I. The Proposal

The paper proposal (sometimes called an abstract) is a short, 1½-2 page document (double-spaced) in which you state your thesis and describe your plan for the paper. The purpose of this assignment is to help you organize your thoughts and begin formulating your argument or contribution to the conversation surrounding your chosen topic. A secondary purpose is to communicate your plans to me so I can make sure you are heading in a viable direction. Your paper proposal must contain the following:

- a working title for your paper.
- a paragraph explaining the significance/importance of your topic and identifying which aspect(s) of the topic you’ll be discussing. Essentially, you want to use your first paragraph to briefly sketch out the scholarly conversation you’ll be joining and the contribution you plan to make.
- a brief explanation of the main points you plan to discuss in the body of the paper. What key issues, subtopics, or bodies of evidence do you plan to address?
- optional: any lingering questions or problems you have run into during the course of your research that you’d like to discuss with me.

Think of your paper proposal as a document summarizing your “working ideas” and current plan of action. Your ideas may change some between this and the final draft of your finished paper, but the substance of your argument should be fairly clear at this point.

II. The Annotated Bibliography

In this document you will provide full MLA citation information for SIX sources (at least FOUR of which must be scholarly sources) you are likely to reference in your paper. For each of your six sources, provide full MLA citation and a paragraph summarizing and evaluating the relevant aspects of your source’s thesis and explaining how this source relates to your thesis.

The entries in your annotated bibliography should be arranged alphabetically, by author’s last name.

The OWL Purdue website offers great information on preparing an annotated bibliography: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/01/
Here are two sample annotated bibliography entries that follow MLA 8th Edition format:


In this book, Haber argues that food is a valuable aid in understanding American history. Drawing on cookbooks, diaries, and oral histories, she explores the central role of food in major historical events from the influx of Irish immigrants in the 1840s to WWII POW camps. Haber’s book supports my argument that food warrants serious scholarly attention and that the study of food sheds new light on populations marginalized by the mainstream narrative of American history.


Although Wise’s article focuses on Native Americans, it supports my argument that food is important to understanding overlooked (and often unsavory) aspects of American history. While my paper will focus on food in relation to Irish American history, some of Wise’s claims apply not only to Native American history but to the history of other marginalized and displaced populations such as immigrant groups. Wise’s central argument is that colonial, industrialized meat processing resulted in the displacement of the Blackfeet, the elimination of their primary source of meat, and ultimately the starvation and exploitation of the Blackfeet population.

III. Formatting Citations for the Annotated Bibliography and Works Cited

MLA Basic Format

https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/05/

For a book:
Lastname, Firstname. *Title of Book*. Publisher, Year of Publication.

For an article in a database:

doi:############################. 