

SOURCE EXPLORATION ASSIGNMENT

Most history books offer a narrative about what happened in the past. These narratives are based on *primary sources*--documents and artifacts created at the time of the events in question, or by eyewitnesses to those events--, as well as *secondary literature*--books and articles written by people (historians, memoirists, novelists) who used primary sources to craft their own narratives. In many cases historians trust other authors' work and do not consult the original primary sources themselves. The task here is to take one of these primary sources, from the document collection by Robert Moeller (or other course readings or source collections), and find out as much as possible about who its author was, why that author wrote it, for what audience, how the original readers understood it, how the source was preserved, and how it has been cited and interpreted over the years since its creation.

Step 1: Proposal (meetings with professor weeks 3 & 4; due Oct. 30--week 5) (5 points)

1. **Pick a source from Moeller's document collection *The Nazi State and German Society*, or from the notes of any other course reading, or even other relevant sources you know of.**
 - a. Think about Germany between 1900 and 1945--what interests you about it?
Look through the book for sources on that topic or types of sources that interest you.
Talk to the professor if you have specific interests or need some help finding a source.
 - b. Look at the source attribution--where Moeller found that text or image (bottom of page)
 - c. Do some searching on the web: google the author and/or title, search melvyl/worldcat for the publication, try google scholar and google books.
 - d. Write a brief narrative or bullet points about where you looked and what you found.
 - e. Make an appointment with the professor and discuss what you can do with that source.
(see Step 2 for ideas)

Step 2: Version 1 (due Nov. 13--week 7) (20 points)

2. **Turn in a 2-3 page text about the results of your research.** These might include:
 - a) Location of original document, or where the publication can be found
(Can you get a copy? If it's within the UC system, you might use interlibrary loans.)
 - b) Description of the original publication
 - c) If the original was in German: Who translated it? Are there different translations?
 - d) Biographical information about the author (and how and where you found out)
 - e) Other things written or created by that author
 - f) How, where and why the source came to be created; in what context was it published?
 - g) Who else has published that text, or cited it?
 - h) Are there varying interpretations of this text? If so, describe them & what they depend on.
 - i) Try putting unique terms into google ngrams and see whether interesting results emerge.
 - j) Can you connect this source to other sources, in this collection or in other collections?

➤ I will note on your corrected paper if it qualifies for one of the presentation/web options.

Step 3: Final Version (due Nov. 25--week 9, before Thanksgiving)(5 points)

3. **After incorporating the professor's corrections & suggestions, submit your final version.**
Also resubmit the hard copy of your corrected Version 1 in class--paper clip them together.

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- **Due dates.** Late submissions will be penalized one point per day, beginning 2pm on the due date.
 - **Grading.** This assignment counts for **30%** of your final grade (including the proposal and corrected version). It is worth taking seriously!
I'll discuss grading criteria and standards in greater detail in class.