The College Essay Is Not Dead: Using Scaffolding and Presentations to Create ChatGPT-Resistant Research Projects

Jennifer Egloff
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ABSTRACT

Comparing and reflecting on the structures and outcomes of research projects for both a required first-year writing course, Writing as Inquiry, and an elective advanced history seminar, Popular Culture and the Scientific Revolution, which the author taught simultaneously at New York University (NYU) Shanghai during the spring 2023 semester, yield several strategies that instructors can implement to help deter students from using ChatGPT, and other AI tools, to generate their research essays. These strategies include making essays one component of larger scaffolded assignments in which students are explicit about their research process; devoting class time to brainstorming and discussion at the beginning of, and key points throughout, a project; providing periodic feedback from the instructor and classmates; requiring students to use available university resources, such as libraries and academic resource centers; and intervening to create additional personalized scaffolding for students who are struggling. By doing so, students can continue to gain the information literacy, critical analysis, and organizational skills—as well as the ability to express themselves clearly—that writing college essays provides.
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In response to the sudden wide-scale availability of ChatGPT, and other artificial intelligence (AI) chatbots, journalist Stephen Marche declared “The College Essay Is Dead” in the title of his December 2022 article in the *Atlantic*. The fact that AI tools can generate full essays at the click of a button is a major cause for alarm and source of anxiety for educators throughout the world, especially those who teach writing and history courses, like I do. Nevertheless, since the information literacy, critical analysis, and organizational skills—as well as the ability to express themselves clearly—that students develop when they research and write essays are invaluable for their subsequent courses and future careers, it would be misguided to abandon college essays entirely.

My experiences at New York University (NYU) Shanghai during the spring 2023 semester, in which I simultaneously taught a required first-year writing course, Writing as Inquiry (WAI), and an elective advanced history seminar, Popular Culture and the Scientific Revolution (PCSR), have enabled me to craft assignments for which it is virtually impossible for students to use AI tools to generate their research essays. Having planned the scaffolded research projects for these courses prior to the sudden wide-scale availability of ChatGPT, I think they serve as valuable case studies, especially because WAI did not have detectable AI-plagiarism issues, while PCSR did.

Comparing and reflecting on the structures of the projects in each course reveal strategies that instructors can implement to make written assignments ChatGPT-resistant. By writing essays as only one component in a larger scaffolded project, which tracks students’ progress and provides numerous opportunities for feedback and intervention, students gain confidence as they develop their ideas incrementally. Since each aspect of the larger scaffolded assignment is manageable, students are less likely to face desperate situations—such as not having started the project until the day before the deadline—which could make them feel as though using an AI tool to generate their essay is the only viable option. Moreover, requiring students to do interactive oral presentations, in which they explicitly discuss their research process and answer clarification questions from their instructor and classmates, provides an additional incentive to do their own work.

Not surprisingly, content-driven courses can benefit from incorporating some of the strategies of method-driven writing courses, including worksheets that help guide analysis, one-on-one meetings with the instructor, and library and peer feedback workshops, as well as in-class activities, such as brainstorming and small-group discussions. As with all assignments, providing students with clear prompts and rubrics, explaining the expectations in class—including policies related to ChatGPT usage—and allowing opportunities for questions decrease ambiguity and help students feel confident that they can optimize their performance by doing their own work, rather than relying on a chatbot to do their work for them. I have included the WAI and PCSR prompts, some scaffolding assignments, and rubrics in the appendices.

NYU Shanghai’s diverse student population, combined with my interdisciplinary training,
influences how I structure my courses and plan my individual class sessions. As a Sino-American joint venture, NYU Shanghai has a student population of more than two thousand, with about half of its students coming from China, one-quarter from the United States, and the other quarter from over seventy other countries throughout the world. The majority of our students speak English as a second language.

A product of my interdisciplinary training in early modern Atlantic history and the history of science and mathematics, PCSR is an advanced history seminar, in which students learn to use historians’ methodologies by analyzing primary sources and engaging with relevant scholarship. As a class, we explore the dissemination and reception of some of the quintessential concepts of the Scientific Revolution within their social and cultural contexts, as well as the interrelationship between popular culture and scientific processes. Each student then applies what they learned throughout the course to a research project on an approved topic of their choice—which can focus on any period and geographical region. The end product is a ten-to-thirteen-page argumentative essay and associated oral presentation.

Although this course is primarily intended for advanced humanities majors focusing on history, it is open to all undergraduate students. During the spring 2023 semester, fourteen of the seventeen students enrolled in the course were first-year students and the other three were second-year students. None of the students had declared humanities as their major at the beginning of the semester, and most students had not taken any college-level history courses previously. This enrollment is not surprising, because many NYU Shanghai students are interested in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) topics; PCSR fulfills NYU Shanghai’s science, technology, and society (STS) core requirement; all third-year students are required to study away; and fourth-year students are likely focusing on their capstone projects, which they need to complete to graduate.

