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Fall 2011 James F. Slevin Assignment Sequence Prize

We are pleased to invite applications for the James F. Slevin Assignment Sequence Prize. This prize of \$500 will be awarded to the teacher submitting the best sequence of writing assignments for a First-Year Writing Seminar (honorable mentions, if any, will receive \$150).

Assignment sequences in a writing course are built around a series of essay topics. These sequences probably represent work assigned during a portion of the course rather than all of the essay assignments distributed over an entire semester. Submissions should include a rationale and a description of your plans for eliciting and responding to student drafts and revisions, as well as a description of how you prepare students for each essay assignment, for example by engaging them in preparatory writing exercises, including informal writing designed to help students understand the material on which they subsequently write formal essays. Reflections on what worked well, and why, and what you would change another time, are welcome.

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Submissions are due in 101 McGraw Hall by Friday, December 16. No exceptions can be made.

Fall 2011 James F. Slevin Assignment Sequence Prize Application

-Please Print Clearly-

Instructor's name IRENE VRINTE

Department HISTORY Course # and title HIST 1139: 'WHAT IF?': COUNTERFACTUAL HISTORY

Should I win a prize, I give the John S. Knight Institute permission to publish, quote from, and/or distribute copies of the assignment sequence, and to distribute publicity to newspapers and other publications, local and/or national, about my winning the prize. I also grant the Knight Institute permission to deposit the assignment sequence in a web accessible archive and make it available under a creative commons attribution, non-commercial license. I am prepared to send electronic versions of my text to Donna O'Hara (dlo1@cornell.edu) in the Knight Institute. I understand that I will receive the award for my prize-winning essay upon submission of the electronic text.

EXPERIENCING THE PAST

Title of Assignment Sequence

Instructor's signature [Signature], Date 12/16/11

Fall 2011 James F. Slevin Assignment Sequence Prize

Irene Vrinte

Experiencing the Past

Assignments: "Personal
Counterfactual"

"Versailles Peace Conference Simulation and journal Entry"
"Hypothetical Documentary Memorandum"

Overview

This application describes a sequence of three writing assignments that I designed for my First-Year Writing Seminar, HIST 1139: "What Ifs: Counterfactual History and the American Century. It focuses on the first, third, and sixth assignment for that course, and gives a rationale, description, and reflection for each. Where appropriate or illuminating, handouts and examples of student writing are included as well.

My course centered on historical *what-ifs* and *might-have-beens* related to twentieth-century American foreign policy. Exploring counterfactual history helps students return to the uncertainties of the world as experienced by contemporaries of the events they study, making them aware of the complexity of past situations and the contingency of past choices. In my seminar, we examined such cases as the dropping of the first atomic bombs, JFK's assassination, and the end of the Cold War.

The course had two principal aims: to help students refine their critical and creative thinking and writing skills, and to facilitate their exploration of history through the use of counterfactual questions and scenarios. Both required students to truly engage with the past, and the three assignments in this sequence illustrate that

This application contains:

Assignment 1: Personal Counterfactual

Assignment 3: Versailles Peace Conference Simulation and Journal Entry

Handout 1

Handout 2

Handout 3

Handout 4

Assignment 6: Hypothetical Documentary Memorandum

Handout 5

Handout 6

Assignment 1: Personal Counterfactual

1. Description and Rationale

Below are the assignment and purpose as handed to students:

Assignment: Our in-class reading and brief discussion introduced you to the topic of counterfactual history. For this first assignment, imagine an event or decision in the lives of your parents that would have significantly altered the course of your life. Examples could include moving to a different country, winning the lottery, joining a cult, or something more sinister. Be creative! In the next ten to fifteen minutes, let your thoughts flow freely and take notes. Then, begin writing a first draft of a short essay in which you first briefly summarize the event or decision, then elaborate on how this would have resulted in an "alternate" you, and finally describe what "alternate you" would have been like. Over the course of the next few days you will work to expand this draft into a final product (of no more than 2 pages), which is due in class on Tuesday.

