

### TERM PAPER ASSIGNMENT

Write a 10-12 page (3100-3700 word) essay on a theme or topic in the *Encyclopedia*. You are encouraged to come up with your own topic, but here are a few very general suggestions:

World Religions      Human Nature      Marriage and Family      Morals

Search and Browse the website at <http://www.hti.umich.edu/d/did/> to find articles that address or are relevant to the general topic you want to explore. There are three ways to do this:

- Browse the site by TITLE, looking for articles that seem like they might be relevant.
- Browse the site by SUBJECT, looking for subject categories that might contain relevant articles. Note: these subject categories are the ones the editors of the *Encyclopedia* invented, and what they contain may surprise you.
- Search the site by KEYWORD, using different keywords that you think might appear in articles relevant to your topic. You can also use the search feature to search by author.

You may include up to 3 of the assigned articles, and, indeed, you might start with an article you've read that interests you and find several others that deal with a topic or theme that it raises or addresses.

If you find a lot of material addressing your general topic, narrow the focus. If you find little, either broaden the focus or try another topic. Once you've found a workable topic, the next step is to have it approved.

All topics must be approved – including the suggested ones. To have your topic approved, submit to me in writing the topic, a one-paragraph description of it, and the titles of 10-15 articles that you have determined to be relevant to it. **Due on Ctools assignment page, Sunday, April 2 by midnight.**

The paper should have 3 parts:

- An introduction that includes a methodological introduction, in which you explain how and why you chose the topic and how you determined which articles were relevant to it. As with any introduction, you will of course lay out your thesis. The introduction thus tells the reader what you want to demonstrate and how you gathered the evidence upon which you are going to make the argument that will sustain it. This introduction is meant to explain both the importance and significance of the topic (why it is worth pursuing, why the reader should want to read about it, and what your take on it is), and to demonstrate the legitimacy of your research approach and methods. That is, you are

using a certain body of evidence to make your argument: how was that body constituted? And how does the way in which it was constituted shape what you can and cannot learn from it? Remember: there are over 80,000 articles in the *Encyclopedia* and you are searching a limited subset of them.

- The body of the paper in which you discuss the treatment of your topic in the *Encyclopedia*. The body of the paper should address the following questions:
  - How informative are the articles? What kind of information do they provide?
  - How critical are they? Explain the nature and object of the criticism.
  - To what degree and in what ways do the articles on this topic fulfill the promise of the *Encyclopedia* as set forth by Diderot in the article “Encyclopedia?” How do they fail, subvert, or challenge Diderot’s claims?
- A concluding section in which you situate the above discussion in relation to two or more readings for this course that are not articles from the *Encyclopedia*. These may include Enlightenment texts or selections from Goodman & Wellman.

**SUBMIT YOUR PAPER VIA CTOOLS BY MIDNIGHT, APRIL 23.**