The enrollment of the course more than doubled during the two-week drop/add period, which I assume was related to positive feedback disseminated by initially enrolled students. Seventeen students took PCSR, which was capped at eighteen. This is quite high for an NYU Shanghai humanities course. It is not uncommon for such courses to have single-digit enrollment. While I am very glad that so many students wanted to take my course, the fact that some students did not begin attending until the fifth class session led to some challenges.

To ensure engagement and facilitate feedback, I had each student do a variety of activities on a Google doc that they shared with me. Unfortunately, some of the students who joined late never caught up with the activities they had missed during the first two weeks of class and did not complete many of the subsequent activities either, which suggests that they were not fully engaging with the course materials. Although NYU Shanghai faculty from virtually every department have discussed the pedagogical benefits of a shorter drop/add period with the administration, we have repeatedly been informed that it is unlikely to be implemented anytime soon.

Unlike PCSR, which is an advanced elective course, all students are required to take WAI during the spring semester of their first year. Since we need to offer it to about five hundred students at
the same time, it is taught by numerous instructors. Although each instructor's course is unique, all WAI courses have common learning outcomes, and it is customary to assign a research project as the final major assignment. The goal of the research project is to build on the reading, writing, and critical analysis skills the students have been developing throughout the course, while also helping students develop their information literacy skills.

During the spring 2023 semester, I taught three sections of WAI. One section had twelve students and two each had thirteen students. The enrollment is intentionally kept around twelve students per section to facilitate discussion and timely feedback. Although some students joined the course during the two-week drop/add period, it was not on the same scale as PCSR, and most students put in the effort necessary to catch up quickly. Both PCSR and WAI met for seventy-five minutes Mondays and Wednesdays throughout the fourteen-week semester.

Since ChatGPT and related tools were a new technology, faculty members created working groups to explore the pedagogical implications, and the administration allowed each instructor to decide whether and how they would use it in their courses. I made it clear in my syllabi, on the project prompts, and verbally throughout the semester that the use of AI tools was strictly prohibited for all aspects of the course and that choosing to use them was a violation of NYU Shanghai’s academic integrity policies.

When creating the scaffolded research projects, I drew on my experiences teaching a variety of history and writing courses. I divided up the research process into a series of manageable steps, as indicated on the table below. In PCSR, the library workshop was intended to help students prepare their topic and initial source assessment assignment. I provided feedback on this assignment to help them choose a focused topic, for which relevant sources were available and about which they could say something meaningful in ten-to-thirteen pages. Since they were required to put forth an argument, support it with primary source evidence, engage with relevant scholarship, and include properly formatted Chicago-style citations, there were a variety of assignments in which students reported and reflected on their progress, including the bibliography of secondary sources and the primary source reflection. As I describe below, I provided feedback on each of these assignments to help them prepare their progress report and project outline, which they discussed with both their classmates and me in the peer feedback workshop and primary source workshop, respectively. Therefore, by the time they submitted their final essay, they had already completed—and received feedback on—five assignments, which included detailed analysis of their sources and an outline of their intended essay. Since they already did all of this work and needed to incorporate it into their final submission, it would have been virtually impossible to use AI to generate their essay at that point.

Although the course material focused primarily on the early modern Atlantic, each student was encouraged to choose a topic that interested them, without temporal or geographical limitations. During the spring 2023 semester, students chose a variety of interesting topics. For instance, one student explored how scientific ideas were presented to children in early Chinese Communist films, while another analyzed popular YouTube videos that claim that the Quran predicted modern science, and another examined the connections between gender and brewing in early modern England. From the first day of class, the project prompt and a list of potential topics were posted on Brightspace, our course learning management system. I encouraged students to start
thinking about topics right away and come to office hours to discuss their ideas.

As shown on table 1, a librarian came to the tenth class session to provide a workshop intended to help students find primary sources, and their topic and initial source assessment was due at the end of the following week. Between class eighteen, in the ninth week of the semester, and the end of the thirteenth week, when the final essay was due, there were a variety of scaffolding assignments, which are included in the appendix. As mentioned above, these were intended to help students find and analyze their sources and develop their ideas. For instance, on the primary source reflection, progress report, and primary source workshop prompt, I asked them to answer the following questions:

What is your research question?

What is your working thesis statement?

How have you located your primary sources?

I then asked them to provide a Chicago-style citation for each source and a paragraph explaining how they planned to use it to answer their research question and support their thesis. Building on their bibliography of secondary sources and reflection scaffolding assignment, I also asked them to relate these primary sources to the secondary sources they indicated they would be using. To facilitate their analysis of primary sources, I provided a worksheet for them to complete for each source. Part of the assignment required them to submit one of their worksheets and be prepared to discuss it with two of their classmates during our small-group discussion.