Purpose: This writing task will help you connect with the topic of counterfactual history and get you to start thinking about the consequences of events or decisions, as well as imagine possible counterfactual scenarios. This assignment is also intended to help you develop your skills in writing clearly and concisely. The final product will be accompanied by a short reflective paragraph in which you describe what this assignment led you to discover about your own writing habits. This "trial" essay will be ungraded, but you will receive extensive comments on your work.

2. Preparatory Writing

This short first assignment did not require students to hand in a draft. After they had read and discussed an introductory piece on counterfactual history and had been given the writing assignment, students instead they spent fifteen minutes free-writing. They considered various topics and various ways of organizing their first essay in silence. Then, we spent the last ten minutes of class time discussing their individual writing habits. This resulted in a lively debate about perceived differences between "college writing" and "high school writing." Many students also brought up the strategies and resolutions they had formed for their First-Year Writing Seminar (e.g. "I will no longer start writing my essays the night before they are due.") During our second meeting, I used this assignment as an entry into working on clarity and conciseness in writing.

3. Reflection

This first writing assignment was an absolute hit. Students enjoyed "easing into" the material and the experience of writing college essays by being creative and working on something personal. The informal free-writing exercise in class allowed them to consider the benefits of doing "low-stakes" preparatory work, and the reflective paragraph prompted them to think critically about the way they usually approached writing assignments.

As an instructor interested in getting to know my students and their writing habits, these first essays proved gems. In writing about their youths in India or China, their love for computer science, or their twin who was accepted into Cornell first, the students gave me the tools I needed to work and connect with them on a personal level throughout the semester. In addition to this, the reflective paragraph helped me see what students believed were their strong and weak points as writers and what they hoped to learn in the course.

Assignment 3: Versailles Peace Conference Simulation and Journal Entry

1. Description and Rationale

After introducing counterfactual analysis and other fundamental skills, I made the First World War our first topical focus of the course. Eventually, students would devote a full 75-minute class meeting to an elaborate simulation of the 1919 Versailles Peace Conference. Each group of three students represented a party at the conference (three students played Woodrow Wilson, three David Lloyd George, three Georges Clemenceau, etc.); each prepared written strategies for the debate. Afterward, a writing assignment asked them individually to expand these experiences into a draft essay. The students then peer-reviewed each other's drafts in class, discussed them with me in conference, and ultimately produced a 4-page paper.

Conducting this policy simulation in an explicitly rhetorical and dramatic framework required students to define their interests and arguments clearly to others. My goal was to teach students how to prepare a sound thesis and start building logical supporting arguments. I expected many to find this assignment severely challenging, so I decided to focus the simulation on only three broad questions: the payment of war reparations, the future of German territory, and the fate of the Kaiser. I also decided that the final product should take the form of a reflective journal entry, written a week after the conference by the head of state each student had portrayed. This meant that students would be able to start writing arguments whose content was historical, but whose tone would ultimately be more intimate, informal, and sensitive to language and voice.

Before the actual simulation, I drew up a sheet of ground rules for civilized debate, tips for successful negotiations, and an agenda for the meeting (see following pages). I opened the conference as chair and set the tone as moderator, making sure that everyone stepped right into character. The simulation was broken up into several distinct segments, as suggested by the planning described above: opening statements, a round of negotiations, small topical working sessions, open debate, and final votes on proposals put forward by the different teams. A short reflective debriefing immediately followed. Students then went home with a worksheet designed to help them write their drafts.

Below are the assignment and purpose as handed to students:

Assignment: During week 4 of the semester, we will devote one class meeting to conducting an elaborate role-play. All students will participate in an elaborate simulation of the Versailles Peace Conference of 1919-1920 by splitting up into groups of three. Each group of three will represent a party at the conference and prepare, ahead of time, a written strategy for the debate. After the debate has taken place, on Thursday September 15, essay assignment #3 will ask you to individually expand your written preparations into a draft essay, to be peer-reviewed in class and discussed with the instructor in an individual conference during week 5. Students will then revise this draft and produce the final 4-page paper, due in class at the start of week 6 (Tuesday, September 27). Preparatory work for this essay will include readings at home and group activities in class.

