Honors US History Research Paper Topics

All books are available in William H. White, Jr. Library

REF denotes books in the Reference section of WHW library, and which therefore cannot circulate outside of the library

* denotes books on more than one reading list; available on library reserve

1. How did the Protestant churches in America react to changes after 1865?
   REF
   REF
   REF
   * Mark Noll, “Protestantism Shaken,” chapter 14 of A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada
   A. Hunter Dupree, Science and the Emergence of Modern America, 1865-1916

2. Why had science replaced religion as the cultural authority by 1900?
   REF
   REF
   REF
   * Mark Noll, A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada (ch. 14, “Protestantism Shaken”)
   Rebecca Edwards, New Spirits, chs. 7-8

3. Why did the U.S. annex Hawaii?
   Beisner, From the Old Diplomacy to the New
   * George Mowry, The Era of Theodore Roosevelt
   * Lewis L. Gould, The Presidency of Theodore Roosevelt

4. Were the Open Door notes issued for economic motives?
   Morgan, America's Road to Empire
   Dulles, Prelude to World Power
   Williams, The Tragedy of American Diplomacy
   * LaFeber, The New Empire

5. Who were the Progressives?
   Page Smith, America Enters the World: A People's History of the Progressive Era and World War I
   Robert Wiebe, The Search for Order
   Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform

6. Was the Social Gospel an effective response by Christianity to industrialization?
   Sidney Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People
   * Mark Noll, A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada
   Winthrop Hudson, Religion in America

7. Was Theodore Roosevelt an overzealous trust-buster?
   * George Mowry, The Era of Theodore Roosevelt
   * Lewis L. Gould, The Presidency of Theodore Roosevelt
8. Did Theodore Roosevelt steal the Panama canal?
Beale, Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America to World Power
David McCullough, Path Between the Seas
H. W. Brands, TR: The Last Romantic
*Dalton, Theodore Roosevelt

9. Did Theodore Roosevelt cause the Republicans to lose the election of 1912?
Mayer, The Republican Party, 1854-1966
Boardman, America and the Progressive Era, 1900-1917
Sean Dennis Cashman, America Ascendant

10. Was President Taft a Progressive?
Paolo E. Coletta, The Presidency of William Howard Taft
William Manners, TR and Will: A Friendship That Split the Republican Party
Henry F. Pringle, The Life and Times of William Howard Taft
* George Mowry, The Era of Theodore Roosevelt

11. Was Woodrow Wilson responsible for the women’s suffrage amendment?
Sara Evans, Born for Liberty
* Eleanor Flexner, Century of Struggle
* Steven M. Buechler, Women’s Movements in the United States
Ellen Carol DuBois, Harriot Stanton Blatch and the Winning of Woman Suffrage

12. Was William Jennings Bryan too much of a pacifist?
Bryan, The Memoirs of William Jennings Bryan, By Himself
Koenig, Bryan: A Political Biography
Levine, Defender of the Faith
Devlin, Too Proud to Fight

13. Did submarines cause U.S. entry into World War I?
Arthur Link, Wilson the Diplomatist
Devlin, Too Proud to Fight
Knock, To End All Wars

14. Did Woodrow Wilson kill the Treaty of Versailles?
Canfield, The Presidency of Woodrow Wilson
August Heckscher, Woodrow Wilson
* Thomas A. Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People
John Milton Cooper, Breaking the Heart of the World

15. Does Marcus Garvey deserve the title “the father of black nationalism”?
No author, Modern Black Nationalism: from Marcus Garvey to Louis Farrakhan
Amy J. Garvey, Garvey and Garveyism
John Hope Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom
Mary Lawler, Marcus Garvey

16. What role did jazz music play in the development of African-American culture?
Leonard Feather, From Satcho to Miles
James Lincoln Collier, Jazz: The American Theme Song
Geoffrey C. Ward & Ken Burns, Jazz: A History of America’s Music
Bill Kirchner, ed., The Oxford Companion to Jazz

17. Was Harding a corrupt President?
Trani & Wilson, The Presidency of Warren G. Harding
Francis Russell, The Shadow of Blooming Grove
Mee, Ohio Gang
Harold Faulkner, From Versailles to the New Deal

18. Was the Scopes Trial a victory for religious conservatives?
Ray Ginger, Six Days or Forever?
Garry Wills, Under God, chapters 8-10
de Camp, The Great Monkey Trial