I encouraged students to consult with me about their in-progress scaffolding assignments and gave them written feedback on their submissions, often encouraging them to narrow their topic, refine their research question, and consult the additional sources I suggested. During the final

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Scaffolding Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Library Workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>12*</td>
<td>Topic and Initial Source Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18*</td>
<td>Bibliography of Secondary Sources and Reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20*</td>
<td>Primary Source Reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21*</td>
<td>Progress Report and Primary Source Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22*</td>
<td>Project Outline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25*</td>
<td>Peer Feedback Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26*</td>
<td>Final Essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-28</td>
<td>Project Presentations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Indicates that it is due the following Friday.
class session’s discussion about the fundamental takeaways of the course, several students emphasized that the workshops we had during the twenty-first class session, in which students discussed their progress in small groups, and the twenty-fifth class session, in which students gave each other feedback on their outlines, were especially useful. Some students highlighted the utility of the peer feedback prompt, contained in the appendix, which both provided guidance about the aspects of their classmate’s outline on which they should focus and ensured that they received substantive comments on their own outlines—as opposed to the customary “pretty good” that often happened in their other courses when no guidelines were provided.

I also encouraged—but did not require—students to follow up on the library workshop by making individual appointments with a librarian. The students who chose to do so tended to include more relevant primary sources in their project than students who chose to find sources on their own. I also encouraged them to visit NYU Shanghai’s Academic Resource Center (ARC), which can help with conceptualizing, formulating arguments, drafting, and editing. In addition, many students chose to discuss their progress with me during office hours. Since this is a content-driven course, students were expected to do the initial aspects of the project in addition to their other required reading and assignments, which is common in many courses.

Since WAI is primarily focused on methodology, from the time that students began their projects during the seventeenth class session, all of the assigned sources and class content were intended to help them develop their research projects, including classes devoted to research, drafting, and presentation strategies. As indicated on the prompt, included in the appendix, students were required to use NYU Libraries resources to research and write a seven-to-ten-page paper on an approved topic of their choice. Since they were required to make an argument, I encouraged them to choose a controversial topic that was narrow enough that they could research it in the allotted time and write something meaningful about it in seven-to-ten pages. Among the three sections, students chose a wide variety of topics, including transgender women in sports, the ethics of self-driving cars, and a comparative analysis of US and Chinese policies on Taiwan.

To discourage the superficial analysis that often results when students are required to use numerous sources, I required them to use only a minimum of three secondary and two tertiary sources. They were also welcome to use primary sources to help support their argument. Unlike PCSR where meetings were recommended, WAI students were required to meet with either me, a librarian, or the ARC and to write a one-paragraph reflection and plan of action. This proved to be a successful method, which I plan to require for all subsequent courses with substantial writing components.

As shown on table 2, WAI also had a library workshop and several of the scaffolding assignments were similar to those assigned for PCSR. For instance, I provided worksheets to help students analyze their sources. Since I devoted about twenty minutes of class time to individual brainstorming and subsequent small-group discussion of ideas for their projects during class seventeen, the library workshop in WAI was much more successful than the PCSR counterpart, where I had asked students to brainstorm ideas individually outside of class. Having given each WAI student personalized feedback about topics they brainstormed, I was able to help them put the research strategies that the librarian suggested into action during the library workshop.
Most students left the workshop with at least some idea of what their topic would be and some sources they could consult. I intend to devote some class time to brainstorming and discussing topics in PCSR in the future. Although doing activities during class leaves less time for the discussion of assigned content, spending even a little time—especially at the beginning and key points throughout the process—can help empower students to formulate their own ideas, rather than relying on AI tools.

**Table 2: WAI Scaffolding Assignments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Scaffolding Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Individual and Group Brainstorming in Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Library Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20*</td>
<td>Topic and Initial Source Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>One Annotated Bibliography Entry • In class Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Draft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Peer Feedback Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26*</td>
<td>Final Essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-28</td>
<td>Project Presentations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Indicates that it is due the following Thursday/Friday.

Since analyzing sources can be challenging for students, we spend a lot of time doing it together in classes, and, as mentioned above, I also provided worksheets intended to facilitate source evaluation and self-reflection. Moreover, I tried to ensure that students received the optimal benefit from their peer feedback by requiring each student to comment on specific aspects of their partner’s draft (WAI) or outline (PCSR). Since many of the scaffolding assignments required students to discuss their research process and analyze their sources, using ChatGPT to generate their final essays would not have been much help, because they would still have had to incorporate their specific sources and analysis into the essay. Despite the prohibition of using AI tools, I suppose that it is possible that some students did do that. If so, I applaud them for doing so in a way that was not detectable.

To further guard against AI plagiarism, in both classes, students were required to prepare five-to-seven-minute presentations about their projects, in which they discussed their research process and answered clarification questions from me and their classmates. The fact that students chose topics that interested them—and presented about them in front of their peers—contributed to the majority of students putting in a lot of effort and ultimately crafting well-structured essays and giving successful presentations. However, several PCSR students did not fully engage in the scaffolding process—likely choosing to use the prohibited AI tools, rather than doing their own work, as I explain below—and ultimately did not successfully complete the course. The following detailed discussion of the choices to (most likely) use ChatGPT that several PCSR students made illustrates the limitations of AI tools and the methods instructors can use to help struggling students get on track.
Ideally, NYU Shanghai students should have completed WAI prior to taking PCSR, so that they would have the information literacy and analytical skills necessary to do a research project. Unfortunately, that was not the case during spring 2023. Since the vast majority of students in PCSR were first-year students, I spent extra class time and provided additional office hours to help students develop their analytical and argument-formation skills. Some second-year students said that they appreciated this also, because their writing foundation was somewhat rocky due to the abrupt switch to online instruction as a result of the COVID-19 lockdowns in Shanghai during the spring 2022 semester. Nevertheless, despite these extra preparations, many PCSR students were ill-equipped to complete the first assignment, which was intended to help them prepare for the historiographical aspects of their project by putting two works of “Scientific Revolution” scholarship in conversation.