Purpose: The final essay for this assignment should be a 4-page paper that contains a clear thesis and logical argument. The focus of this assignment will be on preparing a sound thesis and building a supportive argument, even if the perspective adopted is not your own. Conducting a policy simulation will place you in a situation where you have to define your interests and arguments explicitly and clearly to others, and it will allow you to test your strategy in a debate. Because we will be making this role-playing exercise as realistic as

possible, the assignment will also help you think and write within a rhetorical framework, and make clear to you the possible difficulties in reaching a consensus policy during multi-state negotiations.

NOTE: The purpose of this assignment is NOT to re-enact the Versailles Peace Conference as accurately as possible. We will be changing some of the historical facts to suit our goal. Whereas during the real conference no German delegation was present, for instance, our role-play will include three students who represent Germany. Moreover, whereas the real conference lasted many months (!) and covered a multitude of topics, our conference will take place over the course of one class meeting during which we will focus on several questions related to Germany's post-war future. Note, too, that the final product is NOT a research paper; although the readings for this assignment will give you a good idea of what the main views of each side were during the Versailles Peace Conference, the thesis and supporting arguments that you come up with do not have to reflect those in minute detail.

2. Preparatory Writing and Responding to Drafts

Preparatory work for this essay included readings and classroom activities. After learning of the exercise, students read and summarized straightforward texts to familiarize themselves with the proceedings of the conference and the national points of view expressed there. At the next class, students were assigned their roles (accommodating their preferences); with the help of worksheets I designed, they started working on their positions and opening statements. In order to make the simulation serve writing purposes as well, I built into its structures of peer review, counter-argument, and revision: for each team, one member would focus on giving the opening statement, one would lead a delegation to a topical working session with other groups, and one would prepare for open negotiations. Students finalized their strategies at home.

I commented extensively on the drafts students handed in after the simulation took place, both in writing and in individual conferences. Students moreover had opportunities to do focused revisions in class, working with members of opposite teams to rethink their arguments and organization, consider their tone and diction, and polish their prose.

Students found two in-class exercises particularly helpful. The first was one in which we looked at excerpts from three diaries of actual politicians. This "model writing" exercise helped students think about tone and diction. The second exercise was a "reading aloud" exercise. During this exercise, students swapped their drafts with their neighbor and took turns reading each other's papers aloud. I instructed them to read slowly, and to read only and exactly what was on the printed page. This gave the author of the paper a chance to listen to rather than read over their writing, process information in a new way, and look for places where the reader stumbled or got lost. Final papers were due twelve days after the simulation.

Students completed preparatory work and the final essay assignment in seven steps. I designed helpful handouts for most steps, some of which are included in this application. Below is the outline of the writing assignment as handed to students:

1) BY TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 13

Read the short and straightforward text on the Versailles Peace Conference that is assigned. Briefly summarize (in no more than 5 sentences each) the different points of view expressed by the different countries. Bring these to class on Tuesday, September 13.

2) IN CLASS ON TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 13

You will be assigned your role (three students to each country or side in the debate), and in groups you will begin work on what it is you want to argue during the conference. You should write as if you are the head of state of the country you represent, or the main delegate, and as if you are preparing yourself for your performance during the conference. During the debate you will be expected to argue a specific policy. Start with formulating a clear thesis, then outline your supporting arguments. After some time, a member of an opposing team will conduct a peer-review and offer counterarguments. After some more time, you will return to your original group and continue work on your preparations. By the end of the class, make sure you have divided the roles in your team: one student should make your delegation's opening remarks, one student should lead your delegation during a small topical working session, and one student should speak for your side during the open negotiations.

3) BY THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 15

Read the assigned chapter in Wilbers's style guide ("Point of View") and a short text related to your specific role in the debate (to be handed out on September 13). Finish your written preparations for the debate.

4) IN CLASS ON THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 15

Participate actively in the simulation. The simulation will include opening remarks by the Chair of the Meeting (the instructor), opening statements made by each delegation (student #1), small topical working sessions (led by student #2), open negotiations (student #3), and final negotiations (all students). There will be a short wrap-up and reflective debriefing afterwards.