19. Why did the KKK revive in the 1920s?
Lay, The Invisible Empire in the West
David Chalmers, Hooded Americanism
Kenneth Jackson, The Ku Klux Klan in the City
20. Did Prohibition work?
Frederick Lewis Allen, Only Yesterday
Sinclair, Prohibition, The Era of Excess

21. Were Sacco and Vanzetti unjustly executed?
Joughin and Morgan, The Legacy of Sacco and Vanzetti
Russell, Sacco and Vanzetti: The Case Resolved
Watson, Sacco and Vanzetti: The Judgment of Mankind
Young, Postmortem

22. Did the women’s rights movement fade in the 1920s?
Cott, The Grounding of Modern Feminism
Woloch, Women and the American Experience
* Flexner, Century of Struggle
* Steven M. Buechler, Women’s Movements in the United States

23. Was there a “revolution in manners and morals” in the 1920s?
Frederick Lewis Allen, Only Yesterday
William Leuchtenburg, Perils of Prosperity
Editors of Time-Life Books, The Jazz Age, the 20’s
Paul Carter, The Twenties in America

24. Did Al Smith lose the election of 1928 because he was Roman Catholic?
Josephson, Al Smith
Oscar Handlin, Al Smith and His America
Page Smith, Redeeming the Time: A People’s History of the 1920s and the New Deal
Linda Jacobs Altman, The Decade That Roared

25. What caused the stock market crash of 1929?
John Kenneth Galbraith, The Great Crash, 1929

26. Did the New Deal end the Depression?
Greenhaven Press, The Great Depression: Opposing Viewpoints, essays by Bernstein, Leuchtenburg
Dexter Perkins, The New Age of Franklin Roosevelt
McElvain, The Great Depression

27. Was Robert Moses good for New York?
Burrows and Wallace, Gotham
Caro, The Power Broker
Ballon and Jackson, eds., Robert Moses and the Modern City
Gratz, The Battle for Gotham

28. Did FDR blunder in attempting to “pack” the Supreme Court?
Davis, FDR
Morgan, FDR
Friedel, FDR
Smith, FDR

29. Was Huey Long a demagogue?
Alan Brinkley, Voices of Protest
Stan Opotowsky, The Longs of Louisiana
T. Harry Williams, Huey Long
* David Kennedy, Freedom From Fear

30. How did the Great Depression affect the American People?
* David Kennedy, Freedom From Fear
editors of Time-Life Books, Hard Times, the 30s
Richard H. Pells, Radical Visions and American Dreams
31. Did FDR allow Pearl Harbor to happen?
   Buchanan, *The United States and World War II*
   Beard, *President Roosevelt and the Coming of the War, 1941*
   Gordon Prange, *At Dawn We Slept*
   Robert B. Stinnett, *Day of Deceit*

32. Did “Rosie the Riveter” win World War II?
   Elaine Tyler May, *Pushing the Limits*
   Doris Weatherford, *American Women and World War II*

33. Was the dropping of the atomic bombs justified? (I)
   Peter Wyden, *Day One*
   Keith Wheeler and the editors of Time-Life Books, *The Fall of Japan*
   Martin J. Sherwin, *A World Destroyed: The Atomic Bomb and the Grand Alliance*

34. Was the dropping of the atomic bombs justified? (II)
   Hamby, *Man of the People*
   Herken, *The Winning Weapon*
   J. Samuel Walker, *Prompt and Utter Destruction*
   Ronald Takaki, *Hiroshima: Why America Dropped the Atomic Bomb*

35. Who caused the Cold War? (I)
   Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*
   Horowitz, *Free World Colossus*
   * Combs, *American Diplomatic History*

36. Who caused the Cold War? (II)
   Gaddis, *We Now Know*
   Graebner, *The Cold War*
   Gardner, *Architects of Illusion*
   * Combs, *American Diplomatic History*

37. Did the GI Bill democratize American housing and education?
   John Morton Blum, *V Was for Victory*
   Geoffrey Perrett, *Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph*
   * James Patterson, *Grand Expectations*

38. Was the period from 1945-1980 marked by an urban crisis?
   * Combs, *American Diplomatic History*

39. Did William Levitt invent suburbia?
   Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*
   * Patterson, *Grand Expectations*

40. Was Alger Hiss a communist?
   Smith, *Alger Hiss*
   Weinstein, *Perjury: The Hiss-Chambers Case*
   Whittaker Chambers, *Witness*
   Sam Tanenhaus, *Whittaker Chambers: A Biography*