Five of the seventeen students submitted essays with noteworthy nonsensical elements, including claims that images or texts had nonexistent details and references to imaginary sources. Having attended a variety of ChatGPT pedagogy workshops, I assessed that these seemed to be the types of responses generated by a chatbot. At that time—early March 2023—there was no way of detecting whether something had been generated by AI, so I consulted with the dean of Academic Affairs, who is responsible for evaluating cases of suspected academic integrity violations. We agreed that since we did not have definitive evidence, I should meet with each student to discuss the situation and they would receive the grades that their nonsensical essays earned according to the rubric, which is included in the appendix. According to the parameters of the assignment, each of the five students earned between 60 to 70 percent of the total points. After the meetings, two students began to take the class more seriously, by engaging with the sources and portfolio activities, participating in class discussions, and coming to office hours to consult about their assignments. They both ended up doing very well in the course, submitting well-reasoned and coherent final projects.

Perhaps thinking that they had “gotten away with it,” the other three seemed to have continued using ChatGPT for their scaffolding assignments, submitting extremely vague—yet long-winded—responses for their initial and subsequent assessments of primary and secondary sources. Vague and rambling responses are another tell-tale sign of ChatGPT usage. After reviewing their submissions, I called them in for individual meetings, telling them that their answers seemed as though they were generated by AI but giving them the benefit of the doubt that they had done their own work. I also told them that they needed to narrow their focus considerably and engage more with the author’s arguments and use of evidence, rather than merely providing vague summary.

Nevertheless, when these three students had virtually nothing to say at the progress report and primary source workshop during class twenty-one, it was clear that they had not done much, if any, of the foundational work. None of the three students submitted an outline. A workshop presented by NYU Shanghai’s Center for Teaching and Learning articulated the problem using Bloom’s taxonomy of educational objectives, which was developed by the educational psychologist Benjamin Bloom and his collaborators in the 1950s and continues to influence curriculum and assessment design during the twenty-first century. Since the students had not fully engaged with the lower-order skills—at the base of the pyramid—including “understand” and “apply,” it made it difficult for them to “analyze” or “evaluate” sources and virtually impossible to “create” an original work of scholarship.
Even if I had asked them to submit a draft instead of an outline, it would have been very difficult for them to have used ChatGPT to generate it, because in their essays students were required to use the sources they had indicated on their scaffolding assignments. Not submitting the outline also disqualified these students from doing the peer feedback assignment. Since the outline and peer feedback together accounted for 8 percent of their grade, they had already done very poorly on their other assignments, and it was unlikely they would be able to complete the entire project by the deadline, they each decided to withdraw from the course.

Although I met with these students several times and encouraged them to apply their own critical analysis to their topics and sources, I ultimately learned that more structured interventions are necessary. Regardless of whether a student uses ChatGPT, completing scaffolding assignments unsatisfactorily indicates that they need additional guidance. In the future, after individual meetings, I will require struggling students to revise or redo the assignment. Then I will work with each student to create additional scaffolding, by breaking the assignment down further. For instance, since the bibliography of secondary sources requires students to discuss at least three sources they are planning to use, I could have them submit a draft of their discussion of one of the sources a week ahead of the deadline to ensure that they are on the right track. I will also require periodic check-ins, as well as meetings with me, a librarian, or the ARC, as appropriate. Although this is a fair amount of extra work, it is time well spent to ensure that students learn the foundational skills they will need to thrive in their educations and careers.

Ultimately, these experiences taught me a lot about strategies I can use to help minimize students’ impulse to use ChatGPT and steps I can take when illicit usage is suspected. Scaffolding assignments and periodic feedback from the instructor and classmates are an excellent way to ensure that students are making progress on their research and writing, while simultaneously instilling them with confidence that their own work will earn them a respectable
grade. Devoting some class time to brainstorming and discussing ideas and offering guidance in the initial stages and at key points throughout the project are instrumental, as is collaborating with the library and the ARC to create workshops geared to the specific assignment. These workshops are an excellent way to orient students and ensure that they are engaging with the project from the start, and they can help encourage them to seek additional individualized help from these resources. Moreover, requiring students to schedule, attend, and reflect on individual meetings with the instructor, a librarian, or the ARC can provide students with another level of valuable feedback. Since AI tools are rapidly becoming more sophisticated and currently available AI detectors are not reliable, it is often difficult to know for sure whether a student engaged in unscrupulous behavior or produced a response themselves. Regardless, in the future I will work more closely with students who submit vague or nonsensical scaffolding assignments—essentially creating additional individualized scaffolding—to help them narrow their topics, choose and analyze appropriate sources, formulate their arguments, and use their sources to support them. By helping students feel empowered by doing their own work, we can ensure that the college essay will remain alive.
Appendix A: Writing as Inquiry (WAI) Materials

Essay #3

Researching, Writing, and Presenting

Prompt

Use NYU Libraries materials to research and write a seven-to-ten-page essay on an approved topic of your choice. You will want to choose a topic that is narrow enough to be researched in the allotted time and with resources available via the NYU Libraries databases. Since you will need to formulate an argument, choosing a controversial topic is encouraged.

