

HIST 281: Position Essay

DANIEL HARVEY



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM



Writing across the Curriculum

Contact Us

About Us

People

Resources for Faculty and
Instructors

Resources for Students

WAC Resources

Quick Guides

Research

▶ Class Presentation Slides

Faculty Workshop Slides

[Home](#) > [Class Presentation Slides](#)

Class Presentation Slides

Presentations for Students

[Review Paper: Earth and Atmospheric Sciences 467 \(PDF\)](#)

[Term Paper: Economics 512 \(PDF\)](#)

[Term Paper: Economics 211 \(PDF\)](#)

[Research Reports: Economics 399 \(PDF\)](#)

[Short Paper Assignment: Exploratory Paper: Nursing 303 \(PDF\)](#)

[Community Health Assignment Reflection Paper: Nursing 295 \(PDF\)](#)

[How to Write an Editorial Article: Sociology 365 \(PDF\)](#)

[Writing Persuasively: Mechanical Engineering 200 \(PDF\)](#)

[Writing the Literature Review Essay: Animal Science 120 \(PDF\)](#)

[Writing the Research Proposal: EAS 493 \(PDF\)](#)

[Teaching Writing: A Primer for Graduate Students \(PDF\)](#)

[How to Write a Literature Review: HUCO 510 \(PDF\)](#)

[How to Write a Thesis Statement: Religion 274 \(PDF\)](#)

[Examining the Term Paper: PERLS 204 \(PDF\)](#)

[Science, Technology, Society 200: The Short Essay \(PDF\)](#)

[Nursing 494: The Annotated Bibliography Scholarly Paper \(PDF\)](#)

[Human Ecology 201: The Research Essay \(PDF\)](#)

[Biology 107: The Scholarly Essay \(PDF\)](#)

[Biology 108: The Scholarly Essay \(PDF\)](#)

[Nursing 306: The Scholarly Paper \(PDF\)](#)

[Evaluating Writing in History and Classics Courses \(PDF\)](#)

[Sample Rubric Handout \(PDF\)](#)



Centre for Writers

- Home
- Book an Appointment
- Contact Us
- Workshops
- Becoming a Tutor
- Tutor Bios
- Centre for Writers Guiding Principles
- Policies
- FAQ
- Resources
- Other Writing Centres
- Writing Across the Curriculum
- Writing Studies
- Writing Initiatives
- Annual Report

Home > Home

Welcome to the Centre for Writers

The Centre for Writers will reopen on September 16, 2013. We will post more information in the coming hours soon. Please be advised that we will now require you to show your **One Card** before your appointment."

We offer free writing support to all students, instructors and staff at the University of Alberta – in any subject, discipline, program, or faculty, and at all levels of study. Tutors can assist you with any type of assignment or project, at any stage of the writing process.

To book, change, or cancel appointments, please click here.

Interested in becoming a tutor, click here.

Professors/Instructors: To request a classroom visit by a tutor, click here.

To find our location please click here.

The Centre for Writers invites YOU to weekly, **FREE WORKSHOPS on the English language!**



The Writing *Process*

Getting started

- Explore the assignment
- Make rough notes
- Pick a tentative topic



Drafting/revising

- Make an appointment at a writing centre; attend a group tutorial
- Get feedback on your draft/revise: work on higher order concerns: structure, argument, organization

Editing

- Work on style and lower order concerns
- Proofread, consult checklist for assignment



Students may choose any one of the three essay topics, and write an argumentative paper drawing on assigned sources and textbook. Students will show through their footnoting that they have read and understood every source

Topics:

- A. (Neo-)Confucianism in early modern (~1600-~1800) Qing, Choson, (and Vietnam): positive and negative aspects.
- B. Racism and nationalism in post-World War II China, (South) Korea, and Japan.
- C. The changing status/rise of 'new' women in early 20th century Japan, Korea, and China.



Genre: position paper, analysis/synthesis
descriptive/argumentative

Length: 700-800 words/1 page maximum including footnotes
(Times New Roman, 10 pt font, narrow margins)

Value: 25% grade

Draft Due: February 12th

References: Lastname, #

Headings: No

Reference list: ?



