

## HIST 133C: BOOK ESSAY ASSIGNMENT

### **Proposal with published reviews (due Jan. 23)**

- §1. **Finding a topic.** A good way to find a topic is to look through the textbook (also index and endnotes), the course reader, and the course web site for ideas. When you find something you would like to know more about, check for bibliographical references. Or just go to the library and browse the shelves; DD256.5-DD259 is the main relevant section. If you have trouble finding a topic, or a book for a topic, please come to talk to me—sooner rather than later!
- §2. **Suitable books.** I would prefer that you select academic works of history, rather than anthologies or fiction, although I may make exceptions. That means the book you choose should have notes and a bibliography.
- §3. **Format.** The main purpose of the proposal is to confirm that you have found a suitable book on your topic of interest. The proposal should be about 1 page long and have three main elements:
1. a *descriptive title* that indicates the main theme you are interested in.
  2. a *short description/explanation* of your topic, with several questions you hope the book will address.
  3. *full bibliographic information* (publisher, date, #pages, page # of bibliography and index) on one, two or three books that you think may be suitable, including library call # or other information on the availability of the book.
  4. **published reviews.** You should attach photocopies of at least one, preferably two reviews of that book from scholarly journals. For books published since 1987, these are accessible through the *Expanded Academic Articles database* (accessed through the library's homepage: Research, Article Databases, E). If you need help finding reviews, please come and see me!

### **Book summary and essay draft (due Feb. 9)**

- §4. Once your book has been approved, you should read it and write a 1 page summary description of the book. This is *not* the book essay, which also discusses how the book addresses and answers your question. This summary should be included in the final book essay. This draft should be 4-5 pages long.

### **Book essay: final version (due Mar. 5 [Feb. 27 for web option])**

- §5. **Length.** Your book essay should be at least 1800 words—6-7 double-spaced, typed pages, with 1½x1x1x1 margins and 12point, proportional space font.  
**Number the pages!** By hand is ok if you are word-processor challenged. Otherwise one point off!
- §6. **Content/Grading.** When I grade, I look for five things. *First*, a *thesis statement* tells me the goal of the paper, what it is trying to argue or explain. *Second*, I look for an *argument* supporting that thesis. *Third*, I look for concrete *evidence*—specific cases or examples—used to support that argument. A paper with any two of these three is a "C;" all three elements earn a "B."  
*Fourth*, I look to see whether *counterevidence* is discussed—whether you refute evidence that supports a thesis different or contradictory to your own. If elements one, two and three are also present, this would bring a paper into the "A" range.  
*Finally*, I look to see whether a paper is *carefully written* and proofread, and has clear organization or perhaps even stylistic grace. This can lift a paper up to a "+" or, with two or more typos/errors per page, drop it down to a "-."
- §7. **Importance.** The book essay counts for **40%** of your final grade. It is worth taking seriously! Any submitted work that is not proofread or does not have numbered pages will be reduced by one point.
- §8. **Late papers.** Late submissions will be penalized one point per day, beginning at 9am. I start then because students entering late disrupt the class and distract me.
- §9. **Plagiarism.** Don't do it!! See the note at the end of the syllabus.