Using at least three secondary and at least two tertiary sources, your essay should put forth a clear thesis that you support with properly cited evidence. You are welcome, but not required, to use primary source evidence to help support your argument. All sources must be cited using Chicago-style citations.

You will also do a five-to-seven-minute presentation based on your research and the argument you make in your essay.

For this assignment, you are required to have an appointment at the ARC, with a librarian, or with Dr. Egloff, for which you will write a one-paragraph reflection and plan of action.

Scaffolding

Wednesday, March 29, 2023 – Library Workshop

Wednesday, April 12, 2023 – No Class – Individual Meetings

Thursday, April 13, 2023 – Essay #3 Scaffolding – Upload Topic and Initial Source Assessment to Brightspace by 10pm.

Monday, April 17, 2023 – Upload In-Progress Bibliography with at least one Annotation to Brightspace by 8am. Bring four paper copies to class to facilitate discussion.

Wednesday, April 19, 2023 – Upload Annotated Bibliography to Brightspace by 10pm.

Sunday, April 23, 2023 – Upload Draft to Brightspace by 10pm.

Wednesday, April 26, 2023 – Upload Peer Feedback by 8am and bring three hard copies to class. Be prepared to discuss your peer feedback with your classmate during class.

Wednesday, May 3, 2023 – No Class – Individual Meetings. Reminder: This is the final day to...
have meetings prior to Essay #3 due date. Upload one-paragraph Reflection on Meeting (with ARC, a librarian, or Dr. Egloff) and Plan of Action to Brightspace by 10pm.


**Monday, May 8, 2023** – Upload Presentation to Brightspace by 8am. Be prepared to do your presentation during class.

**Formatting**

Use 12-pt Times New Roman font, double-spaced, justified left, with one-inch margins for the body of your paper.

Include a header in 11-pt Times New Roman font, which contains the course name and your section number on the left and your full name and page numbers on the right.

Footnotes should be in 10-pt Times New Roman font, single-spaced, justified left, and in sequential order. The “References” feature on Word makes formatting them this way simple. If you are unsure how to use it, please ask Dr. Egloff for guidance.

You are not required to include a separate Works Cited page.

Please do not include an MLA heading.

**Grading**

Essay #3 accounts for 30 percent of your grade, which is distributed as follows.

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topic and Initial Source Assessment</td>
<td>1 point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Progress Bibliography with at least one Annotation</td>
<td>1 point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>5 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft</td>
<td>1 point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Feedback</td>
<td>1 point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-paragraph Reflection on meeting (with ARC, librarian, or Dr. Egloff) and Plan of Action</td>
<td>1 point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Version of Essay #3 uploaded to Brightspace by 10pm and a stapled paper version submitted in the following class session</td>
<td>15 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>5 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>30 points</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rubrics

Each of the one-point scaffolding assignments will be graded for completion. The final version of the essay will be evaluated using the rubric posted on Brightspace.

Choosing not to bring/submit paper versions will result in a 5 percent reduction.

Annotated Bibliography – A separate prompt and rubric will be posted on Brightspace.

Presentation – A separate prompt and rubric will be posted on Brightspace.

Academic Integrity

All students are expected to work independently and adhere to NYU Shanghai’s guidelines for academic integrity. Each portion of this assignment will be evaluated using anti-plagiarism software. Use of AI tools (ChatGPT, CopyGenius, etc.) for drafting or editing written work is not permitted in this course. Doing so is a violation of NYU’s academic integrity policy.

Annotated Bibliography

Follow the guidelines in section 53d of Hacker and Sommers’s Rules for Writers, 10th edition, to “construct an annotated bibliography” for all of your required sources.

You should do a Chicago-style “bibliography” citation for each source and organize the entries alphabetically by the authors’ last names.

As Hacker and Sommers explain, each annotation should include both summary and evaluation.

Your summary should include the following:

• Author’s credentials
• Purpose of the article
• Thesis
• Author’s main ideas
• Evidence the author uses to support those ideas

Your evaluation should include the following:

• Assessment of the reputability of the source (similarly to Essay #2)
• Evaluation of how and why this source might help you answer your research question
• Indication of how you plan to use this source in your essay (e.g., background, evidence, counterargument)

Be sure to include Chicago-style “notes” citations in footnotes to cite the page numbers of the sources as you describe them, which are referred to as “internal” citations on the rubric, as well as any “external” sources you consult.

