

*Junior Seminar
Spring 2003
Bruce Mills*

RESEARCH ESSAY PROSPECTUS (5 POINTS)

Due by 5 pm on Friday, April 11

Prospectus: A description or account of the chief features of a forthcoming work or proposed enterprise, circulated for the purpose of obtaining support or subscriptions. Also, a description or account of the activities of a school or other educational institution. (*Oxford English Dictionary*)

During the quarter, you will be asked to develop your research essay in a series of stages. The prospectus represents the first stage. As the *OED* definition indicates, you should see this prospectus as a description of critical elements of your “forthcoming work or proposed enterprise.” And, while you may refine/re-define elements of the project between writing the prospectus and submitting a final draft of the essay, you should see this assignment as the place to describe as concretely and clearly as possible what you intend to explore.

For the purposes of this assignment, your prospectus should include the following sections:

1. Brief Narrative (250-500 words)

In this narrative, you should a) characterize key questions or issues that you intend to explore and why, b) identify the primary text(s)/authors(s) that will form a central part of the essay, and c) pose a tentative thesis or organizing question(s).

In response to why you have selected your topic, feel free to offer a brief “history” of your interest and/or to suggest how you see this focus as contributing to your SIP. By “history,” I mean your involvement with particular readings, writing projects, or experiences prior to this class that sparked an interest in or commitment to your topic.

2. Timeline

After the narrative, you should include a preliminary research/writing schedule. In this schedule or timeline, be as specific as possible. That is, think through when you will be able to do library research, when you might wish to schedule a meeting with a reference librarian regarding your topic, when you will identify and retrieve resources, when you will read/review the primary text(s) and secondary materials, etc., etc.

Scoring:

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| 4.5-5 | Prospectus narrows topic or indicates areas that need further narrowing
Offers specific sense of focus texts (esp. primary sources)
Includes clear and distinctive prose; follows directions |
| 4-4.25 | More general sense of direction--though includes questions, issues,
focus texts that provide a starting place
Includes clear prose; follows directions |
| 3.5-3.75 | Direction remains vague; shows need for more specific representation
of questions, issues, and/or text(s)
Prose could be clearer; does not follow directions or does not do so clearly |