

Honors English II
Professor Moser
Spring 2014

Final Research Paper: Gender and Family in a Foreign Culture

Important dates

Monday, 4/21: topic proposals due via email by 10:00 pm to jmoser1@fitchburgstate.edu

Wednesday, 4/23: Library Research Session (in our regular classroom) with a reference librarian

Sunday, 5/4: rough drafts due by 10:00 pm via email; send as Microsoft Word document via email to jmoser1@fitchburgstate.edu

Monday, 5/5: peer review workshop; arrive to class with laptop and hard copy in hand

Thursday and Friday, 5/8-5/9: paper conferences in Miller G-06 B with Joe

Wednesday, 5/14: final draft of research paper due by 12:00 noon; email your paper as a Microsoft Word document to jmoser1@fitchburgstate.edu

NOTE: I do not assign Incomplete course grades. This means that if you do not turn in a paper by the final deadline, you will receive a “0.0” grade on this paper, which could result in a serious reduction of your overall course grade and possibly a “0.0” grade in the course.

Rationale

This semester you have read and written (and viewed documentaries) about many different perspectives on gender, but our class has mostly focused on American thinkers and writers. For this final paper assignment, you will investigate and evaluate a foreign culture and society and clearly distinguish some of its practices and (measurable) problems from ours in the U.S., looking to see what this nation has to offer the United States in terms of model practices and/or solutions to pressing family, social and/or political issues.

What this assignment is

For this paper you will delve deeply into issues of gender and family in a foreign culture, focusing on an aspect of that culture you find exceptionally positive, exemplary, and admirable—a practice, tradition, law, etc., that you think the United States could learn from and/or adopt.

Using the word “foreign” here, we are talking about a culture and society as it exists outside the United States.

To this end, your research paper should include all of the following:

1. a thesis that clearly draws a comparison between an exemplary/admirable aspect of a foreign culture (in terms of gender/society and the family) and a problematic aspect of American culture
2. a cogent, detailed overview—probably around 700 words in length—of family and social life in the foreign culture you are researching, supported by trustworthy, scholarly information from expert sources correctly documented
3. a brief description—about 400 words in length—of a specific problem in American society and families that seems much less severe (or hardly seems to be a problem at all) in the culture you’re studying; include statistics (and cite reliable sources) to substantiate your view on this problem in American society
4. an explanation—about 900 words long—of the reasons why this foreign culture seems to do better in this particular area of family/society; what is different about their society that allows them to excel in an area where U.S. society and families tend to struggle? Include scholarly/expert testimony (and cite sources) to support your explanation.
5. a concluding section—400 words or so—that offers some thoughtful speculation about how the U.S. could learn from and/or adopt practices of this foreign culture and improve our society in terms of gender and family life

NOTE: You will be graded mainly on how well you fulfill the requirements for each of the five sections described above. Therefore, it’s essential that you follow those guidelines carefully.

What this assignment is not

This is a research paper; it is not an opinion piece. Although the basis of your paper will be your own view of an exemplary/admirable aspect of another culture in terms of gender and family, you should reinforce your viewpoint with solid, detailed evidence obtained through research (and always cite your sources).

You should also use compelling evidence from reliable sources to substantiate your view of problem(s) in American society and families that seem to be considerably less severe in the foreign culture that you’re studying.

Second, this is not a proposal argument and you should not concern yourself primarily with devising solutions, although you are certainly free to suggest some solutions in the concluding section of your paper.

Required research

You must cite a minimum of **seven scholarly sources** for this paper. At least one of these sources must be a book, and internet-based sources do not count towards the minimum requirement of seven sources. By “internet-based,” I mean sources that exist only on the internet and not in print. Articles from scholarly journals, magazines and newspapers that are found online, or through online databases, are absolutely acceptable. Here is a link to the FSU Library’s databases page:

<http://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/library/>

--You may find the [SocIndex With Full Text](#) database particularly useful for research for this project.

Any time you draw information from a source in your paper (whether you are summarizing it, paraphrasing it, or quoting from it directly) you must cite that source in the text of your paper, as well as in your Works Cited page. I would strongly encourage you to do your in-text citations as you’re composing the paper, rather than waiting until the end to insert citations. If you don’t keep track as you go, you are likely to forget what information came from which source. For this paper you are required to have a Works Cited page. I will not accept any final paper without one.

Format, Length & Style

Cite all sources using in-text citations that adhere to MLA guidelines; include the full information on each and every source in your Works Cited page. If you need a refresher on MLA documentation, consult the *Purdue Owl* online:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

Your paper should be at least 2400 words (8 pages) in length.

Your most important stylistic concern should be with crafting unified paragraphs. Make sure you begin each paragraph with a topic sentence that clearly states its main idea; then make sure all your supporting sentences cluster around that main idea without detours. Avoid beginning or ending any paragraph with a quotation; start with your own framing idea/topic sentence and close each paragraph with your own comment.