Grading criteria:

- Correct sources
- Format
- Clarity of argument & ideas
- Quality of writing





1. Were the influences of Confucianism on issues of governance and society on the whole positive, or negative, or differing by issue? Define briefly what you mean by 'positive' and 'negative', and whether your judgment is in terms of the present, or the early modern period, or both.
2. Contrast and compare various examples of racism, and its relationship to nationalism, in all three countries in the post-war period. Note any common, region-wide features, and/or characteristics unique to each country (and, optionally, commonalities with global trends).
3. One of the most novel and sometimes contentious discourses of early 20th century Asia surrounded the need to change the role of women. Contrast and compare this discourse across the region. Note any common, region-wide features of this phenomenon, and/or characteristics unique to each country (and, optionally, commonalities with global trends).



What kind of paper are you being asked to write?

- Look at the verbs/questions:
 - “Were the...?”
 - “Contrast”
 - “Compare”
 - “Note”
- Implicit: “summarize,” “argue,” “take a position”

What do these mean?



Two aspects to this:

1. **Understand** and be able to **summarize** the articles
2. **Take a position** based on readings

Approaches:

- **Summarize/describe** article: what are the most important aspects in relation to the question?
- **Analysis**: what are the component parts?
- **Synthesize: persuade** audience of your position



Were the influences of Confucianism on issues of governance and society on the whole positive, or negative, or differing by issue? Define briefly what you mean by 'positive' and 'negative', and whether your judgment is in terms of the present, or the early modern period, or both.

- How can you narrow this topic?



Contrast and compare various examples of racism, and its relationship to nationalism, in all three countries in the post-war period. Note any common, region-wide features, and/or characteristics unique to each country (and, optionally, commonalities with global trends).



One of the most novel and sometimes contentious discourses of early 20th century Asia surrounded the need to change the role of women. Contrast and compare this discourse across the region. Note any common, region-wide features of this phenomenon, and/or characteristics unique to each country (and, optionally, commonalities with global trends).



Sources:

- May only cite the assigned readings and textbook
- Can perform further research and outside reading, but make sure you don't plagiarize!!



Draw on topic description for your structure:

Introduction: What is your topic? (How) Have you narrowed it?
 What is your position/main claim?
 What are your sub-claims? What evidence do
 you draw upon?

Body: Specific details of sub-claims

Conclusion: Review argument/position/answer



Must have an **explicit** position statement that answers the research question.

Position must be: specific
 manageable
 interesting

Contains an **observation**, an **argument**, and (potentially) suggests some **implications**

Explicitly links your **position/claim** to your **sub-claims/reasons** and **evidence**.

“I argue X because of A, B, and C”



Order of thesis statement/paper

**Claim /
Solution**

Link (because)

**Reason /
Analysis**

Challenges / Problem

(How, So what, Why?)

Evidence

(Case studies, gov't reports, legal documents, literature reviews, etc.)

Order of tasks



Always have a **topic sentence** that explicitly indicates what the paragraph is about, and how it fits in your argument

Always have a **transition sentence** that connects each chunk of argument to the next:

- use transitional words/phrases
- link back to main claim or sub-claim



Strong paragraphs:

- Express a clear, single idea with a topic sentence
- Move on to back up and expand upon that idea, through exemplification, clarification, comparison, demonstration, etc.
- Return to the main idea in the final paragraph
- Connect to both the next idea and the main thesis/position of the paper

Transitions for purpose

For this purpose	In order to	To that end
In order that	So that	To this end

Transitions for argument or proof

Accordingly	Despite	In addition	Nevertheless	Therefore
Admittedly	Even so	In any case	Nonetheless	Thus
Although	Even though	In conclusion	Obviously	To be sure
At this level	Evidently	Indeed	Of course	Truly
Because	For	In fact	On the one	Whatever the
Besides	For the same	In light of this	hand... On	case may be
But	reason	evidence	the other hand	What's more
Certainly	Furthermore	In summary	Regardless	
Clearly, then	Granted	Meanwhile	Since	
Consequently	However	Moreover	That is	

Transitions for exemplification, illustration, addition or clarification

Additionally	For instance	More importantly	Specifically	The next part
Again	Further	Moreover	Such as	To add
Also	Furthermore	Most importantly	Take the case of	To clarify
And then	Generally	One characteristic...	That is to say	To demonstrate
As an illustration	speaking	Another characteristic	The final type	To explain
Besides	i.e., (that is)	One example...	The first	To illustrate
Besides that	In addition	another	(second, third)	To put it another
Case in point	In another case	example	category	way
Equally	In general	One kind... another	The last group	To rephrase it
important	In other words	kind	The most	What's more
Finally	In particular	One way... Another	important	
First	In the same way	way	component	
Following this	In this case	On this occasion	The most important	
further	In this situation	Point in fact	example... The	
For example	Like	Pursuing this further	next example	

