

Annotated Bibliography Guidelines

Due April 22 (25 points)

Format: For each citation all but the first line should be indented. The entire bibliography should be double-spaced. You should use MLA or another appropriate citation style. Include 5-6 sources, alphabetized. The explanation should come directly after the citation. (1-2 sentences summarizing the work and 1-2 sentences telling specifically how you might use it in your paper.)

DO NOT include *Signs of Life* or any of the stories, essays or films that we have read and seen in class.

Researching Your Topic: Information available on your topic maybe overwhelming, so you need to be selective. Your best bet to start your research might be to consult some general reference books (encyclopedias, biographical works, dictionaries, yearbooks). The best of these kinds of books have bibliographies that can lead you to more specific aspects of your topic. However, **DO NOT** use these as your primary sources; use them as a starting point.

Consult the reference librarians for help in locating sources for a specific idea. They can refer you to specific indexes and help you come up with the subject headings; however, make sure you are prepared with specific questions. Do not expect them to help you come up with ideas.

Evaluating and Analyzing Your Sources: Read your sources carefully and decide if they are valid to use in your paper. First determine if the sources come from reliable authors and publishers. If you have not heard of the author and s/he states some remarkable or startling information, find out who s/he is. Also consider the publishers. Some books published at the author's expense are not reliable, nor are those that are published by presses advocating specific philosophies. However, most academic books and journals are valid sources. You may use information gathered from the Web, but only if it has a source that can be verified. Once you've verified your sources, consider the information itself: is the information accurate, up-to-date, reliable, and relatively unbiased? Is it the whole story? Does something seem missing? Do you need more information? For example, consider how Exxon might answer the question of whether or not their cleanup is sufficient. Remember that your project is not to prove the "rightness" of something, but a search to find some plausible conclusions.