**Formatting**

Include a header in 11-pt Times New Roman font, which contains the course name and your section number on the left and your full name and page numbers on the right.

Bibliography entries should be justified left. The second and subsequent line should be indented one-half inch.

Annotations should be justified left and not indented.

For presentation purposes, and to save space, everything should be single-spaced. Be sure to include space between the bibliographical citation and the annotation, and the annotation and the next bibliographical citation.

Note: While you are only required to include bibliographical information and annotations for the sources described on the prompt, including at least the bibliographical information for all sources you are considering using is recommended.

### Annotated Bibliography Rubric

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Possible</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
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<td>• Evaluation</td>
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Prepare a five-to-seven-minute PowerPoint presentation in which you introduce your topic, argument, and evidence to your classmates. Be sure to address all of the following aspects and consult the rubric to optimize your evaluation.

Include a title slide containing your name, class name and section number, and title of your project.

Research process:

- What was your initial topic idea?
  - What was your initial research question?
- What resources did you consult to initially explore your topic?
• What search terms did you use?

• How did you refine your topic and research question during your research process?

Background – Explain the relevant background information for your topic. Remember to tell your reader when things happened.

Scholarly Conversations – Describe the scholarly conversations surrounding this topic.

• Discuss the specific sources that you used to learn about these conversations.

Argument – Clearly articulate the argument that you are making in your essay.

Evidence – Discuss the specific evidence that you use to support your argument.

• Incorporate visual representations as appropriate.

Conclude by suggesting additional research that scholars could do to further explore this topic in general and your research question in particular.

Save at least one minute for questions.

Your final slide should be a Works Cited page, which has Chicago-style “bibliography” citations in alphabetical order for all the sources from your essay.

Throughout your presentation, you should include Chicago-style “notes” citations referring to specific page numbers in the notes section of each slide.

Be mindful of the time, speak loudly and clearly, and create a visually appealing presentation.
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<th>Evaluation</th>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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Appendix B: Popular Culture and the Scientific Revolution (PCSR) Materials

Project Overview

A fundamental aspect of this course is a project on an approved topic of your choice. While the topic must be related to popular culture and science, broadly conceived, you are not required to focus on Europe or the early modern period.

By the end of the semester, you will research and write a ten-to-thirteen-page paper on your approved topic.

Throughout the semester, you will receive feedback on a variety of scaffolded assignments. This process is intended to help you develop your research, critical analysis, argument formation, and writing skills.

A list of potential topics is available on the course website. You may choose from this list or propose a topic of your choice. Please feel encouraged to discuss potential ideas with the professor as you think of them.

Written Component

Prepare a ten-to-thirteen-page paper on your approved topic that

• Puts forth an argument
• Supports it with primary source evidence
• Engages with relevant scholarship
• Includes the required number sources, with accompanying Chicago-style citations
• Follows the formatting parameters (see below)

Academic Integrity

All students are expected to work independently and adhere to NYU Shanghai’s guidelines for academic integrity. Each portion of this assignment will be evaluated using anti-plagiarism software. Use of AI tools (ChatGPT, CopyGenius, etc.) for drafting or editing written work is not permitted in this course. Doing so is a violation of NYU’s academic integrity policy.
Parameters

You are required to use at least four primary and four peer-reviewed secondary sources. You may also use tertiary sources, but you are not required to do so.

Header

Include an 11-pt Times New Roman font header in which the name of our course is justified left and your first and last name is justified right, along with the page number.

Body

Begin the body of your paper with a title that is centered and either in bold or underlined.

Use 12-pt Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with one-inch margins.

Include Chicago-style footnotes – see chicagomanualofstyle.org.

Footer

Format your footnotes in 10-pt Times New Roman font.

---

**Topic Selection and Initial Source Assessment**

Review the prompt for the project, as well as the list of suggested project topics. You are free to choose a topic from the list or choose your own topic. You should choose a topic that has some scientific aspect—broadly conceived—and has some relation to popular culture. You are not required to choose a topic related to Europe or the early modern period, but you are welcome to do so. Since you will be putting in effort to research and writing about this topic, it should be a topic that you find interesting. Making an appointment with a librarian is highly recommended!

Be sure to include Chicago-style bibliographical citations for all sources that you list.

What topic are you considering researching?

How does it relate to science (broadly conceived)?

How does it relate to popular culture?

What NYU Libraries database(s) do you think will have relevant primary sources?

Why? (Review the notes from the library workshop regarding how to use NYU Libraries databases to locate primary sources. The link to the slides is posted on Brightspace under the Class 10 tab.)
Locate at least two primary sources that you think could be useful for your project. For each source, include at least one sentence explaining why you think it would be useful.

Use NYU Libraries databases to locate at least two secondary sources that you think could be useful for your project. For each source, include at least one sentence explaining why you think it would be useful. (Note: The secondary sources should be journal articles or scholarly books, as opposed to encyclopedia entries or textbooks. JSTOR is an excellent source for scholarly articles and the “Books & More” tab is a good place to search for books.)

Rubric

This assignment is graded for completion.

