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response papers

Assignment Overview

- Two short (minimum 2 page, 500 word) papers before October 28.
- Due before class on the day the reading is assigned (uploaded to Assignments in Blackboard)
- Purpose: Practice interpreting sources, supporting claims with evidence, and writing clearly

To interact with history it is necessary to be able to identify and analyze different types of sources. This involves working primarily with two types: primary sources (the extant artifacts and traces of the past) and secondary sources (usually books and essays produced by historians who are interpreting primary sources).

It is not enough to simply read the sources, however. Historical documents do not easily reveal their meanings. Some historians are such skilled writers that they can mask weaknesses in their arguments or convince the reader that an interpretation may be the correct one even if the evidence does not support it. How do you unlock the secrets of the past by interpreting historical documents? How do you tell if a historian is effectively using evidence and making a convincing argument? How do authors' biases impact the sources? How do you make sure you're not duped? To answer these questions, you need to develop habits of active and critical reading.

The reading response paper assignment is designed to allow you to practice working with a variety of sources, to encourage you to develop habits of critical interrogation of sources, and to hone your skills of academic writing.

Your task is to complete two, minimum 2 page (500 word), response papers this semester that use primary sources to answer the questions. You can choose which readings and questions you would like to write about with the following stipulations:

- At least one paper must be submitted before exam 1.
- The papers must be submitted to the Assignments section of Blackboard before class as .doc or .docx on the date listed and contain citations to receive credit.

due dates and questions

Aug 31: *Constructing the American Past*, Ch 1

What were the goals of the Ku Klux Klan, and how did their selection of victims illustrate them?

Sept 4: *Constructing the American Past*, Ch 3

What key factors caused the confrontation at Wounded Knee?

Sept 14: *Constructing the American Past*, Ch 2

What motivated the strikers in 1877? How did their opponents seek to delegitimize workers'?

grievances and win support for private business?

Sept 16: *Constructing the American Past*, Ch 4

How did Corresca, Lee, and Schneiderman differ in their memories of their homelands? In their attitudes toward America? In their descriptions of work? What do you think accounted for the differences?

Sept 28: *Constructing the American Past*, Ch 5

Why did advocates of an overseas U.S. empire (especially annexation of the Philippines) believe it was the best option for the United States? –or– Why did opponents of U.S. empire believe that acquiring overseas territory was undesirable?

Sept 30: *Constructing the American Past*, Ch 6

Should Upton Sinclair and Margaret Sanger be considered “progressives”? In other words, in what ways did Sinclair and Sanger exhibit or act on concerns of the Progressive Era?

Oct 7: *Constructing the American Past*, Ch 7

How did the United States government and the artists of wartime posters appeal differently to men and women to persuade them to support World War I?

Oct 16: *Constructing the American Past*, Ch 9

How did the Great Depression affect people in their daily lives?

Oct 28: *Constructing the American Past*, Ch 10

What do documents 3-7 suggest about the extent of Roosevelt’s four freedoms during World War II? Could minority groups expect equal access to the freedoms?

formatting and citations

Papers should be typed, double-spaced, in 12 point, Times New Roman font, with 1 inch margins. Title pages and works cited are not necessary, but your paper must include a creative title that indicates the subject matter of your essay.

Footnotes should be single spaced in 10 point, Times New Roman font.

Evidence and sources should be cited using footnotes that conform closely to the Chicago Manual of Style, 15th edition. You can find the Chicago guidelines, with examples, here, http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html and a guide here <http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/DocChicago.html>. The UCA Writing Center has prepared this helpful guide: <http://uca.edu/writingcenter/cms-basics/>.

Citing sources from a document reader can be a bit tricky, but make sure you have the following elements (if provided): Author, "Document Title," in *Book Title*, ed. Editor (City: Publisher, Year), Page Number. If the

source book does not list an author, start with the document title.

Do the best you can with citations for the response papers. Remember that a citation should point your reader to the precise page and source in which you found the information.

To insert a footnote using Microsoft Word on a PC, click "References" and then "Insert Footnote." You can achieve the same thing by using the keyboard shortcut CTL+ALT+F. To insert footnotes in previous versions of Word, click "Insert," "References," and choose "Footnote." The keyboard shortcut CTL+ALT+F should also work for versions prior to 2007. Mac users click "Insert" and then "Footnote" or cmd+option+f.

assessment

A Paper: The author directly answered the questions. The paper uses evidence in support of the argument, interpreting primary sources and evaluating and engaging secondary sources where appropriate. The evidence is appropriate to support the argument, and it is analyzed thoroughly. The examples chosen are fitting, given the argument, and demonstrate a mastery of the material. There are appropriate citations. The paper shows clear, forceful, and engaging writing. It is almost entirely free from grammatical and mechanical errors.

B Paper: There are answers to the questions, but they are not fully developed. Use of evidence is adequate, but not outstanding. Examples may be left without sufficient analysis or without clear relation to the thesis statement. The writing is solid, but has some flaws. The organization of the paper could be stronger, or the writing could be improved.

C Paper: The author attempted to answer the questions, but the claims may not be explicit, do not match the evidence presented in the paper, or need improvement. Use of evidence is acceptable but needs work. Evidence may not effectively support the claims, or different kinds of evidence would have been better. There may not be enough specific examples to support the argument. The writing shows a basic grasp of general conventions, but has areas that could be improved with further editing and revising.

D Paper: The paper lacks coherent answers to the questions or the evidence is weak or does not support the argument. It lacks specific examples sufficient to fully explore the historical topic. The writing is below average; it shows clear room for improvement.

F Paper: The paper fails to meet the basic requirements of the assignment, shows a lack of effort, or exhibits an egregious amount of errors or mistakes.



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