41. Was Joseph McCarthy’s anti-communist crusade good for America?
   Thomas Reeves, *The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy*
   Cook, *The Nightmare Decade*
   Griffith, *The Politics of Fear*
   Morgan, *Reds*
42. How did Harry S Truman win the election of 1948?
* Ferrell, *Harry S Truman*
Hartmann, *Truman and the 80th Congress*
Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., ed., *The Coming to Power*
Gary Donaldson, *Truman Defeats Dewey*

43. Why did the US recognize the nation of Israel in 1948?
Nadav Safran, *The United States and Israel*
* Thomas A. Bailey, *A Diplomatic History of the American People*
Donald R. McCoy, *The Presidency of Harry S. Truman*
* Ferrell, *Harry S Truman*

44. Why did Adlai Stevenson fail to become President?
Stephen Ambrose, *Eisenhower*
David Halberstam, *The Fifties*
Alden Whitman, *Portrait: Adlai E. Stevenson*
John Bartlow Martin, *Adlai Stevenson and the World*

45. Why did the United States intervene in Korea in 1950?
Gouldin, *Korea: The Untold Story of the War*
Paige, *The Korean Decision*
MacDonald, *Korea, the War Before Vietnam*
Catchpole, *The Korean War*

46. Why didn’t the Brown case result in immediate desegregation of schools?
Schwartz, *A History of the Supreme Court*
James T. James Tackach, *Brown v. Board of Education*
Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education*
Kluger, *Simple Justice*

47. Why did the United States get involved in Vietnam in the 1950s?
* Dudley & Bender, *The Vietnam War: Opposing Viewpoints*, chapter 1, #1-2
Podhoretz, *Why We Were in Vietnam*
Brinkley, *Dean Acheson*
Karnow, *Vietnam: A History*

48. Was Betty Friedan “the mother of modern feminism”?
Frost-Knappman, *Women’s Progress in America*
Linden-Ward & Green, *American Women in the 1960s*
Kerber & deHart, *Women’s America* (3rd or 4th ed.)
Buechler, *Women’s Movements in the United States*

49. Why did Kennedy win the election of 1960?
Theodore H. White, *The Making of the President, 1960*
Christopher Matthews, *Kennedy and Nixon*
* Stephen Ambrose, *Nixon*

50. Did Kennedy justifiably risk nuclear war in the Cuban Missile Crisis? (I)
Raymond A. Gartoff, “The Cuban Missile Crisis: An Overview,” in James A. Nathan, ed., *The Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited*
Dino A. Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*
Blight and Welch, *On the Brink*
Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *Robert Kennedy and His Times*

51. Did Kennedy justifiably risk nuclear war in the Cuban Missile Crisis? (II)
Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days*
* James N. Giglio, *The Presidency of John F. Kennedy*
May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*
Fursenko and Naftali, “One Hell of a Gamble”: *The Secret History of the Cuban Missile Crisis*

52. Did Kennedy risk nuclear war in the Cuban Missile Crisis? (III)
Roger Hilsman, *The Cuban Missile Crisis*
David Burner, *John F. Kennedy*
Evan Thomas, *Robert Kennedy: His Life*
* James N. Giglio, *The Presidency of John F. Kennedy*

53. What did King’s “I Have a Dream” speech accomplish?
Garrow, *Bearing the Cross*
Oates, *Let the Trumpet Sound*
Lewis, *King: A Biography*
Weisbrodt, *Freedom Bound*

54. Why did President Kennedy challenge the nation to send a man to the moon?
McDougall, *The Heavens and the Earth: A Political History of the Space Program*
55. Did Barry Goldwater’s candidacy for President in 1964 constitute a “conservative revolution”?
Perlstein, Before the Storm
Goldwater, With No Apologies
Theodore H. White, The Making of the President 1964
* Patterson, Grand Expectations

56. Was Malcolm X at the center or fringe of the black civil rights movement?
Bruce Perry, Malcolm X: The Last Speeches
David Gallen, Malcolm X
Clayborne Carson, Malcolm X: The FBI File
William Strickland, Make It Plain
*John Hope Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom

57. Were hippies radicals?
Geoffrey Perrett, A Dream of Greatness: The American People, 1945-1963
* James Patterson, Grand Expectations

