

Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Environmental Context of Human History
Second paper (50 points); First draft due 9 October 2001; final draft due 18 October 2001

Assignment. Your mission is to compose a 2-3 page essay inspired by the readings up to this point (25 September) of the course. You may take as your starting point any reading we've analyzed so far, including the papers you and your partner read for your library assignment. Your essay should cite at least one source *besides* the assigned readings.

How should you select a thesis? I can suggest two approaches. One approach is to brainstorm about some section of text (e.g., Diamond's chapter about drug use) or about some idea the course has considered. (e.g., the Great Leap Forward). A second approach, which is at once more straightforward and more restrictive, is to find an argument that an author of our readings makes and then construct a counter-argument, substantiating your position (i.e., supporting your thesis) with evidence from at least one outside source.

This assignment is not about writing down your immediate reactions to the reading. I want you to exercise your skill in making and defending an argument supported with concrete evidence.

Peer review. Prepare a *complete, finished* draft of your paper and bring it to class on Tuesday, 9 October. One of your classmates will read your paper in class and give it written and oral comments. You will do the same for someone else's paper. The written evaluations will be handed in for credit, and you will use them to revise and improve your paper. The final draft will be due in class on Thursday, 18 October.

Essay writing. Let me modify slightly the instructions I gave you the first time.

1. Select a clear, meaningful thesis, and introduce it in a paragraph that previews the rest of the paper. Ensure (don't *assume*) that the reader knows *what* you are writing about and *why* it is a significant issue.
2. Follow the introductory section with paragraphs (with one main idea each) that present *evidence* and *arguments* supporting the thesis. Convince the reader that your thesis has merit. (In longer essays it also is helpful to *introduce and refute counter-arguments*.)
3. End the essay with clear and effective take-home lessons.

All papers in this class should follow these formatting guidelines.

- Papers should be *typed, double-spaced*, and should use a *font no smaller than 10 point*.
- Leave 2.5 cm (1 inch) top, bottom, and side margins. *Do not* right-justify the text.
- Do not use a separate title page. Under the paper title, at the top of the first page, write your name, your campus box number, the class, and the date.
- Cite and list the bibliographic information for references according to APA style guidelines.