

HIS 498C THE RESEARCH PROCESS

There is no single way through the maze of processes which produces a high quality research paper. The following are just a few suggestions, based in part on how some historians produce their final work.

1. Choose a topic, area, or subject (related to the theme of this course) which interests you. You will only be able to do this once you are familiar with the basic narrative of this history. I urge you to read ahead of the syllabus to get a head start on your research.
2. Go to the library and use online SCHOLARLY sources (JSTOR is a great place to start) to READ work by historians (in books and scholarly journals) which deal with the topic you have chosen. These are secondary sources While you are reading, keep two questions in mind:
 - a. what sort of questions are historians NOT addressing? Think about focusing on those questions.
 - b. could there be SOURCES which would give you the data to address those questions? Without sources it may not be possible to adequately address the questions you think are interesting.
3. Based on a. and b., above, formulate your research question. You may well come up with a THESIS or HYPOTHESIS at this time, which will need to be supported by **evidence**.
4. This, in turn, should lead you to RESEARCH and the search for sources to support your hypothesis. Cline is not a great source of South Asian history material, use Inter Library Loan (Document Delivery Services) to order copies of work that may be relevant to your research project. The more diligent you are in research, the better your final product will be. Don't hesitate to modify or even change your thesis depending on the evidence you collect.
5. Finally, the writing process! Write, and revise, and then revise again till you (and your peers as well as your instructor) are satisfied that you have conveyed your argument with clarity, and supported it with the best evidence you can unearth.