

*Professor Duane Tananbaum created this letter assignment for his course, "Modern United States History" (HIS 274).*

## **Second Assignment: Letter to President Truman**

The second formal paper for this course is a 4-5 page paper on President Truman's decision to drop the atomic bomb on Japan in World War II. You are to assume the role of President Truman's top advisor on August 1, 1945. Based on the documents available online at <http://www.dannen.com/decision/index.html>, you are to write a 4-5 page memorandum to President Truman advising him whether to use the atomic bomb against Japanese cities in August 1945. You must refer back to the documents frequently, sometimes quoting, sometimes paraphrasing, making sure to cite your sources for all your information. You can use materials from other sources in addition if you wish, but you are not required or even encouraged to do so, and your paper must be based mainly on the materials from the required website.

The President is a busy man, so in the first paragraph of your paper you must state clearly your recommendation. You should then go on and discuss the arguments for and against dropping the atomic bomb on Japanese cities, and then explain in detail the reason for your recommendation.

Papers should be typed with at least one inch margins on all sides. Papers should be approximately 1000-1250 words, or 4-5 standard, typed, double-spaced pages using a 12-point font. Number your pages.

Your paper will be graded according to the content and quality of your thoughts and ideas and the clarity and accuracy of your presentation. Although this is not an English class, I expect that as college students you should be able to express yourselves in reasonably concise and correct prose. Neatness, spelling, and grammar are important, so please **proofread** your paper carefully and correct any spelling or typing errors. Use a dictionary. Do not rely on a spellchecker to catch all your errors. **Papers with numerous spelling and typing mistakes, non-sentences, or other such problems will be marked down.**

Any direct quotes must be placed in quotation marks, and you must use footnotes to show the specific source for the quotation. Even when you are not quoting directly, you must still use footnotes to indicate the specific source for your information. You need to cite your specific sources whether they are books or online materials. For online materials, which are what you will be using for this paper, you need to cite the title of the specific webpage (not just the general website) and give the exact web address or URL so that I can get to that exact page by typing it in. The footnotes themselves may be placed at the bottom of the page or at the end of the paper, whichever is easier.

Your paper must also include a **Bibliography** on a separate page at the end of the paper, listing all the sources that you used for the paper, including all the specific web pages.