Project Scaffolding: Bibliography of Secondary Sources and Reflection

Complete the following and submit it by the deadline. Writing your responses in a non-bold font is recommended.

Write a paragraph describing your specific topic and what you have done to research it so far. Include your research question. If you have not yet formulated a research question, it is wise to do so now. (10 points)

List at least three secondary sources that you are considering using for your project in alphabetical order, using Chicago-style “Bibliography” citations. (35 points)

Write a paragraph about each source, in which you summarize it, offer a brief analysis of the argument and use of evidence, and discuss how you plan to use it for your project. Be sure to include Chicago-style “Notes” citation in footnotes to the individual pages you are referencing. (30 points)

Review the deadlines for the components of the project as indicated on the syllabus. Write a plan of action for the remainder of the semester as well as a timeline for how you will complete each component on time. (25 points)

Primary Source Reflection, Progress Report, and Primary Source Workshop

Primary Source Reflection

Complete the following. Be sure to cite all sources using Chicago-style citations. You should use “bibliography” citations when listing sources and “notes” citations—referring to specific page numbers—in footnotes, when you are discussing them. As with all assignments, failure to include citations is a violation of academic integrity.
What is your research question? (3 points)

What is your working thesis statement? (2 points)

How have you located your primary sources? (2 points)

List all the primary sources that you are considering using. (Use Chicago-style bibliography citations and list the sources alphabetically. You are required to list at least three primary sources. However, it is highly recommended that you list all sources that you are considering, so that you can get the best possible feedback.) (10 points)

Include a paragraph for each source, in which you describe what it is and how it helps you answer your research question and support your working thesis. (15 points)

How do these primary sources relate to the secondary sources you submitted for the “Bibliography of Secondary Sources and Reflection” assignment and any additional secondary sources you have analyzed since then? (10 points)

Do you plan to look for additional primary sources? If so, where? (3 points)

Progress Report (5 points)

Be prepared to discuss your answers to all of the above questions, report on any additional progress you have made, and present on one primary source during the scheduled class session.

Primary Source Analysis

Choose one of the primary sources that you are considering using for your project and analyze it according to the following criteria. (It is advisable to do this for all of your sources.)

Bring three physical copies of this analysis, as well as a link to the source with you to class on the day of the workshop. Choosing not to bring the required physical copies will result in a 10 percent penalty.

Rubric – Five points for each bold heading.

Author – If the author of the document is not clear, be sure to indicate that. What other information is available that could offer some indication?

• Credentials – What is the author’s training? Where were they employed? And so on.

• Impression of the source based on this information

Full Title of the Source
Date of Creation – If it is not clear, be sure to indicate that. Offer its approximate date of origin along with a justification for your estimate.

• Previous editions? – For texts. If it is an instrument or artifact, consider the similarities and differences with similar items that preceded it.

• When?

• Changes between editions

Publication/Creation Details

• Assess the significance

Intended Audience

Project – What was the author hoping to accomplish? Do you feel as though they did accomplish it?

Arguments/Intentions

• Evidence – What sources/strategies did the author use to support their points?

• Do you find these to be convincing? Why or why not?

Contemporaries – Does the author engage with contemporaries/predecessors? If so, in what way?

• Are you familiar with the work(s) of these contemporaries/predecessors?

• Do you think that it is worthwhile to become familiar with it/them? Why/why not?

What role will this source serve in your project?

Next Steps

• Based on this source, what, if any, additional primary sources will you analyze? Why?

• Based on this source, what, if any, additional secondary sources will you analyze? Why?

Outline

Working Thesis Statement (10 points)

Outline – Create a “Formal Outline” based on the criteria we discussed in class.4 (45 points)
By providing as much detail as possible, your classmate will be able to provide you the best possible peer feedback.

**Works Cited** – Include a Chicago-style bibliography of all sources you intend to use. Remember that you are required to use at least four primary sources and at least four secondary sources. You should also include any tertiary sources that you plan to use. (45 points)

---

**Peer Feedback**

**Project Outline**

Each student will offer feedback on the outline of a classmate’s research project. As Hacker and Sommers highlight in *Rules for Writers*, “It is your job to offer thoughtful, encouraging comments to show peers what they’re doing well and how they might build on their strengths.”

Annotate your classmate’s outline.

- Make notes in the margin with positive feedback, questions you may have, aspects that you think need more explanation, etc.

- Note if you think that anything would benefit from being removed or rearranged.

Write a one-to-two-page double-spaced analysis of the outline, with suggestions on how it could be improved prior to drafting the essay. Your analysis should be written in paragraph form, as opposed to bullets. Refer to the numbered points on your classmate’s outline throughout. (If they did not include numbers, please add them as part of your annotations.)

Be sure to address the following.

- Restate your classmate’s main idea in your own words.

  - “After reading your outline, my big takeaway is...”

- Thesis

  - Is it clear, specific, and concise?

  - Suggest a way to rephrase it.

- Historical Context

  - Does your classmate provide enough information about their topic for someone who knows nothing about it to understand their argument and analysis? Particularly, do they say *when* and *where* things happened?

