**Course: Introduction to Historiography**

**Instructor: Katherine Lacks**

**Academic Year: 2016-2017**

Time: Independent Study

Location: Room S11

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**Course Overview**

This course serves as an introduction to some of the basic theories, practices, and problems of historiography, the history of historical writing and inquiry, throughout US History. Its principal aims are to study certain theories that have had a major impact on the writing of history, to point to questions about how we, as academic historians, know and represent the past; and to promote a sense of intellectual community between historiography students and AP US History students.

**Student Performance Objectives**

Students will be evaluated on the basis of their ability to:

* *Discern* major themes, problems, and controversies that serve as threads running through the history of modern historiography.
* *Connect* specific topics and readings to these larger issues, in both the weekly response papers and in comments in class.
* *Analyze* individual works of historiography and historiographic debates rigorously, e.g. by situating work(s) in broader intellectual context and conversation, reading for argument, considering how writer uses evidence and what might be alternative explanations for given data, identifying methodology and orientation and discerning possible authorial biases, etc.
* *Write* with clarity, cogency, and concision.

**Evaluation and Requirements**

**Each trimester grade will be based on the following:**

* **Trimester Exam (Historiography Essays 1, 2, & 3): 40%** - due at the end of each trimester
* **Discussion Board: 60%** - due bi-weekly

**Discussion Board Component**

Read arguments provided and write an article on your webpage explaining each argument, and your personal viewpoint in terms of the history discussed.

Each article should be in the following format:

* Paragraph 1: Author 1’s point of view
* Paragraph 2: Author 2’s point of view
* Paragraph 3: Your personal point of view (Based on your knowledge of history, and what you learned from each author, what is your overall interpretation of the information discussed? You may complete some additional research if you find yourself skeptical.)

This exercise is also intended to continue to improve your writing skills and act as an example for 11th grade students to improve their writing. Remember to read critically and therefore be extremely detailed in your arguments. Question the authors! Keep an open mind and look for counter-evidence.

Be sure to use proper English grammar in all posts. Remember to not rely on conversational language, avoid ending sentences with prepositions, and avoid the first and second person, even in the third paragraph.

Grade 11 students will be encouraged to comment on your entries, or question them. Please respond.

**Historiographical Essay Component**

Historiography is the study of changes in the methods, interpretations, and conclusions of historians over time. Putting the historian in the context of ideas and events current in his/her day is one way to explain why one historian’s interpretation may differ from another’s. Assessing the primary sources – and how they are used – is another way to grapple with competing interpretations of the same subject. Deconstructing the ideological assumptions or theories a historian brings into his/her interpretation is yet a third way to explore the historiography of a subject. Consider the following historiographical questions when engaging in class discussion and writing your papers:

1. How has the historian defined the subject/problem?
2. What is the historian’s argument and how does it compare to that advanced by other historians?
3. What philosophical/political assumptions or theories does the historian bring to his/her subject? How do these assumptions affect the conclusions?
4. What primary sources does the historian use? What methods are employed to interpret these sources?
5. What are the similarities and differences between the findings of different scholars? How do you account for these similarities or differences?
6. What important aspects of the problem have not been examined? Why not?

Writing a Historiographical Paper: There are several ways to organize a historiography paper.

1. When focused on a specific topic, it may be helpful to analyze the scholarship chronologically. Begin with the work that was published earliest and end with the one published most recently. Discuss the ways in which later scholars rely upon or reject the work of their predecessors, and explain why.
2. Another organizational scheme is to focus on the impact of different methodologies. You can group together the scholars who use various kinds of sources or various methods of analysis or philosophies and theories. Then discuss the differences between the groups you have set up.
3. Another possibility is exploring the reasons for all the variations you have found in the scholarship. Are the authors you have read addressing different questions? Using different sources? Do they start from different philosophical positions?

Thesis for a Historiographical Paper: Every paper has a thesis, even a historiography paper. Identify a common thread or main idea that connects your discussion of the various scholars. Make your thesis clear in your introductory paragraph and in your paper’s title. (You do not need a separate title page).

Writing Standards: *Standard English* mechanics and grammar are expected on all papers and discussion postings. The [*Chicago Manual of Style*](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html) citation format will be expected on all papers. See the sample footnote below and visit the Chicago Style link on the weebly.[[1]](#footnote-1) Please use numeric footnotes (using MS Word’s Reference/Insert system).

