

LIB 120 Semester Project: The Paper Trail

Due: IN CLASS on the LAST DAY OF CLASS

What is “The Paper Trail”?

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (4th ed., 2000) defines a paper trail as “Documentary evidence of one’s actions.” Another way to think of it is as an annotated, chronological record of the research done for an academic research question. The Paper Trail counts for 20% of your semester grade.

What should your Paper Trail include?

1. **Table of Contents & Organization (10%):** This should include one basic page showing where everything is, and what order it’s in. Your semester project must be well organized. I should be able to examine it without being confused about what is what and what is where. Use a 3-ring binder and divider tabs to organize your materials.
2. **Defining, Planning & Refining (5%):** Here is where your background information should go, including materials from the first two assignments.
3. **Your Research Statement (5%):** See Assignment 3 for details.
4. **An outline for an 8-12 page paper on the topic (10%),** or, if you’ve actually written a paper, include the paper. Projects submitted without an outline or paper will not be graded. Outline must include the relevant source citations for each section and/or subsection.
5. **Complete citations and annotations for at least 15 sources on your topic (45%).**
When you’re putting this together, you should have at least two major sections:
 - Sources Used (This can be further subdivided by the material format, if you wish.)
 - Sources Not Used (Annotations for these items **MUST** say why they’re NOT used.)*How many should be allocated to each category is up to you, depending on the results of your research. This should include books, periodical articles, web pages, etc. Must be in alphabetical order, either overall, or within source type.*
5. **Supporting Materials (15%),** such as printouts or photocopies of HELIN screens, database screens, web pages, title pages of books, journal articles, etc. Must be in an order that corresponds with the order of your bibliography.
6. **Your Research Logs (5%).** These should be organized by date.
7. **A Research Summary (5%):** See the Research Summary Guidelines handout for details.

Can I use the sources I’ve found for other assignments?

Yes! In your homework assignments over the course of the semester, you will be asked to find books, periodical articles, and web sites. You may have to find some sources on your own,

however, so keep that in mind as you're working on your assignments. If you run across a gold mine of information, make sure you remember where you found it.

You must make the necessary corrections to assignments that require them. The bibliographies you hand in with your project should be free of any correction marks. If I made comments but didn't recommend corrections, you can hand them in as is.

Remember, though, that the sources you include must be truly relevant, or you can include them in the list of items you're not using.

What's most important?

- The integrity of your research process
- Its relation to you learning to understand and apply information literacy skills

What are the information literacy skills I'm supposed to apply?

Your Paper Trail should show that you can:

- Understand the organization of information
- Recognize and articulate a research question
- Develop appropriate and effective search strategies
- Select and use information retrieval tools
- Locate and retrieve information sources
- Analyze and critically evaluate information
- Organize and synthesize information for an information need
- Use and apply information efficiently and effectively

Projects are due IN CLASS on the last day of class. If you turn in your project late, you will lose **10 points** off your total project grade for **each day** it is late.

A few Paper Trail DOs and DON'Ts:

DO...

Keep all of your materials, including annotated bibliographies and research logs!
Put your name, date, and assignment numbers on everything. It will make organization easier!
Make a table of contents that names each section.

DON'T...

Include homework instruction sheets.
Submit uncorrected assignments.
Count individual pages - that's a waste of time!

If you have any questions, concerns, or problems with your Paper Trail, *please* let me know! I will be happy to give you any assistance you need at any stage of the process!

Good luck! 😊