

UNITED STATES HISTORY
AMY BELL

WRITTEN EXERCISE #1

“ONE IS ASTONISHED IN THE STUDY OF HISTORY AT THE RECURRENCE OF THE IDEA THAT EVIL MUST BE FORGOTTEN, DISTORTED, SKIMMED OVER. WE MUST NOT REMEMBER THAT DANIEL WEBSTER GOT DRUNK BUT ONLY REMEMBER THAT HE WAS A SPLENDID CONSTITUTIONAL LAWYER. WE MUST FORGET THAT GEORGE WASHINGTON WAS A SLAVE OWNER...AND SIMPLY REMEMBER THE THINGS WE REGARD AS CREDITABLE AND INSPIRING. THE DIFFICULTY, OF COURSE, WITH THIS PHILOSOPHY IS THAT HISTORY LOSES ITS VALUE AS AN INCENTIVE AND EXAMPLE; IT PAINTS PERFECT MEN AND NOBLE NATIONS, BUT IT DOES NOT TELL THE TRUTH.”

~W.E.B. DUBOIS (*BLACK RECONSTRUCTION*)

What is history? Why should we study history? Within the context of our stories concerning Christopher Columbus, Native Americans, the Pilgrims, or slavery, discuss how historians (Zinn and Loewen) have dealt with the above issues specifically. How have history *textbooks* begun to complicate our histories even further? With regard to the above topics, how have your readings and studies in this class differed from the ways in which these topics have been portrayed (all the way back to elementary school) to you in previous classes? In the quote above, W.E.B. DuBois suggests that in our studies of history, when we skim over the bad parts, our histories begin to lose their value as “incentive and example.” What does he mean by this? What are the far-reaching consequences of the ways in which so many of us have been taught history?

“HISTORY IS FICTION, EXCEPT FOR THE PARTS THAT I LIKE, WHICH ARE, OF COURSE, TRUE.”
~ JIM CORDER

DIRECTIONS

- 1) Your response to the question must be typed—twelve point font, double-spaced, one-inch margins. In writing your answer, please do not exceed five pages.
- 2) ***In your response, use only your assigned text(s), the instructor's handouts, or class notes taken from discussions. Do not use additional library or internet sources.***
- 3) Your generalizations must be supported by direct citations from the text, class notes, or instructor's handouts.
- 4) Citations should be made in MLA format. For class notes or presentations, you might use: (60's handout) or (class notes).

Note: You must cite parenthetically throughout your narrative. Please follow this format. There should be many citations throughout your response taken from the sources noted above because assumptions and interpretations must be bolstered by citations. **The strength of your response is dependent largely upon your citation of the assigned sources.**

- 5) Do not include a bibliography.
- 6) You may consult with your classmates in formulating an answer to this question. However, you must write your own, unique, independent answer to this question.
- 7) **Date Due:** See eCampus Instructions

“COMPREHENSION DOES NOT MEAN DENYING THE OUTRAGEOUS, DEDUCING THE UNPRECEDENTED FROM PRECEDENCE, OR EXPLAINING PHENOMENA BY SUCH ANALOGIES AND GENERALITIES THAT THE IMPACT OF REALITY AND THE SHOCK OF EXPERIENCE ARE NO LONGER FELT. IT MEANS, RATHER, EXAMINING AND BEARING CONSCIOUSLY THE BURDEN WHICH OUR CENTURY HAS PLACED ON US – NEITHER DENYING ITS EXISTENCE NOR SUBMITTING MEEKLY TO ITS WEIGHT.”

~ HANNAH ARENDT