5) BY NOON ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 18 (VIA EMAIL)

Expand your written preparations and outlined arguments, and compose a draft essay (minimum three pages). You should continue to write as if you are the head of your delegation, and your final paper should be in the form of a journal entry written a few days after the end of the conference. You should integrate your original thesis and arguments into your final essay, but you should also be reflective and perhaps display some creativity. How (from the point of view of you, the delegate) did the conference go? What were some of the difficulties you encountered during the negotiations? Is there anything you would have done differently? How happy are you, in light of your proposed policy, with the compromise that was reached?

6) WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 19-23

Meet with your instructor in an individual conference. Bring with you a hardcopy of your draft and two issues in your writing that you want to work on.

7) IN CLASS ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

Complete your revisions and hand in your final essay (4 pages) at the beginning of class.

3. Reflection

We all immensely enjoyed this exercise. Students felt anxious at first about the scope of the assignment, but soon realized that the preparatory work was designed to gradually ease them into both the simulation and the writing of the essay. By the time they were working on their opening statements, the different teams had already formed private Facebook groups to help them communicate outside class! The reflective paragraphs that accompanied their final papers also suggested that they had had fun peer-reviewing each

other's work, and that the exercise overall had provided them with various distinct opportunities and methods to start the writing process. Numerous mid-term evaluations suggested doing a similar assignment in the second half of the semester.

Running the simulation was almost as nerve-wracking for me as it was for the students. I realized that I had tried to prepare them thoroughly, but that my opportunities to intervene once the conference got underway would be limited. In the immediate aftermath, I concluded that a complex and comprehensive assignment such as this one is better saved until the last weeks of the semester; some students seemed more self-conscious about speaking up than others, and some put forward theses that ranged from the mildly a-historical to the truly cringe-worthy. But it turned out that after the heat of the moment had subsided, the latter were able to revise their arguments in writing, and the former were able to put to good use their notes on what other delegations had said during the simulation. More than anything, I was struck by the marked improvements students were able to make while revising their drafts into final essays.

My course had two principal aims: to help students refine their critical and creative thinking and writing skills, and to facilitate their exploration of history through the use of counterfactual questions and scenarios. The Versailles Peace Conference simulation and subsequent journal entry essay accomplished both. Students improved their ability to identify arguments and develop and communicate perspectives, and in the process became more aware of the causes and consequences of a major historical event and the influence of individual agency on it.

Handout 1:



Versailles Peace Conference

18 February 1919

Agenda

08:40-08:45	<u>Introductory Remarks by Chair of Meeting</u>
08:45-09:00	<u>Opening Statements by Delegations</u> Order: Clemenceau, Lloyd George, Wilson, Lenin, Keynes, Scheidemann
09:00-09:15	<u>Topical Working Sessions</u> - War Reparations: Keynes Scheidemann - German Territory in Europe: Clemenceau Lenin - Kaiser Wilhelm II: Lloyd George Wilson
09:15-09:35	<u>Joint Proposals and Open Negotiations</u>
09:35-09:45	<u>Final Negotiations</u>
09:45-09:50	<u>Vote</u>
09:50-09:55	<u>Debriefing</u>

Handout 2:



Versailles Peace Conference

18 February 1919

List of Participants

Georges Clemenceau (Prime Minister of France)	Akshay Craig Reese
Woodrow Wilson (President of the United States)	Victoria Gabe Lydia
David Lloyd George (Prime Minister of the United Kingdom)	Jack Gus Spencer
Vladimir Lenin (Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Soviet Union)	Ben Xiner Matt
John Maynard Keynes (Expert Economist)	Sean Kate Peter
Philip Scheidemann (Chancellor of Germany)	Jordan Brennan Steven

Handout 3:



Versailles Peace Conference

18 February 1919

Rules of Negotiation

- Remember that it is not *your* opinion you are expounding but that of the country and person you are representing!
- Be aware and respectful of different political perspectives.
- Compromise is an art – treat it that way.
- Be familiar with your country's history and culture.
- Know your allies and your opposition. In order to adequately represent your country during the conference, you will need to interact with delegates from other countries. Knowing their positions on your topic will help you predict their arguments during debate.
- Decide on your top priorities: what is negotiable and what is not?
- Participate – be respectful and listen to others.
- Take detailed notes on what other delegates are saying – they will be helpful both during the debate and while writing your paper.
- Remember that it is not the Chair of the Meeting (i.e. your instructor) that you are aiming to convince of your argument. Talk directly to the other delegates.

