HCOL186 Research Paper Guidelines:

The process of writing your research paper will include five basic steps: choosing a research topic, compiling an annotated bibliography, writing a research proposal, and writing both a complete first draft and final version of your paper.

Choosing a Topic: You need to decide on a general topic of research during the first few weeks of class. While this does not have to be a topic directly addressed in the seminar readings, your paper should reflect a serious engagement with issues of subjectivity/objectivity as they apply to the topic you have chosen to research. I recommend that you begin by choosing a topic and method of analysis appropriate to either your major or minor at UVM. This should ensure that you have an adequate background to formulate a good research question. The starting point of a good research project is a topic that you find really interesting and that can be explored effectively in a paper of this scope. It is important to pick something for which there are adequate research sources available, but that is not beyond what you can investigate in the course of a single semester. I will be happy to meet with you after class or preferably during my office hours or by appointment to discuss specific topics. A one-paragraph statement of your topic is due in class on 2/14 when I will also ask everyone to very briefly state their topics in class.

The Annotated Bibliography: The annotated bibliography will be a record of your research into your topic. Reference Librarian Patricia Mardeusz (e-mail: Patricia.Mardeusz@uvm.edu; phone: 656-5718) is the Honors College's special liaison with the reference department; you should e-mail her directly well in advance to arrange a one-on-one meeting. You should also always feel free to ask the reference librarians on duty for help. You need to learn how to identify and use relevant library sources as soon as possible, since you should begin work on your bibliography as soon as you have a basic topic for your research. Note that research projects typically begin with broad reference sources such as specialized encyclopedias to provide general background and orientation, and then narrow in focus to more detailed and specialized sources of direct relevance to your topic. I do not expect you to read everything you find on your topic; you are responsible for "looking at" as much of it as possible, and for recording all of your sources in your bibliography. The annotations in your bibliography may be as brief as a sentence, or as long as 200 words, depending on how useful or interesting you find a particular source. In your annotation, you should evaluate the author’s credentials, the kind of source it represents (scholarly, trade publication, popular), basic approach of the source (for instance, what academic discipline(s) and/or theoretical perspective(s) it represents), the basic argument it makes, and your brief evaluation of the source's validity and usefulness to you. While internet webpages can be useful for some projects, their authorship and authority can be difficult or impossible to establish. If you use material found on the internet, you are responsible for determining its authorship and the author's academic credentials. For guidance on evaluating sources and for annotating your bibliography, see: http://researchguides.uvm.edu/c.php?g=290274&p=4991255, http://researchguides.uvm.edu/c.php?g=290795&p=1937032 and http://guides.library.cornell.edu/annotatedbibliography. Your bibliography should be
roughly 8-10 pages long (bibliographical entries should be single-spaced and the annotations double-spaced), with no fewer than 12 entries. Please work ahead on this assignment. Recalls and Interlibrary Loan may take time. The completed bibliography should be typed, double-spaced, paginated, and should follow a bibliographic form appropriate to the discipline of your topic. For guidance on various formats, see: http://library.uvm.edu/guides/citation/why.php/. It is due in class on 3/7.

Research Proposal: This is a 1-2-page statement of the thesis or argument you intend to develop and support in your research paper. You should define as clearly as possible what your thesis is, why this thesis is interesting in light of what you know about your general topic, and how you intend to support it (i.e., what kinds of evidence you will use). You should also briefly explain the roles that subjectivity and objectivity will play in your analysis. Your research proposal is due in class on 3/23.

The Research Paper: Your 12-15-page, double-spaced research paper should make an original argument about your topic. It should be clearly and persuasively written and it should address current scholarship on the topic. You will submit it in two versions. Your first draft, due at my office on 4/11 by 5 p.m., should be a complete version of your paper, carefully written and as fully polished as you can make it (i.e., fully supported with footnotes, in-text citations, or endnotes, with a full bibliography of sources consulted—note that this is not the annotated bibliography that you submitted earlier in the semester—carefully proofread for spelling, grammar, and typographical errors, and with page numbers). I will respond to this as soon as possible and return it to you with comments for revision. Be sure to keep this draft with my comments and attach it to your final version when you hand it in. The final version of your paper is due at my office on 5/10 by 5 p.m. I will pay careful attention to how effectively you have responded to my comments, and this will be an important factor in determining your final grade for the assignment.