

Tasks as you head into this weekend (choose the one that fits where you are in your research):

1. Continue to gather resources and take notes. *Remember that the research should lead you to an argument. You should not make an argument first, then find research to fit it.*
2. Look through all of the notes for the resources you've consulted and identify a thread, a focus and/or an argument.
3. Start to write your annotated bibliography, summarizing the source and then really exploring what you learned from each source (specifically, why it matters (how it is influencing your thinking), what more you need to know, etc. *The seniors who worked on theirs already tell me that their argument/focus changed and/or developed more as they worked on this. That's exactly what is supposed to happen.*

As we head toward the weekend, you need to start thinking about how you are going to pull everything together and work toward a final project. As you are thinking about this, ask yourself what you've learned and what is the best way to demonstrate what you've learned given the topic, its relevance, your purpose in studying it, etc. *It is unlikely that a live oral presentation will be an option. I also do not think that a slide show is the best option for many of these projects.*

I will post over the weekend some ideas about projects and possibilities. What you need to do is to think about what the value of your project is. For the most part, my goal is for you to find a way to share what you've learned with a larger audience (like through a TED Talk, or a set of online posters, or a website, or through the development of a set of biographical sketches for future classes to use, etc.).

The proposal due on Tuesday (no coupons, no extensions) should be a one page document (hard copy):

- with your argument/focus
  - a brief summary of the resources you've consulted (one sentence long like: "Himpathy," an episode from *Scene on Radio* podcast, told the story of one woman who struggled after a sexual assault to deal with it and with sympathized with the person who assaulted her.)
  - a list of information/questions you still need to find or answer
  - a short description of the 3-4 most important ideas you have about your topic
  - a proposal for the type(s) of projects you think might make sense and a rationale for why (look at my description above about the project and its goals and at the ideas I post this weekend about possible projects to help you).

Scroll down to see my brainstorming about some possible final projects:

*Below are a series of possibilities for projects that I have developed based on your topics and resources I can access. Your options are NOT limited to these options. You can also propose working with another student (or more than one other student) on a final – we would need to work out the details together). **Before you get started and as you work on the project, keep rechecking and rereading the initial assignment and the grading criteria ([here](#)).***

Are you looking for arts based possibilities (no matter the topic):

- think about writing a series of poems addressing the issue and/or exploring the ideas that you've discovered through your research
- put together a film about your topic
- create a playlist of important music and/or write your own based on what you've learned
- draft a speech
- write a one act play or a short story that reimagines an important time in history
- write a magazine profile of the people and/or movements you've been studying
- pull together a photo essay (or some sort of visual art piece) that examines your topic
- create and film your own TED Talk
- put together a virtual gallery of people we should know
- create your own website
- Draft a policy statement (with supporting documents) and/or a ten point plan and political flyers to advance your cause.

If part of your argument is that others should know the information that you have discovered, think about what is the best medium through which to do that:

- Does it make sense to write a series of biographical sketches for American Biography?
- Is a podcast conversation between you and other student(s) who are working on the same topic as a roundtable for you to explore and discuss varying points of view that I could use in future Contemporary American Culture classes?
- Does it make sense to interview people who are directly affected by your project topic?
- Does it make sense to create a series of posters or a virtual gallery that future science classes can use to highlight important scientists whose work has been under-taught?

If your argument is based on what you learned about a particular artist's style or about the work of a group of artists:

- Does it make sense for you to try to create a piece(s) that demonstrates what you learned about technique or style?
- Does it make sense to put together a book of the art (or a soundtrack) that you found most compelling and explain why?
- Does it make sense to write an illustrated reflection about what you learned and how it helps you to understand something important about Contemporary America culture?

If your focus is more about what you have learned from a study over time and why it matters to your understanding of a contemporary issue (rather than an argument):

- Does it make sense to write a reflection that takes me through what you learned and why it matters?
- Does it make sense to use what you've learned (about prison reform, about climate change, about race in America, etc.) and apply it to evaluating proposals that are out there aimed at dealing with your issue?
- Does it make sense to pull together and film your own TED Talk about the issue?
- Does it make sense to create and propose a plan to attack an aspect of the issue, developed from the research you've done and write a defense?
- Does it make sense to write a position paper that could be used in classes next year defending your ideas?