

Project #2 – “Copper Country History”

Historical Research Project

(individual – 350 points)

For the Revisions section on research, we are going to do an extensive historical research project. This will take about two months. This section will incorporate design plans (and the elements of rhetorical argument), intensive research, historical interests, personal interviews and the presentation of material in different formats such as Wikipedia. I am also hoping you will write something and get it published. Yes, you. Yes, published. By including all of these elements, I hope you will create a fun, interesting and educational project.



Michigan College of Mines (now Tech)
Courtesy of the MTU Archives and Copper Country Historical Collection

For this project, you will examine an aspect of local history or culture. Your interpretation of the historical information you find should be paramount in the essay— the final draft should not be a dispassionate "book report" devoid of your insights. Choose a topic wisely: it needs to engage you and have substantial surrounding information. Your research question is vital to this endeavor. A good question will sustain you and your research; an incomplete or over-broad question will bog you down and dilute the efficacy of your paper. I cannot emphasize this enough. To help, after you provide me with a proposal, we will meet one-on-one to discuss and refine your question.

To provide effective context and strong support for your views, **use at least ten varied sources**. The following list provides a breakdown of these sources.

2-5 Photographs (primary source – archival or taken yourself)

1-5 Books (primary or secondary)

1-2 Personal interviews (primary source - no staff or faculty from MTU, without my prior permission)

0-2 Internet sources (must be credible – this is likely to be a secondary source, but it could be primary)

0-5 Other sources, including but not limited to radio or video transcripts, journals, newspapers, magazines

Of these sources:

- At least five must be primary
- At least three must be secondary

Yes, I will count your sources in your annotated bibliography. It is important, both for me and for your own interest in this project, that you take the time to consult original sources and secondary sources to see how other people have handled primary sources. I would actually recommend starting with pictures as a way to explore your topic. Another good idea-generator is looking at local architecture or old newspapers. I have numerous old and newer cookbooks from this area as well.

Breaking the Project into Manageable Pieces:

Often, the key to any seemingly overwhelming task is to break it into manageable pieces. That is a vital skill for a student, which relates to the ability to learn how to project and plan. To make this easier for you, I have already broken the project into smaller chunks. You will need to manage them, however. There will be four distinct phases to this project. The first will be the research phase, in which you will explore and research

your topic. This is the time to make changes, and you should ask extensive questions of me, your sources and yourself. You will build a proposal, craft a research question, plan your available time and research your sources. The idea is to have ALL of the research done before the writing commences, although you may have to go back and research a little more as you go. This should be when you do your heavy lifting. You will be expected to visit the JRVP Library and possibly the Michigan Tech and Copper Country Archives (in the JRVP basement), the local historical societies or the Keweenaw National Historical Park. This is research intensive, but I will walk you through every part of this work. You will not be alone.

The second phase is the formal academic paper phase. You will produce the composition in a narrative, first-person style that consists of one or many voices, and you will call upon the visual design skills developed thus far in the course. I expect you to develop an advocacy angle in your argument, not just a factual recitation of your research. Why does your research matter? Is there something you want to see happen with your topic? I emphasize the “So what?” question. You will produce at least two drafts of this paper. The final composition must be a research paper approximately 2000-2500 words in length (about 8-10 pages, double-spaced) and should also include visual elements (photographs, charts, etc.) to add interest and further explain your topic. You need to include a Works Cited or Bibliography page, and cite all information appropriately within your paper.

The third phase is the revision phase, in which you use the information you have found to create other articles on your topic. The first project you will do is create or edit a Wikipedia article on your topic. Examples abound of Revision students’ work on Wikipedia. You will also investigate a magazine, newspaper or newsletter that might be interested in your topic. You will “pitch” your story to this media entity using a query letter, and finally, you will write the article. Although I will not force you to submit your work to your target, I strongly encourage it.

The final phase of the project is reflection. I want you to contemplate what this assignment may have taught you, both in terms of historical information and in terms of rhetoric and composition. This project will encompass many weeks of the semester.

Guidelines

Phase 1 – Research and Exploration

Proposal for the Project (10 points):

You will write a simple proposal for the project. In it, you will include the topic you will be researching and (most importantly) the question you hope to answer about it. Remember: **an excellent project starts with an excellent question**. Also include a printed copy of the Wikipedia entry you will be aiming to edit. After I receive this, we will schedule a time to meet one-on-one. At that time, we will discuss, revise and fine-tune your question. Bring three copies of your proposal to class – one for me, and two for classmates to read and consider. You may certainly discuss your ideas and topic with others, as they may be able to point you in a good direction for more information.