Transitions for emphasis or repetition

Absolutely	Certainly	In brief	Obviously	To repeat
Always	Definitely	Indeed	Of course	Undeniably
As I have noted	Emphatically	In fact	Perennially	Undoubtedly
As I have said	Eternally	Naturally	Positively	Unquestionably
As has been noted	Extremely	Never	Surely	Without a doubt
Assuredly	Forever	Nobody denies	Surprisingly	Without reservation
By all means	In any case	No doubt	To be sure	

Transitions for comparison and contrast

Although	Despite	Likewise	hand... On the	Vis à vis
After all	Even though	Meanwhile	other hand	Where
As	However	Nevertheless	Otherwise	Whereas
Balanced against	In comparison	Nonetheless	Similarly	While
But	In contrast	Of course	Still	Yet
By comparison	In the same way	Once in a while	Though	
Compared to	In spite of	On the contrary	Unlike	
Conversely	Like	On the one	Up against	

Transitions for concession and exception

Admittedly	Granted	Nevertheless	Once in a while	Though
Although this may be true	However	Nonetheless	Perhaps	To be sure
Certainly	In spite of	Of course	Regardless	True
Despite	It is true that	Of course, it is true that	Sometimes	Yet
	Maybe		Still	

Transitions for cause and effect

Accordingly	Because	For this reason	The first	important cause
Another cause	Consequently	On account of	(second, third)	/ effect
Another effect	For	Since	cause / effect	Therefore
As a result	For that reason	So	The most	

Transitions for narration and process

After	At first	third	Meanwhile	(second, third)
After a few hours (days, months, years)	At last	Firstly...	Nearly	step
After that	At the same time	secondly... thirdly	Never	The next step
Afterwards	Before	Formerly	Next	The last step
Almost	Before long	Frequently	Now	Then
Always	By this time	Immediately	Once	Thereafter
As	Earlier	In the first place	Previously	Two hours
As soon as	Eventually	In the meantime	Soon	(days, months, years) later
	Finally	Later	Subsequently	When/While
	First... second...	Later on	The first	

Transitions for description

Above	Beyond	Inside	On one side... On the other side	The least important
Behind	In	Nearby	Outside	The most important
Below	In back of	Next to	Over	Under
Between	In front of	On		

Transitional chains

Basically... similarly... as well	In the first place... pursuing this further... finally
First(ly)... second(ly)... third(ly)...	In the light of the... it is easy to see that
Generally... furthermore... finally	In this case... in another case
In the first place... also... lastly	To be sure... additionally... lastly
In the first place... just in the same way... finally	

Transitions for conclusion or summarization

Accordingly	Finally	In final analysis	In summary	To summarize
As a result	Hence	In final consideration	Lastly	To sum up
As I have said	In brief	In general	On the whole	Therefore
As I have shown	In conclusion	Indeed	Summing up	Thus
Consequently			To conclude	

References

- Kirsznern, L.G. & Mandell, S.R. (2006). *Writing first: Practice in context* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's.
- The OWL at Purdue (2007). *Transitional devices*. Retrieved November 1, 2007, from <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/574/02/>
- Transition words* (n.d.). Retrieved November 1, 2007, from <http://larae.net/write/transition.html>
- The Writing Centre at the University of Wisconsin – Madison (2006). *Using transitions*. Retrieved November 1, 2007, from www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/Transitions.html



How will you draw on your evidence?

- Direct quotation (statistics, dates, etc.)
- Paraphrase
- Summary

Paraphrase & summarize when the **ideas** are important:
content

Always integrate and comment on your quotations

Always indicate when you're drawing on the words or ideas of another!!



Writing concisely:

- Avoid adjectives and adverbs
- Avoid passive constructions and forms of “to be”: use strong verbs and the active construction
 - e.g. Passive: “The dog was run away from by the cat.”
 - Active: “The cat ran away from the dog.”
 - Passive: Object – Verb – Subject
 - Active: Subject – Verb – Object
- Avoid lists
 - e.g. “Racism is hurtful, damaging, and bad.”
 - “Long lists are cumbersome, annoying, and unnecessary.”



- Get feedback from a “trusted reader”
 - Consider using other students in the course or the Centre for Writers
- Ask readers to read for specific purposes: thesis, structure, transitions, development of a particular paragraph or idea.
- Focus on higher-order concerns before lower-order ones



Towards the due date, switch your focus from

higher-order concerns (arrangement, arguments, evidence) to

lower-order concerns: proofreading, grammar, citation format,
grammar/spelling



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM