

## Mellon Initiative Course Revision Grant Report Guidelines

The purpose of the “blog reports” is to create resources for other arts and humanities faculty who are considering integrating research skills and opportunities into their courses. Your report will be made available through the Mellon Initiative website. Please keep in mind this broader audience when you write.

Please use the following questions as a kind of template:

*What course did you modify? Tell us about it (e.g., dept, level, type of students, goals, etc.). Why did you choose to modify this course?*

SPMT 3316 (History of American Sport). This course is offered as an upper-division elective of the sport management minor and has SPMT 1312 (Sport in Society) as a pre-requisite. The spring 2014 course had 20 students (9 graduating seniors, 3 other seniors, 5 juniors, and 3 sophomores). The course description, as it appears in the catalogue, reads: “This course explores the historical evolution of American sports from colonization to globalization. The course examines sport experiences in colonial America, the antebellum health reform movement, sport and social changes during the progressive era, and the rise of modern sport.” SPMT 3316 has the following course objectives:

As a result of completing this course, students should be able to:

1. Detail how American sport evolved as a result of the political, economic, and religious power structures during major historical periods;
2. Discuss the impact of Title IX and desegregation on modern sport;
3. Describe the impact of television and technology on American sport;
4. Effectively use a variety of resources to explore a current issue in American sport from a historical perspective;
5. Evaluate the appropriateness of a source for use in scholarly research; and
6. Understand the elements involved in writing and presenting a scholarly research paper.

I choose to modify this course because there was an opportunity to directly integrate the specific goals of the Mellon Initiative into the content (e.g. “greater integration of research skills and research opportunities” and “assignments designed to expand the number of students who participate in research experiences”).

*What assignment or course module did you add? If possible, please include an attachment or link to the actual assignment. Why did you choose to add this component? What were the goals of the assignment or module? How did you assess the assignment?*

The assignment was a 14-18 page research paper. I selected this assignment for inclusion because its goals specifically relate to course objectives 4-6. The required pre-req for this course (SPMT 1312) introduces students to elements of research, while the one aim of SPMT 3314 is enhance those skills. The hope is that by completing the research project, students will become more proficient at accessing and evaluating information. Prior to submitting the paper, the project

required students to submit a one-page proposal with citations and reference page, a virtual proposal presentation (5-minute PowerPoint with narration), and a complete outline nine days before the paper due date. As such, students should be on their way to mastering the ethical use of information by citing and documenting every source (APA). Furthermore, by completing the project, students should be prepared to demonstrate mastery during a senior-level capstone assignment. The research paper project requires students to identify a historically significant topic, closely examine primary and secondary historical texts, and employ primary and secondary textual evidence to support their analysis. As such, specific goals for this project include helping students understand the value of the iterative writing process, the importance of outlines, receiving peer feedback, and how providing feedback to a writing partner can improve one's own skills. I have attached the grading rubric as an addendum. [Note: I asked colleagues in history for examples of grading rubrics. The rubric I use was adapted from one provided by a former TU history professor.]

*What worked? What didn't work? Why? Any surprises?*

Early in the semester, students submitted a research worksheet; an assignment developed in conjunction with the sport management library liaison. The worksheet was an effective first step and got students thinking about their topic very early in the semester. Something else that proved valuable was an in-class visit by our librarian. She was familiar with the assignment and provided the students with some specific tips; most important, however, was providing students with a name, face, and contact information for an additional resource. Later in the semester, a handful of students indicate their visit(s) with the librarian exposed them to source material they otherwise would not have discovered. I view that level of interaction with the librarian as a significant lesson for young scholars/researchers. The paper proposal and virtual presentation also were positive. It forced students, mid-way through the semester, to begin analyzing and synthesizing information about their topics. One positive surprise: a few students learned that a dearth of extant secondary source material would prevent them from effectively researching their topic. As such, the timing of the proposal afforded them the ability to switch topics with very little "opportunity cost." The peer review reviews and outlines did not work as well as I had expected/hoped. Although the peer reviewers seemed to spend time and energy providing good feedback, it didn't appear that the student receiving feedback utilized it. Additionally, while I was pleased with most student's outlines (very detailed and thorough), it appeared that about half of the students didn't follow the outline closely when writing their final papers.

*What would you do differently next time?*

Though there was much more about this project that went well, the next time I will do two things differently. One, there will be scheduled class time for students to work one-on-one with their writing partner. During this session, I will spend time with each writing pair providing feedback and discussion prompts. Additionally, I will not use the outline next time, but will instead require students to submit the first five pages of the paper. My hope is that by providing a small writing sample, students will be required to have done significant writing two weeks before the final

paper. That ungraded 5 pages will also allow me to offer constructive feedback in time for students to make adjustments to structure, style, and mechanics before the final paper.

