

AADS 1102 Fall 2015
My Family and American Culture (MFAC)¹
Presented in class on November 9 and 11, 2015

For the MFAC project, you will be writing a family history that relates at least two generations of your family to the dominant national, cultural, and local trends in America.

Timeline:

In the project, you are positioning your family in larger cultural and historical context. In the timeline component, you will chart your family's history and begin trying to tie that history to major political, social, and cultural patterns and events in the U.S. (and in the case of MFAC Option 2, to tie that history to major patterns and events in your country of origin). You only want to include national patterns and events that encompass topics and events your family discussed. Use the readings and activities in the course to identify relevant national patterns and events. Sample timeline charts will be given later in the semester. You will bring in a draft of your timeline for discussion on September 28.

Narrative History:

You have two options for completing the narrative history component.

Narrative History, MFAC Option 1: If you choose option 1, you will demonstrate your understanding of the ways in which at least two generations of your family related to national, cultural, and local trends in America. At least one generation must encompass the period before 1975, and I strongly encourage you to focus your entire project on generations who came of age prior to 1975.

To complete your family history, you will likely rely heavily on interviews of family members, but you can also utilize manuscript sources such as diaries, letters, photographs or other materials your family has kept. You may also use your own memories of stories you have been told in the past.

Utilizing your interviews, other historical materials your family provides, and background information you find on the history and culture of the U.S., prepare a no less than 1500 word formal paper, or narrative history that places at least two generations of your family's history in context of American history and culture. Synthesize your findings, and organize your paper around time period and topic (i.e., popular culture). That is, do not organize your paper around each interviewee's responses, with each paragraph covering a different person. You likely will not be able to use all the information your family provides to you. You will have to decide what information interests you the most or provides the richest narrative.

¹ MFAC is based on the Family History Assignment given by Lois P. Rudnick and other instructors in the University of Massachusetts, Boston's AMST 100 course.