58. Did the Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society end poverty in America?
Doris Kearns, Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream
Gentleman and Mermelstein, eds., The Great Society Reader: the Failure of American Liberalism
Reuben J. Margolin, The War on Poverty

59. Why did President Johnson escalate the Vietnam War in 1965-67?
* George Herring, America’s Longest War
Brian VandeMark, Into the Quagmire
Lloyd C. Gardner, Pay Any Price
Turner, Lyndon Johnson’s Dual War

60. Was Lyndon Johnson’s policy in Vietnam a success?
Irving Bernstein, Guns or Butter
H.W. Brands, The Wages of Globalism
Larry Berman, Lyndon Johnson’s War: The Road to Stalemate in Vietnam
Joseph A. Califano, The Triumph & Tragedy of Lyndon Johnson

61. Was the Tet Offensive of 1968 a military and political defeat?
* Dudley & Bender, The Vietnam War: Opposing Viewpoints, ch. 2
Ronald H. Spector, After Tet
Robert Dallek, Flawed Giant: Lyndon Johnson and His Times, 1961-1973

62. Did George Wallace’s candidacy affect the outcome of the 1968 election?
Dan T. Carter, The Politics of Rage
* James Patterson, Grand Expectations
Tom Shachtman, Decade of Shocks
Jules Witcover, The Year the Dream Died

63. Did Nixon and Kissinger gain “peace with honor” in Vietnam?
Robert Mann, A Grand Delusion
Howard Jones, Crucible of Power: A History of American Foreign Relations from 1897
Robert Dallek, Nixon and Kissenger: Partners in Power
* Ambrose, Nixon

64. Why did the US lose the Vietnam War?
Dudley & Bender, The Vietnam War: Opposing Viewpoints
* George Herring, America’s Longest War
Lomperis, The War Everyone Lost – and Won
Summers, On Strategy

65. Was Richard Nixon guilty of committing a crime in the Watergate scandal? (I)
Perlstein, Nixonland
Fred Emery, Watergate
Jonathan Aitken, Nixon: A Life
Melvin Small, The Presidency of Richard Nixon
66. Was Richard Nixon guilty of committing a crime in the Watergate scandal? (II)
   Kutler, *The Wars of Watergate*
   White, *Breach of Faith*
   Drew, *Washington Journal*
   * Ambrose, *Nixon*

67. Was Richard Nixon guilty of committing a crime in the Watergate scandal? (III)
   Jeffrey and Maxwell-Long, *Watergate and the Resignation of Richard Nixon*
   James Patterson, *Restless Giant*
   Olson, *Watergate: The Presidential Scandal That Shook America*
   Wicker, *One of Us*

68. Did the Iranian hostage crisis cost Jimmy Carter the presidency?
   Wilentz, *The Age of Reagan*
   Borne, *Jimmy Carter*
   Gould, *The Modern American Presidency*
   Carroll, *It Seemed Like Nothing Happened*

69. Did the United States mount an effective response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979?
   * Jones, *Crucible of Power*
   LaFeber, *America, Russia and the Cold War, 1945-1990*
   Jordan, *Crisis*

70. Was Ronald Reagan’s foreign policy in the Middle East effective?
   Oren, *Power, Faith, and Fantasy: America in the Middle East 1776 to Present*
   Bell, *The Reagan Paradox*
   Schulzinger, *US Diplomacy Since 1900*
   Teicher and Teicher, *Twin Pillars to Desert Storm*

71. Did Ronald Reagan’s domestic policies constitute “a conservative revolution”?
   Stockman, *The Triumph of Politics*
   Evans & Novak, *The Reagan Revolution*
   *Pemberton, *Exit With Honor*
   *Ehrman & Flamm, *Debating the Reagan Presidency*

72. Should Ronald Reagan have been impeached for the Iran-Contra Scandal?
   Lou Cannon, *Reagan*
   Emerson, *Secret Warriors*
   Pemberton, *Exit With Honor*
   Schultz, *Tumult and Triumph*

73. Did newspapers commit treason by publishing *The Pentagon Papers*?
   Goodale, *Fighting for the Press*
   Rudenstine, *The Day the Presses Stopped*
   Graham, *Personal History*
   Sheehan, *The Pentagon Papers*

74. Why was the Stonewall Riot known as the birthplace of the gay rights movement?
   Eisenbach, *Gay Power*
   Faderman, *The Gay Revolution*
   McGarry & Wasserman, *Becoming Visible*