Additional Requirements:

* Minimum word count: 1,000 words
* Sources: all assigned essays + at least one scholarly, outside source
* Citations: Chicago Style citations in footnotes
* Margins: 1 in
* Submission: email to Mrs. Lacks by due date; file format: Historiography Essay 1 – first initial. Last name

Academic Ethics: Cheating and plagiarism (claiming another’s works, sentences, or ideas as one’s own) will not be tolerated. Please note that copying directly from a book, article or the internet is plagiarism. Use quotes and proper citations (with page #s or web address with date accessed) when referring directly to a passage written by another author. Paraphrases of an author’s work should also be credited to the author with a citation.

Historiographical Essay Rubric:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Advanced** | **Intermediate** | **Poor** | **Not Met** |
| Thesis | Thesis is interesting and original | Thesis is good | Thesis is not clearly identifiable |  |
| Historiographical Connections | Historiographical turning points are nicely identified; solid connections are made between various historical interpretations. | Historiography is explored but some important connections are not made. | No support is provided for historiographical claims or historiographical analysis is missing. |  |
| Depth of Analysis | Argument reflects some depth of analysis and reflects a solid reading of the material. | Argument is good but overlooks some important aspects of the readings | Paper has no meaningful analysis |  |
| Timeliness and mechanics | *Chicago Style* is used; Paper is posted on/by due date. Standard English mechanics and grammar are used. |  | Paper is posted late; poor documentation of quotes/sources. | Paper is not submitted |

Helpful Checklist for Historiography Papers:

1. Do you have a topic and thesis appropriate to a historiographical paper?
2. Does your thesis reflect some depth of analysis of the subject?
3. Do you discuss all required sources (monograph books & journal articles)?
4. Do you identify each author, title of his/her work, and date of publication?
5. Do you clearly address and analyze the arguments presented by the various scholars?
6. Do you make solid analytical connections between the arguments offered by the authors studied?
7. Do you make connections between the strengths and weaknesses of primary sources used by each scholar?
8. Does your paper reflect a good reading & understanding of the books and articles?
9. Is your paper well organized with paragraphs designed to support your historiographical analysis?
10. Is your evidence (examples, quotes etc.) explained and analyzed effectively?
11. Is your paper free of long, unexplained quotes?
12. Are your quotes, paraphrases or ideas taken from the readings properly documented with footnotes using Chicago Style?[[2]](#footnote-2) To make a footnote, go to “references” then click on “insert footnote.” You will automatically be taken to the footnote area to type in the citation, and the numbering will be done automatically as well. Use the mouse to get back to the body of your paper. *Save your work after each footnote*.
13. Is your paper free of grammatical, spelling and other mechanical problems?
14. Do you avoid first person “I” and informal contractions (don’t)?
15. Do you have a title for your paper (no cover sheet is needed)?
16. Does your paper meet the word count and 12pt font/1inch margin standards?

**Late Work**

Any late work will be accepted within the given trimester for a penalty of 25 points, meaning, the highest achievable late grade is a 75 percent. No credit will be given for any work that is not submitted. Students who have missed class are expected to make-up all work in a timely manner. All work is located on our website, [www.klacks.weebly.com](http://www.klacks.weebly.com). Students who miss class are expected to go to the website to get the work they missed before returning to class.

**Materials**

All articles and texts will be provided by the instructor.

**Use of Technology**

As this course is online, participating students should bring a laptop to school each day.

**Class Schedule and/or Sequence of Instruction**

Please visit my website, [www.klacks.weebly.com](http://www.klacks.weebly.com), for all class information, detailed syllabus with all due dates, contact information, and additional review materials.

**Honor Code**

Students are expected to abide by the Broadwater Honor Code. Any cheating or plagiarism will not be tolerated. If you are caught, no credit can be given for a dishonest assignment and you will be referred to the Honor Council.

1. First name Last name of author, *Title of book underlined or in italics* (Publishing city: Publisher, copyright year), page #. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. First name Last name of author, *Title of book underlined or in italics* (Publishing city: Publisher, copyright year), page #. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)