

Term Paper Topics and Guidelines
Fall, 2004
Dr. Reilly
Carnegie Mellon University, Doha

DIRECTIONS: each student must research and complete a 6-8 page term paper in order to successfully complete the World History core class. Students are expected to write an analytical paper that addresses a historical question rather than a narrative paper that merely tells a general story about the past. This means that each paper must be centered around a thesis question. Some examples:

- 1) What was the most important factor contributing to the Han dynasty's collapse?
- 2) To what degree are there early political similarities between Mesopotamian and Chinese civilizations?
- 3) How credible is McNeill's claim that the Mongols caused the Black Death?
- 4) Are cheetahs really as hard to tame as Jared Diamond contends?
- 5) How was gunpowder used differently in China and Europe, and to what degree did that influence the development of the two regions?
- 6) Are Christianity and Buddhism really as similar as McNeill claims?
- 7) What does Zheng He's expedition tell us about the strengths and weaknesses of Chinese civilization?

8) Which was more important to Islam's fast expansion: strong leadership, or the merits of the religion itself?

Students are generally free to pick their own topic, but within the following limitations:

- Any paper that deals directly with an issue raised during classroom discussion is OK.
- Any paper that deals with an issue raised by either McNeill, Roberts, or Diamond is OK.
- For all else, please consult with me before proceeding!

Reminders: students are expected to use outside source (web sites, scholarly articles, and books) and whenever students use either ideas or direct quotations from other authors, they should mark it with a footnote- click [here](#) for a guide on including footnotes into a text.

Plagiarism will result in a zero grade for the project, and that zero grade will quite likely result in a failing grade for the course.