Handout 4:

Due: By noon on Sunday, September 18 (via email)

Starting from your written preparations and notes from the debate, compose a draft essay (minimum three pages – length of final essay four pages). You should continue to write as if you are the head of your delegation; this will be a first-person narrative. Your draft should be in the form of a journal entry written a few days after the end of the Versailles Peace Conference. Remember that this means you can be somewhat informal – however, every president, prime minister, chairman, or leading economist knows that his diary is likely to be published after his death! In other words; don't do away with rhetoric completely. You are still trying to convince your readers that you are (or were) right.

A good way to begin writing this draft is to return to your delegation's opening statement. You may use this statement word for word, if you wish, but you are also free to revise it. Be sure to integrate an original thesis statement into your essay, and underline it.

This essay must also demonstrate some personal reflection on the conference. How did the conference go, from your point of view? What were some of the difficulties you encountered during the negotiations? Is there anything you would have done differently? How happy are you, in light of your proposed policy, with the compromises that were reached? Remember that you are writing in the voice of the person you represented.

Assignment 6: Hypothetical Documentary Memorandum

1. Description and Rationale

Below are the assignment and purpose as handed to students:

Assignment:

For your final research paper, your task is to write a hypothetical documentary memorandum. Imagine you are an officer in the State Department at a certain time between 1914 and the current day. The Secretary of State, your boss, asks you "What should we do about _____?" To do this assignment well it is essential you put yourself into the mind of a hypothetical official at the time. Do not use knowledge of events occurring after the time in which you are supposedly writing. Your policy options and predictions should have a reasonable basis in events visible at the time and should not be fanciful, but you do not need to confine yourself to the conventional wisdom of the time.

Provide a written answer to the Secretary of State in 8 double-spaced pages in which you:

- briefly sketch the background of the situation;
- outline various possible courses of action;
- assess their realistic consequences;
- and argue for the policy that you deem most prudent.

Purpose:

The final paper should be a crisply written, rigorously argued, and thoughtful formal and persuasive essay. It should demonstrate the critical thinking and writing skills you developed over the course of the semester. Part of the focus of this essay is finding, working with, and appropriately citing both primary and secondary sources.

2. Preparatory Writing and Responding to Drafts

Students completed preparatory work and the final essay assignment in seven steps.

I designed helpful handouts for most steps, some of which are included in this application. Below is an outline of those steps as handed to students:

0) (NOVEMBER 3: LIBRARY SESSION 1)

1) INTRODUCTION TO ASSIGNMENT, LIST OF TOPICS, SAMPLE ESSAY: TUESDAY
NOVEMBER 8

Your instructor will introduce you to the final research paper assignment and explain the procedures. You will be given a list of possible topics, and there will be a sample essay for you to read.¹ Note: if you are adamant about choosing a topic that is not on the list, you must make a request to your instructor via email by 8pm on Wednesday, November 9.

¹ The topics were: World War I (August 4, 1914); Hitler Invades Poland / Start World War II (September 4, 1939); Atom Bomb / End World War II (July 17, 1945); Korean War (June 26, 1950); Cuban Missile Crisis (October 15, 1962); Gulf of Tonkin Incident / Vietnam War (August 6, 1964); South African Apartheid / Death of Steve Biko (September 13, 1977); Tiananmen Square Protests and Massacre (June 8, 1989); First Gulf War (November 28, 1990); Terrorist Attacks on 9/11 (September 11, 2001). Topics that students came up with themselves included the Berlin Crisis (1948), Nixon's visit to China (1972), and the Iran Hostage Crisis (1979-80).

2) PROPOSAL, SECONDARY SOURCES, LIBRARY SESSION 2: THURSDAY NOVEMBER 10

For this assignment, you will be using both primary and secondary sources. You will begin by finding the secondary source material during our second library session. Reference librarian Virginia Cole and your instructor will be able to answer any questions you may have.

