

HIST 506: History of Science
Research Prospectus

On **Thursday, November 30th**, your 3,000-4,000 word research prospectus is due in class. Please bring **FOUR hard copies** of your prospectus to distribute. You will hand in one copy to me and three other copies to others in the class.

A research prospectus is a scheme or narrative outline of the research you are currently pursuing. It should present your major research area, the problem you are engaging, your argument (thesis), and how you will put that argument into place. It should demonstrate both what you are arguing and how you are arguing it. You will want to end your discussion with the ramifications (importance, significance, the “so what?”) of your work. Please incorporate the readings of the course into your prospectus; this can be accomplished directly in the text or primarily through footnotes.

Your prospectus will differ from other students depending on your current status within the program. Some of you may be using this subject as the basis of your MA thesis or professional paper. In that case, please outline your thesis – what your larger, finished product will look like. Others may be focusing on a different topic for your thesis in a related field. In that case, please use this prospectus to explain how you will (or could) incorporate perspectives that you have engaged in this course into your broader thesis. Please come talk to me if you have any questions about how this assignment can fit into your overall course of study at MSU.

Another way to look at this is from my perspective: I want to know how the history of science has or can influence your own interests or written work. Thus, the assignment 1) will demonstrate what you are working on, 2) will allow me and others to critique it, adding new perspectives and fresh ideas, making certain that you are not missing important material or approaches; and 3) enable me to continue to help you throughout your tenure at MSU.

On **Thursday, November 30th**, you will also present your research formally to the entire class. At the beginning of class, you will distribute your prospectus to three other students in the class. You will have a week to critically analyze these, adding your own thoughts and suggestions. You should bring written comments to class the following week, though you are also welcome to add additional comments directly to the prospectus.

On **Thursday, December 7th**, you will meet in groups of four to discuss in depth your written and marginal comments. We will then discuss everyone’s research as a large group.