

Familiarizing Students with Library Research: News Magazines & Journals of Opinion

Course: The Early Cold War: The Truman Presidency, 1945-53

Taught at the U.S. Naval Academy, spring semesters

Instructor: Richard Hume Werking

Meeting Pattern: Two 75-minute sessions per week for 15 weeks

Level, etc.: Sophomore research seminar, one of the approximately eight sections offered annually of “Perspectives on History”, a required course for History majors, intended to help students develop skills in critical analysis, synthesis, and written and oral communication. Sections are offered on a wide variety of subjects. The principal requirement for all sections is the researching and writing of a research paper (typically 15-20 pages) using both primary and secondary sources. In addition, I give several additional assignments designed to introduce students to various aspects of “doing History”, as William Appleman Williams put it in his entertaining OAH *Newsletter* article of 1985.

Enrollment: 12-14 students

Prerequisites: Sophomore standing, for History majors only.

HH262C
Dr. Werking

January 25, 2010

News Magazines & Journals of Opinion

Your second research assignment involves finding information in news magazines or journals of opinion from the time period we are studying. Your report is due Tuesday, February 2, at the beginning of class.

Using the *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature* located on an index table near the Library's Reference Desk (Reference Table 2), find citations to two articles published between January 1945 and January 1953 on any topic of your choice related to the Cold War. They need to be articles in magazines that this Library owns.

Locate the articles, either in the bound periodicals on the second deck or in the microform reading room, and read them. (Although the Nimitz Library has a respectable and growing number of electronic scholarly journals that go back this far in time, some significantly farther, our more popular periodicals from this time period are in paper or microform.)

Briefly summarize the contents of these two articles, indicating any areas of agreement and differences of opinion between them, as well as any differences in treatment of the topic.

Look through some issues of *Life* magazine, among the bound periodicals on the second floor, from sometime between 1945 and 1953. Skim two articles dealing with any public policy topic, foreign or domestic (the stories do not have to be on the same topic), and describe their contents in a short paragraph – perhaps two sentences for each article.

I've placed on reserve at the Circulation Desk the *Life* magazine volume containing the issue for February 26, 1945. Take a look at pages 24-27; what do you find there? See also pages 34-35 in the February 12 issue. Where do you suppose President Roosevelt was, since he missed his own birthday celebration?

Your paper should be no more than two pages long. Its last section (not included in the two-page limit) should be a short bibliography with five or six entries, listing the four articles, and also the pertinent information about the *Readers' Guide* index volume(s) that you used to get the citations: volume number(s), dates of coverage of the volume(s), page number(s) containing the citations you turned up, and **the subject heading or other heading** you used to find the citation. For this assignment, use the *Chicago Manual of Style* version of bibliographic entry.

Let me know if you have questions, either initially or along the way.