Note: a short (one page max) proposal with a topic, preliminary research question (i.e. the question your boss, the Secretary of State, asks you), date, short explanation of your reasons for selecting this topic, and list of five secondary sources is due via email by midnight on Thursday, November 10.

3) CLASS PRESENTATION AND WORKSHOP: NOVEMBER 15 AND 17

Our two class meetings this week will be devoted to presentations. You will have 5 minutes to explain your topic and research question, talk about your ideas for the organization and outline of the paper, and ask advice for any problems you have encountered so far. There will then be 5 minutes for the class to ask questions and give feedback on your research question and outline.

Note: during your presentation, you should provide your colleagues with a brief handout that includes the working title of your hypothetical memorandum (e.g. "Responding to Hitler's Annexation of Austria"), a date (e.g. 28 March 1938), and a brief outline of your paper in bullet points (one per paragraph). After your presentation you will also be handed back your proposal and secondary sources and receive written comments from your instructor.

4) PRIMARY SOURCES, OPTIONAL EXTRA CREDIT: BY 5PM ON THURSDAY NOVEMBER 17

You will be using three separate primary sources for this assignment. For topics ranging from 1914 until 1976, all three must be *FRUS* documents.² If you choose a topic after 1976, you will have to find other primary sources. Whether you are choosing a topic that is covered in *FRUS* or not, you will have the opportunity to find your own primary sources (in *FRUS* or elsewhere) and receive extra credit. If you do not select your own primary sources for extra credit, your instructor will provide you with three relevant primary sources to use in your essay.

5) FULL DRAFT: BY NOON ON WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 23

A carefully written and proofread (!) full draft of 8 pages is due via email. Happy Thanksgiving!

6) INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCE: NOVEMBER 28 – DECEMBER 2

Meet with your instructor in an individual conference to discuss your draft. Bring with you a hardcopy and two issues in your writing that you want to work on. If you have any remaining questions about the paper you should also bring those to the conference.

7) FINAL PAPER: BY NOON ON THURSDAY DECEMBER 15

² The *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) series is the official documentary historical record of major U.S. foreign policy decisions that have been declassified and edited for publication. The series is produced by the State Department's Office of the Historian, and is now also available online. I introduced this series and talked about the differences between primary and secondary sources in early November. The first library session included a section on FRUS, which allowed students to look at some actual memoranda and use them as "models" for their own.

Revise your draft and hand in your final essay (8 pages). You must do so either by putting the essay in an envelope (include your instructor's name as well as your own on the cover) and slipping it under your instructor's office door, or by handing it to your instructor in person (B-02 McGraw) between 10:00am and 12noon on December 15.

3. Reflection

I had previously used a final writing assignment similar to this one with juniors and seniors, so I consciously lowered my expectations for my freshmen students. To my surprise, I found out I need not have done that at all! This taught me that with appropriate guidance and instruction, short research papers can function as final writing assignments for First-Year Writing Seminars.

I believe the two library sessions with reference librarian Virginia Cole were exceptionally helpful for my students. The first session took place before students started work on the final assignment, and included a short tour of Uris Library and a section on where to locate historical primary and secondary sources. It also introduced students to the Library Guide drawn up especially for our course. I gave students their final writing assignment before the second library session. This meant they arrived for that session with a topic in mind, and were ready to use those 75 minutes to locate appropriate secondary sources for their essay. Having someone look over their shoulders ready to answer questions made this a much more fruitful exercise than finding the sources at home would have been. Most importantly, it allowed me to teach the students to ask critical questions during their search. I believe that the quality of the source material they found was much higher because of this.

I was generally satisfied with the presentations students gave during the workshop sessions. I had divided the group into two, which made the workshops smaller and more focused. It was clear that some students had already put a lot of time in their final assignments, whereas others were only just starting out. To make these workshops more helpful, I might have asked students to send the outline of their presentation to one or two peers and ask for comments.

The drafts of this final writing assignment were, almost without exception, impressive. I think it was a good idea to discuss these drafts during individual conferences in the last week of class; it allowed me to review each student's progress over the course of the semester beforehand and identify one or two main issues to work on. The final papers for this course were exceptionally well written; it was almost every student's best essay of the course.