  - If not, what would you suggest they add?

---

If you think that they include too much detail, what do you suggest they remove?

Required Secondary Sources

Does your classmate use at least four secondary sources?

Do they use these sources effectively?
  - If not, what would you suggest they add?
  - If you think that they include too much detail, what do you suggest they remove?
  - In what ways could this analysis be improved?

Required Primary Sources

Does your classmate use at least four primary sources?

Do they use these sources effectively?
  - If not, what would you suggest they add?
  - If you think that they include too much detail, what do you suggest they remove?
  - In what ways could this analysis be improved?

Overall Argument

Are you convinced by your classmate's overall argument and use of evidence?
  - Why or why not?
  - If not, suggest opportunities for improvement.

Organization

Is the outline easy to follow?
  - If not, make some suggestions for reorganization.

Title

Does the title fulfill its intended function of catching the reader’s attention, indicating what the essay is about, and hinting at the argument?
  - Suggest at least one alternative title.

Conclude by highlighting:
• Two fundamental strengths

• Two aspects that need the most attention

Upload the following to Brightspace as one file by the deadline. Also email them to your peer feedback partner and bring three physical copies to class (one for each of you and one for Dr. Egloff).

• Your one-to-two-page (double-spaced) analysis of the essay

• The original essay with your annotations

Project Presentation

Prepare a five-to-seven-minute PowerPoint presentation in which you introduce your topic, argument, and evidence to your classmates. Be sure to address all of the following aspects and consult the rubric to optimize your evaluation.

Include a title slide containing your name, the course name, and title of your project.

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### Appendix C: Essay Rubric (WAI and PCSR)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>F</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thesis Statement and Content</td>
<td>- Thesis statement is easily identifiable, clear, and focused.</td>
<td>- Thesis statement is identifiable but somewhat vague.</td>
<td>- Thesis statement is missing, but the essay has a clear argument.</td>
<td>- Thesis statement is missing, and the essay does not have a clear argument.</td>
<td>- Fails to answer prompt. - Below minimum expectations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(50%)</td>
<td>- Fully answers the prompt with excellent detail.</td>
<td>- Mostly answers the prompt with good detail.</td>
<td>- Somewhat answers the prompt with some detail.</td>
<td>- Partially answers the prompt with spotty detail.</td>
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<td>(45–50%)</td>
<td>- All concepts are accurately explained.</td>
<td>(45–50%)</td>
<td>(40% - 45%)</td>
<td>(35–40%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evidence and Analysis</td>
<td>- Consistently uses reliable sources.</td>
<td>- Mostly uses reliable sources.</td>
<td>- Uses some reliable sources.</td>
<td>- Uses few reliable sources.</td>
<td>- Does not use reliable sources. - No critical analysis.</td>
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<td>(30%)</td>
<td>- Critical analysis of all key concepts.</td>
<td>(27–30%)</td>
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<td>(0–18%)</td>
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<td>(24–27%)</td>
<td>(21–24%)</td>
<td>(18–21%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citations</td>
<td>- Citations are included in all relevant places and formatted perfectly.</td>
<td>- Citations are included in all relevant places, with minor formatting errors.</td>
<td>- Citations are included in all relevant places, with significant formatting errors.</td>
<td>- Some missing or incorrect citations.</td>
<td>- Many missing or incorrect citations. - Academic integrity issue.</td>
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<td>Format (10%)</td>
<td>- Fully meets expectations for academic writing. - No errors in paragraph formatting. - No errors in spelling or grammar. (10%)</td>
<td>- Mostly meets expectations for academic writing. - Few errors in paragraph formatting. - Few errors in spelling or grammar. (9%)</td>
<td>- Somewhat meets expectations for academic writing. - Some errors in paragraph formatting. - Some errors in spelling or grammar. - Errors do not cause strain for the reader. (7–8%)</td>
<td>- Meets few expectations for academic writing. - Multiple errors in paragraph formatting. - Multiple errors in spelling or grammar. - Errors cause strain for the reader. (5–6%)</td>
<td>- Below minimum academic expectations. (0–5%)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

N.B. – The expectations for academic writing are indicated in the style guide. Be sure to closely review them prior to submitting your essay.
AUTHOR BIO

Jennifer Egloff A strong advocate of interdisciplinarity, Jennifer Egloff combines her PhD training in early modern Atlantic history and the history of science and her undergraduate training in mathematics in both her teaching and research. Having a joint appointment in NYU Shanghai’s Writing Program and Humanities Department, Egloff teaches the two-course writing sequence that all students are required to take, elective introductory and advanced interdisciplinary history of science and mathematics courses, and introductory mathematics courses. Her research explores multivalent ways that Anglophone individuals used numerical methods and mathematical techniques to confront challenges brought on by the opening of the Atlantic to increased exploration and commerce, competing religious philosophies, and increased availability of information. Her current book project, “Apocalyptic Atlantic,” explores the impact that the discovery of the Americas, and ongoing events within and across the Atlantic, had on conceptions of the Apocalypse and predictions of when and how the “End Times” would unfold.

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