AAS/HSTA 417 Research Paper Checklist

Argument
- Can you identify a clearly stated argument?
- Has evidence been organized and arranged in support of that argument?

Paragraphs
- Does each paragraph have a clearly stated topic sentence?
- Do the rest of the paragraphs in that sentence support the topic sentence?

Sentences – punctuation and grammar
- Does each sentence have a subject and verb?
  Are there any grammatical or punctuation issues that need to be addressed such as:
  - using consistent case in compound sentences: i.e. “The Birmingham police used batons on Delores and me.”
  - using participial phrases that refer to grammatical subjects: i.e. “Marching down the sidewalk, the demonstrator carried a sign.”
  - writing complete sentences without comma splices: i.e. “They met in a rural Mississippi prison after a voter registration drive during Freedom Summer.”
  - using adjective phrases that refer to the grammatical subject: i.e. “Frustrated and fed up, H. Rap Brown gave powerful and provocative speeches.”
  - putting punctuation inside quotation marks: i.e. “Ella Baker once said, ‘One of the things that has to be faced ... where we have come from and where we are going.’”
  - placing parenthetical expressions inside commas: i.e. “Malcolm X, you will be saddened to hear, was assassinated today.”
  - joining independent clauses with semicolons or periods: i.e. “Septima Clark taught school children first; later on she taught adults.”

Sentences - style
- Do any of the sentences have stylistic issues that need to be addressed such as:
  - writing in the active voice: i.e. “A center right coalition of Republicans elected President Nixon.”
  - avoiding nominalization (the making of a verb into a noun): i.e. “The SNCC staffers demonstrated” rather than “The SNCC staffers participated in a demonstration.”
  - avoiding use of the verb to be: i.e. “The Black Studies Movement foments discord” rather than “The Black Studies Movement is controversial.”
  - avoiding unclear antecedents: i.e. “Historical narratives shape our perceptions” rather than “This shapes our perceptions.”
  - defining your terms: i.e. Pan-Africanism, a movement to unify the dispersed peoples of Africa under a common political umbrella, flowered in the early twentieth century.
  - using positive rather than negative constructions: i.e. “Stokely Carmichael promoted black nationalism” rather than “Stokely Carmichael did not support racial unity.”

Footnotes - mechanics
- Do any of the issues need to be corrected:
  - are all your footnote numbers superscripted, at the end of the sentence, and outside all punctuation;
  - have you italicized book, journal, and magazine titles;
  - have you checked over the seven-step footnoting process?