Handout 5:

Library Session 2: Secondary Sources

For this essay assignment, you will be using both primary and secondary sources. Now that you have selected your topic, you will begin research for this paper by finding secondary source material. If you have not yet made your final topic selection, looking for source material on the topics you are considering should help you decide. By the end of this second library session, you should have found:

- 1) one background resource
- 2) two recently published scholarly books
- 3) two scholarly journal articles

Start your search by returning to the course homepage designed by Virginia Cole:
<http://guides.library.cornell.edu/hist1139>.

1) Background Resource

Using the "background" tab on the homepage, search the *Dictionary of American History* and *The Oxford Companion to United States History* for background articles that can help you get started. Read them and make sure you email yourself all entries that seem helpful, so that you can later easily choose one to list in your proposal. Note also that the bibliographies at the bottom of the article may help you in your search for more material.

2) Recently Published Scholarly Books

Using the "books" tab on the homepage and the classic search catalog, search for two recently published books that will help you write your paper. Note that the books must be published in 1995 or after. Ponder the titles and subtitles carefully (the book may deal with the Cuban Missile Crisis as a whole, but what aspects does it seem to focus on, and are those helpful for your paper?) and if you can, try to find out more about them. Who is the author? Has the book made a significant contribution in the historiography of your topic? Can you find any book reviews? (If not, what might this tell you about it?) Make sure to check if Cornell has a copy of the book, and write down the call number so you can pick it up after class. Again; email yourself the titles and information of books that seem likely candidates so that you can later easily choose the two you think are best.

3) Scholarly Journal Articles

Using the "articles" tab on the homepage and the database *America History and Life*, search for two scholarly journal articles. Again: ponder titles carefully, and if possible, have a look at the PDF. Consider the date of publication and the journal in which the article was published (a journal on American foreign policy? Or a journal on American sociology? Which is most likely to be helpful to you?). Try to locate a copy of the article, and email yourself complete PDFs or the article's information.

Due by midnight on Thursday, November 10

A short (one page max) proposal with a topic, preliminary research question ("what should we do about...?" or "what are the possible courses of action now that...?"), date, short explanation of your reasons for selecting this topic, and a list of five secondary sources given in the appropriate format.

Note: your list of five sources should take the form of a works cited list:

- arrange entries in alphabetical order by authors' last names

- background resource:

Author. "Article Title." *Title of Book*. City of Publication: Publisher, Year.

- books:

Author. *Title of Book*. City of Publication: Publisher, Year.

- journal articles:

Author. "Title of Article." *Title of Journal* Volume number (Year): Page(s).

Handout 6:

Primary Sources

You will be using three separate primary sources for this assignment, and you will have the opportunity to find your own primary sources (in *FRUS* or elsewhere) and receive extra credit. If you do not select your own primary sources for extra credit, your instructor will provide you with three relevant primary sources to use in your essay.

If your topic falls before 1976...

Two of the three sources must be *FRUS* documents. Make sure to choose these carefully! Of course they will have to be written either on or before the date of your memorandum. Your third primary source can be either a *FRUS* document or a contemporary newspaper article (again, published on or before the date of your memorandum).

If your topic falls after 1976...

No *FRUS* documents are available for you yet. You should choose three other primary sources, such as a contemporary newspaper article, a presidential speech, a letter, an interview, etc. Keep in mind that all of these should have been published on or before the date of your memo. The bibliographies of your selected secondary sources may help you find some.

Note!

The list of primary sources that you send me must be *ultra* clear. You should include a clear bibliographic entry with information so that I can easily locate your source to check it. (*FRUS* documents should have an author, an exact date, and page numbers, and you must include the information on the *FRUS* volume (title and publication year). Use this format:

Acheson, Dean. "Relations between the United States and Iceland." 693-702. *FRUS* 1949, Volume 4: Western Europe.

Due: by 8PM on Thursday, November 17. You will receive either feedback on the primary sources you found, or primary sources that I selected for you, by 12NOON on Friday, November 18.