Design Plan for the Project (10 points):

You will write a design plan for your project. In addition to a brief synopsis of your project at the beginning, you will list your intended audience in detail, with as much relevant information on them as you can, as well as secondary or tertiary audiences. You will also flesh out your ideas and the elements you intend to use for your argument. Be sure to hit all angles in your design proposal (purpose, audience, context, strategies, medium, arrangement, production and testing).

Annotated Bibliography (50 points):

As with your first assignment of the semester, you will create an annotated bibliography of your sources. As before, the citation style can be the one used in your major or in MLA – your choice. For each source, include a complete bibliographical listing (intended to make it locatable for another researcher) as well as a synopsis paragraph below the listing describing any information you will be using from the document, as well as at least one quote from the document (also list if it is primary, secondary or tertiary). In the case of visual material, your synopsis should describe the visual in some detail, as well as your proposed use for the visual, arguing for why it should be included in your paper. Place these sources in order according to your chosen citation style. Bring three copies to class– one for me, and two for classmates to read and consider.

Phase 2 - Formal Academic Paper

Presentation of Your Project (10 points):

You will present your project to the class. This will serve both as a component of the testing phase and as an opportunity to practice brief presentation, a necessary skill in the business world. Your presentation will be 5 minutes in length. You will treat your classmates as if they were your intended audience. You may not read directly from your finished paper. Provide visual, oral and written information for your audience. Photographs are an excellent way to interest your audience and show your topic. Since this is informal, no PowerPoint is accepted, although you may use your computer to show visual elements like photographs or documents.

Rough Draft (30 points):

For your rough draft, you will have a complete, but preliminary, draft of your final research paper. This draft should be whole, as if you were turning it in for the final, which includes meeting the length and citation requirements. Bring three copies to class on this day – one for me, and two for classmates to read and consider.

Final Draft (100 points):

This will be your final project research paper. It will be in the first person narrative style (as indicated on the first page) and 2000-2500 words in length, with visuals. This must completely answer your research question to the satisfaction of your audience. It needs to be fully cited, using the citation method of your own preference. Bring two copies to class – one for me and one for the MTU Archives and Copper Country Historical Collection.

Phase 3 - Revision

Wikipedia Entry (30 points):

You will create a Wikipedia entry based on the information in your paper. This should not be a cut and paste of your entire paper, as Wikipedia editors will pull it faster than you can say “plagiarism.” A paragraph or two is adequate, and a visual should be posted as well. Post the final draft of your entry directly to the Wikipedia site. Alert me to its inclusion on the site and provide me with a final hard copy as well. It is vital that you print a hard copy **immediately** upon posting, as sometimes editors will alter your work within minutes of posting. Highlight on the hard copy the text and visuals that are yours. This article needs to be cited in Wikipedia style, so make sure you check their website (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Cite_sources).

Analysis of an Audience (10 points):

Choose a magazine, newspaper or newsletter to target for your article. I would recommend that you shoot for a target that you can realistically expect to hit. Match your target to your ambition and ability, and don't be afraid to stretch! Possible local sources may include the *Daily Mining Gazette* or the *The Lode* right here at MTU. Other local papers would probably be interested as well. I also encourage you to submit to the newsletters of local historical societies and parks. They are always looking for fresh stories for their publications. Create a rhetorical analysis of your target, including its audience, context and purpose. You must consult (and use as an example in your analysis) the target's Writer's Guidelines, if they are available. Include an idea of the length your target would expect for your final article. This analysis will likely be one to three pages.

Query Letter to Media (30 points):

Once you have a target, you need a stellar query letter to hook them on the idea of your story and you as a writer. These are typically one page in length, but you will want to make every word count.

Article on Your Topic (50 points):

Finally, you will produce an article on your topic for submission to your target. Your final package to me should include your revised query letter and your accompanying article. Please let me know if you plan on actually submitting your work to the target, as that will affect how I critique your work for you. The article length will depend upon the needs of your target.

Phase 4 - Reflection

Reflection (30 points):

Do you feel you reached your intended audience? Did you adequately answer your research question? Why did you make the rhetorical choices you did when creating your project? What did you discover as you researched that surprised you? What did this project help to teach you (or help you realize) about rhetoric and communication? Where did *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos* fit in to your resulting work? How did the Wikipedia entry and target article differ from the research paper? How did your advance research help you craft and revise your later work? . Look at the “Course Descriptions and Goals” section of my syllabus again. Which goals do you feel this assignment addressed? This reflection should be two to four pages in length.