevant quotes and citations should be considered to illustrate or support ideas.
- Content should not be repetitive.
- A good conclusion may suggest directions or questions for further investigation of the topic. A conclusion is not a rewording of the introduction.
- The paper should be carefully proofread. This includes proofreading for accuracy, clarity, proper format, grammar, spelling, and punctuation.1

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1Please note: Although they can be helpful tools, Spell Check and Grammar Check are not adequate for proofreading. There are many errors they will not find.
Timetable: This paper is to be prepared in the following three stages: [note: all three stages must typewritten]

1) Due Thursday, April 13
   ▪ A brief proposal of the topic you plan to pursue with a short explanation of its relevance to the study of France in the Middle Ages. [1-2 paragraphs]

2) Due Tuesday, April 25
   ▪ A general outline of your paper plus:
     o a draft of the introduction
     o a list of the sources you are using [in MLA format] with a brief description of each source, indicating its contents, how it relates to your topic, and why it can be considered a reliable source for a scholarly research paper.

3) Due Tuesday, May 9: Final paper

Format

▪ length: no fewer than 7 full pages; no more than 9 pages (the bibliography is in addition to these pages)
▪ spacing: double-spaced
▪ margins: 1” [all sides]; left justified
▪ page numbering: bottom right
▪ header: right justified [three lines: 1-first/last name; 2-course; 3-due date]
▪ no title page
▪ stapled: top left
▪ references: if you include notes, they should be footnotes rather than endnotes
▪ bibliography should appear at the end of the paper in MLA format

Grading: Factors considered in evaluation of the paper:

▪ inclusion and organization of all required elements
▪ relevance and accuracy of content
▪ quality of analysis
▪ writing skills (clarity; proper grammar, spelling, punctuation; appropriate style for research paper)
▪ adherence to stated format
▪ submission of all stages of completion on time and in good order
▪ overall quality of paper

Any instances of plagiarism will be investigated as academic misconduct.

UW-Fox has numerous resources, such as the Writing Center (Room 1813) and the Online Writing Lab (OWL), to help students prepare and improve research papers. Please take advantage of them. More information is available at:

http://uwfox.uwc.edu/academics/resources/writing-pad [Writing Center]
http://uwc.edu/students/academic-support/owl/online-writing-lab [OWL]

In addition, the Fox library has created a research guide specifically for FRE 277 at http://libguides.uwc.edu/FOXFRE277. This site provides a variety of information and links to help you begin your research. It also provides a link related to formatting citations and the bibliography. Our two librarians are also happy to set up appointments with individual students seeking help on how to get started looking for research materials. Don’t be shy – stop by the library and ask!

If you have questions or concerns, please drop by my office [2829]. My official office hours are M 10:00-12:00, W 1-3:30, and Th 2:30-4:00, but you can usually find me in the office Monday afternoon and most of the day Friday as well.

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2 For example: Wikipedia, although it can often be very helpful when starting on a topic, does not constitute a legitimate source for a formal research paper. Why not? Please look at the attached handout concerning “How to Evaluate a Web Site for Credibility.”
How to Find Library Materials

Use Search@UW from the library home page.
- Easily find Full text scholarly journal articles.
- Easily find books here at UW-Fox Valley and order books from other UW-System Libraries.

How to Evaluate a Web Site for Credibility

Is the source appropriate for the assignment?
- What types of sources are required?
- Anything you're not allowed to use?

Authority:
- What are the qualifications the author/editor/organization has on this subject?
- Are you able to verify that the information is accurate? (Does the author cite sources?)
- Can you tell who created and maintains the site? If you can’t tell what person or group created the site, that’s a bad sign.

Purpose:
- Can you determine why the source was written?
  - Explain?
  - Persuade?
  - Inform?
  - Entertain?
- What is the potential bias of the author/organization?
- If the source is biased can you find another source to balance the perspective?

Accuracy:
- Are there sources listed?
- Can you find obvious errors in spelling, punctuation, etc.?
- Can you verify the information in another reliable source?

Coverage:
- How in-depth is the information or material available?

Dates:
- When was the source originally published?
- Can you tell when the site was updated last, and if it is being maintained regularly?
- If there are charts and graphs, can you tell when that content is from?
- Beware out of date content; abandoned web pages are common!

Navigation:
- Is the site well designed and easy to use?
- Are the links broken?

Domain:
- What is the domain? Noting the domain gives clues to the probable content of the website.