A research paper is a written document in which the writer seeks out information on a particular topic from a wide range of sources, analyzes and evaluates that information, synthesizes the body of information, and then gives his or her own interpretation of one angle or aspect of the information. An effective research paper presents a new or unique interpretation of a topic of interest, always backed up by solid evidence.

A research paper is not a mere repetition of facts and statements which have been previously formulated by some expert in the field; it is instead your own interpretation and analysis arrived at after you have conducted an exhaustive study of available materials on the subject.

**ASSIGNMENT:** Write a 7-8 page research paper in which you use a variety of sources to explore an issue or answer a question of interest to you. Please follow the MLA guidelines to format your paper. Your paper should have a title page with your name, my name, course number, section number, date and title of your research topic. Your paper should have a clearly stated thesis, which describes the **FOCUS, SCOPE AND PURPOSE** of your research. At the end of your paper, provide a “Works Cited” page, which clearly lists and documents all the sources, including internet resources and references you have used. The “Works Cited” page must follow MLA style guidelines and should contain a minimum of four sources, two of which should be print sources such as books, periodicals or journals. A handout on the MLA (Modern Language Association) system of documentation is available at the EVC library and at [https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource)

**Please note that Wikipedia is not an acceptable research source.**

**Please submit your rough draft with your research paper. You must also include hard copies of your research sources, highlighting the information that you have used either by paraphrasing, summarizing or quoting.**

Students are free to choose their own topics, **but the paper must include analysis and critical thinking, and it must not be simply informational.** Students should give careful consideration to an appropriate rhetorical strategy for organizing their papers, such as: comparison and contrast, cause and effect analysis, argumentation, etc.

Each student should select a topic of interest in the area of Asian or Asian American literature, art, philosophy, sociology, business, politics or culture. Then the student should research this topic in the library and the internet to narrow the focus of the general subject into a thesis statement.

**Sample topics:**

- A comparison and contrast between two writers, focusing on styles, themes, the use of literary elements etc.
A biographical study focusing on a writer’s style and themes, based on factors and influences in the writer’s life
The use of symbolism or elements from mythology in the art or literature of one of the Asian cultures
Historical factors that affect a writer’s style, themes or the elements of literature that appear in his or her work

Sample thesis statements:

- For historical reasons, the concept of exile is a central theme in the writings of Carlos Bulosan
- Ono Komachi, a tanka poet from the Heian Period, had a profound influence on the modern tanka of Yosano Akiko
- The medieval samurai concept of Bushido influences contemporary business practices in Japan
- Confucian values still form the basis of the interpersonal relationships in many Chinese American families
- Despite the cultural differences, there are many similarities between Sita from the Ramayan and Helen of Troy
- Several of Chitra Divakuruni’s short stories and poems on the immigrant experience focus on the themes of displacement and loneliness

The list of possible topics is endless, so it is important for you to identify a topic that interests you. Then find a particular focus within the range of issues relevant to that topic to further develop.

- Go to the library and read as much as you possibly can to find out what resources may be available to you. EVC Library databases are an excellent resource.
- Remember to immediately note down names of journals, dates of publication, etc. so you can later compile a complete and thorough Works Cited page to document all your sources of information.
- If your research focuses on the spoken word of someone you have interviewed, be sure to document the name of that person and the date that you conducted your interview. This person should be an authority on your topic of interest and should have some clear connections to the area of research you are conducting.
- If you are writing about a particular author, you should read several of his or her works and quote from them to illustrate what you are saying about this author’s particular writing style or particular subject matter.
- When you use quotations from any source, they should be properly indicated with quotation marks (“……”). If you are quoting one or more paragraphs from an article, indent the entire quotation.
- Never use the writings of other persons without clearly citing the exact source, or you could be indulging in plagiarism.
Keep in mind that you are educating your reader on a particular topic, so be sure to include any information that would make the issue more clearly understood. In your writing include information on causes, effects, comparisons, conflicting opinions, possible solutions and of course your own analysis.

Aim for accuracy and excellence in your writing, which means that you must read and reread your paper several times, and proofread very carefully to weed out logical fallacies and factual errors.

Make your research paper is one that you will be proud to share with others, and to read again, perhaps many years from now.

**WARNING:** A research paper that has been downloaded from an Internet site will receive an “F”. No matter how skillful you may think you are in cutting and pasting, it is always evident when a paper has been patched together and is not the student’s original work. **It is always best to write your own work and put your own thoughts and conclusion into your research paper rather than risk the consequences of turning in a piece of work that is plagiarized.** If you have any doubts about how to document references and make correct attributions, please check with me or consult your text book on the MLA format.

**Research Paper Due: Thursday, May 3, 2018**

Please follow this timeline for extra points:

**Topic due:** April 17, 2018

**Thesis due:** April 19, 2018

**Bibliography (list of at least 4 sources that you might use) due:** April 26, 2018

**Outline due:** May 1, 2018

**Paper due:** May 3, 2018