

UBC, Geography 429: Research in Historical Geography.

David Brownstein.

Literature Review Guidelines.

Due online before class starts on **February 1, 2016**. This assignment is worth 30% of your final grade. Maximum 1500 words not including sources. Please aim to include a minimum of 15 secondary sources in your review.

Begin your review with an updated argument or problem statement, incorporating my comments from your original proposal. Then, make an argument about the state of the literature with respect to your goals.

Your task here is to identify works that will help you to write your paper. A literature review gives an account of what is already known about a given topic (and what is not known), particularly as it relates to your specific research goals. In this sense it is a summary.

It is also a synthesis, a custom reorganization of the info. You might give a new interpretation of old material or you might trace the intellectual progression of the field, including major debates. How do the various pieces relate to each other? Make sense of the works you find by organizing them in some way. This might be by region, period, method, sources, discipline, thematic focus, author background, political ideology or any other meaningful categorizations you can invent.

Your review ought to contain a very brief discussion of your topic; your appraisal of the literature; and a clear argument, using the works on your topic as evidence, i.e., you discuss the sources in relation to your thesis, not as a separate topic.

The most recent works will appear in the journal literature, but books, government reports, and perhaps local histories will also be helpful. You may use internet sources in the very early stages of research but please do not include any of those in your review (we will discuss the reasons for this in class). Locate a set of sources in the library and select a wide range providing a variety of perspectives. Electronic versions of journal articles are not considered websites for the purposes of the assignment.

Make this webpage your first stop:

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/specific-types-of-writing/literature-review>

Things to think about in your appraisal of each source would include:

- how the work gives you insight into your topic
- the authority or disciplinary background of the author
- the intended audience of the work
- a summary of the work's argument, methods, and conclusions (include strengths and weaknesses)
- biases, reliability of the work via sources they used, how they arrived at their conclusions and
- a comparison with some of your other sources.

You don't need to include each point for every source in the review. Synthesize the most important aspects into a coherent whole.

Ideally you won't have to do much more library research after compiling your literature review. The sources that you uncover and evaluate should be sufficient to launch your archival research and enable your final report.

Marking Rubric.

	Sophisticated 80 - 100	Quite good 70 - 79	Sufficient 60 - 69	Inadequate < 60
Submitted online prior to 9am Feb 1?	Yes.	Yes, but late or not as a pdf.	Yes, though late or not a pdf and required a prompt.	No.
Comments shared with two peers by 4pm on Feb 5 th ?	Yes. Thoughtful, engaged, helpful comments.	Yes, but late, or less than thoughtful.	Yes, though late and required a prompt. Or unhelpful.	No.
Includes a revised project argument?	Yes, a new improved version.	Yes, but some suggested improvements not made.	Present, but not enough improvements.	Not present.
Includes an argument re the literature?	Yes, a tight synthesis of the existing literature.	Yes, though could have stood some more work or communicated in weak fashion.	Barely there or not implemented to structure the assignment.	No argument present.
Good clean prose. Correct grammar, well structured.	Yes, error free and very well structured.	Yes, though the odd error here and there.	Errors peppered throughout.	Very poor and extremely hard to read.

Appropriate length?	Yes, spot on.	Slightly too long or short.	Much too long or short.	Absurdly too long or short.
Sufficient number of high quality sources?	Yes, spot on, and sources are highly relevant for the project.	A few short, or those present are not high quality, or not directly related.	Many missing, or inappropriate sources that are not related to the project. .	Lots of work yet to do here.
Organization of your sources?	Meaningful, intelligent categories or themes of analysis.	Organization present but still needs minor adjustment to pull out most important themes.	Weak organization or inappropriate themes and categories used.	Little to no organization or inappropriate themes or categories used.
Critical of your sources?	Even, persistent evaluation of all sources, detailing strengths and also finding imperfections in all works or correctly identifying biases.	Yes, though perhaps in spotty fashion by not noting strengths or misses important problems in sources collected.	Weak or inconsistent critical eye allowing for inappropriate sources or unclear as to how a work will help you.	Not critical of sources or no indication of how a source will help to support your argument.
Comparison of works?	Key sources compared, or complex relationships from the literature made evident, esp controversy.	A few comparisons made, but missing a few key relationships. No disagreements are identified.	In weak fashion or makes comparisons of wrong works.	No comparative element present in the review.

Formulates questions or identifies areas demanding more study?	Yes, identifies knowledge gaps and begins to chart a path forward.	Yes, attempts to identify gaps, if not entirely successful.	Very weak gesture towards identifying knowledge gaps or no connection made with future strategy.	No knowledge gaps identified and little or no connection made with own future archival work.
Appropriate Citations?	Yes, cites like a pro. Works indicated in footnotes and then a full bibliography at the end.	Yes, though minor errors in form.	Perhaps many errors, or bibliography not present or no distinction between primary and secondary sources.	Many or all citations missing, or no bibliography at the end.