**Final Essay**  
**Due Wednesday, May 7 by 12:00pm (noon)**  
**Post on T-Learn (.doc, .docx, or .rtf only)**

You will write a medium-length research paper that is 14-18 double-spaced pages, on a topic in sports history. Plan to explore such topics historically, with an effort to:

- Describe the origins of the topic in American sport, i.e. when did this topic become important?
- Detail the evolution of the topic over time up to the present.
  - How has this topic been addressed over time?
  - What are the seminal moments of this topic's evolution?
- Highlight related scholarship.
  - What does the scholarly literature say about this topic?
  - How have other researchers explored this topic in their research?
- Present ongoing dilemmas or areas rife for future research or scholarship.
  - How does the literature inform the field at present?
  - What areas could be explored more fully?

Content	Criteria	Grade
Depth of intellectual-historical analysis	• Clearly describes the origins of the topic in American history	____/35
	• Details <b>evolution</b> of the topic over time and <b>seminal moments</b> in the topic's history	____/35
	• Highlights important related scholarly literature	____/35
	• Describes ongoing dilemmas and areas in which the topic could be explored in greater detail	____/35
<b>Content Total Grade:</b>		<b>____/140</b>
Structure	Criteria	Grade
Introduction	• <b>Engages</b> the reader so that s/he wants to keep going • Clearly introduces essay's <b>central theme</b> and principal <b>argument</b>	____/20
Body	• Each paragraph <b>builds on</b> the previous paragraph to develop <b>nuance</b> and <b>depth</b> of interpretation	____/20
Conclusion	• Provides <b>satisfying ending</b> that provokes or inspires reader to further reflection	____/20
Paragraphing	• Paragraphs provide <b>logical units</b> that assist readers comprehension • <b>Transitions</b> between paragraphs <b>smooth</b> and logical	____/10
<b>Structure Total Grade:</b>		<b>____/70</b>
Style & Mechanics	Criteria	Grade
Style and Tone	• <b>Professional</b> tone appropriate for formal academic writing • Clear, <b>direct, concise</b> sentences; every sentence <b>meaningful</b> • <b>Creative use of language</b> and metaphors enhances clarity and depth of insights	____/10
Mechanics	• <b>Free from</b> spelling, punctuation and grammatical <b>errors</b>	____/10
Appropriateness of Sources for a Scholarly Paper	• Excellent choice of sources for a scholarly paper	____/10
References/Citations	• All quotes, paraphrases, and summaries follow in-text citation rules perfectly according to APA style. • All elements of citations present and all sources are cited and formatted perfectly according to style	____/10
<b>Style/Mechanics Total grade:</b>		<b>____/40</b>
<b>Total Grade:</b>		<b>____/250</b>

## COMMON PROBLEMS AND PITFALLS

### Punctuation:

- When quoting, commas and periods go **INSIDE** quotation marks.
  - o Dr. Tingle said, “If you don’t know about Satchel, you don’t know.”
- Semi-colons and colons go outside quotation marks.
  - o Dr. Tingle said, “The Patriots will win the Super Bowl”; yet, Justin Parker said, “I prefer the Niners.”
- If you are quoting a question, the question mark stays inside the quotes.
- If you are questioning a quote, the question mark goes outside the quote.
  - o Why does Dr. Tingle “like the Pats”?
- When using footnotes, the footnote goes outside the punctuation.
  - o Tingle (2012) wrote, “Teddy Roosevelt was the greatest U.S. President.”<sup>1</sup>

### Grammar

- Contractions **DO NOT** belong in formal academic writing.
  - o Didn’t is did not, etc.
- Verb tense: when you proofread, make a pass through with specific attention to verb tense. Is it consistent?

### Subject/pronoun agreement:

- Countries and Institutions are singular: The United States/Trinity University is “it,” not “they.”
  - o Ex.: “If the NCAA **was** to govern **itself**”; not “If the NCAA were to govern themselves.”

### Evidence:

- You must have textual evidence to support your claims. Do not just assert what someone believed—show it. This doesn’t mean you need to constantly quote, but you do need to show that your argument is grounded in the evidence with periodic use of appropriate quotations and citations.

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<sup>1</sup> Jacob Tingle, “Review of *The Big Scrum*,” *The Funion*, January 12, 2013.