

History 2PQ3 Assignment 3: proposal for an OMEKA Project

If you are working in a group (which I recommend) on your OMEKA project, then this is also a group assignment. Each group will submit one proposal and all members will receive the same grade. Though this is only worth 10% of your mark, it is a complex assignment. If done correctly, it should take a *lot* of work out of the final Omeka project. Extra effort here will pay off.

Accessibility Concerns and the overall OMEKA Assignment

If the technological requirements or the visual blocking of an OMEKA project present a learning challenge for you, let me know.

Weight: 10%

Due Date: Monday, March 10th, 11:59 pm. Grace period extends to Monday, March 17th, 11:59 pm.

- **I strongly suggest that you try not to use the grace period on this one so that you do not get behind with the project as a whole. There will be much less flexibility with the final exhibit submission. Plan accordingly.**

Group sign-ups:

Sign up for a group using this [form](#) before 11:59 PM on March 7th. We will use class on March 7th to make sure everyone is taken care of and to work on proposals.

Overview of the Proposal

The proposal is intended to get you working on your OMEKA exhibit and to give me a sense of what you are thinking about so I can help. This involves identifying which primary sources you will highlight in your exhibit, the story you wish to tell using those sources, and how that story is grounded in history. This will involve some reading around related topics (using tertiary + academic and peer-Reviewed Secondary sources) to make sure that you understand the topic area, context, and some of the existing historical literature. The proposal also gives you a chance to identify the narrative (story) you will convey or explore in your exhibit.

Preliminary Work:

Before you begin, you will need to identify a body of sources, and then do some background reading related to these sources as well as the concepts and time periods to which they pertain. Start with sources and work outwards, or start with a narrative idea and work towards sources; up to you. This background exploration might include “tertiary literature,” meaning high quality and trustworthy background material that is not peer-reviewed — think of reputable encyclopedias, survey textbooks, and primers. It’s fine to start general and work towards the specific.

Section One of the proposal: Context and Introduction (300 – 500 words)

The proposal begins with you laying out the context and narrative for your project. What type of sources are you using to help tell your story? Where and when are they from, and how are they related? What are the key topics or issues raised by this body of material, and how do you plan to use them to tell a story? What narrative will these sources illustrate? Essentially, I am asking you to explain the “big picture” of your exhibit — what is going on, and how you understand the topic you have chosen. You might think of this section as the rough draft for the introduction to your exhibit, but don’t worry – you can change this as you move from the proposal to the final online exhibit. At this stage, your context and introduction writing may take a wider view than the finished project. Ask yourself: do I or we (as a group) know what is going on when we think about our topic as a whole? Can we explain why we think it is important and how we will use the sources to tell an engaging story? Remember: this is a storytelling exercise, but also an academic one. Your narrative must be well-supported by scholarly evidence; see Section Three below. **You will almost certainly require some source-work (section two) and reading (section three) before you can write this section.** All the parts of this assignment are interconnected.

You can look at a finished model of Context and Introduction on the introduction page of the [1848 Posters OMEKA project](#) (369 words). This is where you want to be at the end of term.

Here is an [example](#) of a project from last year’s 2PQ3 cohort; here’s [another](#), built from McMaster’s physical collections. They are not perfect, but give ideas about what’s possible!

Section Two of the proposal: Primary Source Selection (100-200 words)

For this section, you will need to identify and briefly describe which sources you will use to build your exhibit — these are the building blocks of the story you wish to tell. Think of these as the paintings or artefacts that you look at in a museum exhibit; same principle. You will need **12 sources in total** for a three- or four-person group exhibit, or **eight sources in total** for a solo or two-person exhibit. These could be books, single documents, photographs, maps — be creative, but also carefully consider how they will be represented visually. The original sources *must* predate the year 1929. They can be described in general terms, but the more specific you are, the more content you will be able to re-use in your final exhibit. They do not need to be formally cited at this stage, but I need to be able to find and understand what you are referring to.

You may, if you choose, use sources you find on the internet — Wikimedia Commons is a great place to look. If using online sources, include in-line links. You may also use photographs or scans from McMaster’s historic collections — and you are welcome to take these yourself! If using these, include links to the library catalogue.

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING ABOUT THESE SOURCES, REGARDLESS OF WHERE YOU FIND THEM, IS THAT THEY BE IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN OR LICENSED FOR PUBLIC USE. If you are using sources you find on the internet, there must be an **EXPLICIT RIGHTS STATEMENT** that they are in the public domain or that they have a Creative Commons (CC) license for public use. **If you choose CC material, YOU WILL BE BOUND BY THE TERMS OF THE LICENSE AND YOU MUST GIVE PROPER ATTRIBUTION IN YOUR EXHIBIT METADATA.**

Section Three of the Proposal: Annotated Bibliography

- For a student working alone, identify at least two academic monographs or peer-reviewed secondary sources (book chapters or journal articles). You will need at least four for the final project.
- For a student working in a group of 2, identify at least three academic monographs or peer-reviewed secondary sources (book chapters or journal articles). You will need at least six for the final project.
- For a student in a group of 3, identify at least four academic monographs or peer-reviewed secondary sources (book chapters or journal articles). You will need at least eight for the final project.
- For a student in a group of 4, identify at least five academic monographs or peer-reviewed secondary sources (book chapters or journal articles). You will need at least eight for the final project.

Remember that your sources have to be relevant to your topic, but relevant can be a wider connection; you do not have to find sources which repeat your topic in the title. It's the content that counts.

For each article or book chapter, **begin with the properly formatted Chicago Style BIBLIOGRAPHIC citation.** I know you use citation generators. I use citation generators. Therefore there is no plausible reason to expect you cannot generate a citation. I believe in you!

Then provide an annotation of around 2-4 sentences. An annotation is not so much about summarizing the article or book chapter; it's more about indicating how and why this is relevant for your exhibit. In a typical annotation, there might be one sentence that gives a high-level overview of the piece, and then 1-2 sentences that explain why you expect this to be important and relevant to your project.

Need help identifying or finding appropriate sources?

- If in doubt, begin with [JStor](#) (log in with your MacID). Try different combinations of search terms, like names, topics, places, events, &c. This is a great starting point for peer-reviewed journal articles in the Humanities, especially History.
- For books and book chapters, use [Advanced Catalogue Search](#) in Omni. This will only link you to things that actually exist and are accessible to you on campus or online. To learn more (much more) than you could ever want to know about Omni, check [this guide](#).
- If still in doubt, ask me. I live for this — this is what librarians do. If we really hit a wall, I can suggest alternative topics. But it is harder to hit a wall than you may think.