

HIST 133C: BOOK ESSAY ASSIGNMENT

Proposal with reviews (due Jan. 27)

§1. What should I write about?

- Think about Germany--what's interesting about it? Look through the syllabus, textbook, and course web site (see esp. the Links section and CourseLinks page) for ideas. The course website also has sample book essays from the previous class.
- Suggestions: occupation, Marshall Plan, Berlin blockade, refugees from the east, 1953 uprising, Berlin Wall, Spiegel Affair, student movement, RAF terrorism, Stasi, immigration policy, daily life, opposition in East Germany, biographies of famous or "ordinary" (post-1945) Germans.

§2. How do I find books about that topic?

- When you find something that piques your interest, check for bibliographical references (textbook footnotes or bibliography pp. 385ff, Hilton bibliography).
- Searching the web or amazon for keywords, and following the "recommendations" and "also bought" links can lead you to the most current titles.
- Go to the library and browse the shelves--the DD256.5-DD259 is the main relevant call numbers.
- If you have trouble finding a topic, or a book for a topic, please come to talk to me—sooner, not later!

§3. What kind of books are suitable? I would prefer that you select **academic works** of history, and not anthologies or fiction, although I may make exceptions. Most **memoirs**, **diaries** and **biographies** are fine as well.

§4. What should my proposal look like? The purpose of the proposal is to find a suitable book on your topic of interest. It has three main elements:

1. a *descriptive title* that indicates the main theme you are interested in.
2. a *short description and explanation* of your topic, including an explicit *list of questions* that you hope the book will address.
3. *Full bibliographic information* on this and perhaps other books that you think may be suitable, including library call number or other information on the availability of the book.
4. *Published reviews of the book.*
 - You should attach printouts or photocopies of 2 or 3 reviews of your proposed book, at least one of which should be from a scholarly journal (which may be available on the internet; the others can be from other internet sources).
 - For each review you must give full bibliographic information--also about the websites!
 - For books published since 1987, reviews in scholarly journals are often listed in the *Expanded Academic Articles database*, accessible from the UCSB domain, through the library's homepage (Research, Article Databases, E). However, the actual review text is often not available on-line, so you will have to get that journal from the stacks and photocopy the review.
 - If you need help finding reviews, ask a reference librarian for help, or see me.

Book summary and essay draft (due Feb. 17)

§5. Once your proposal has been approved, you should

- Read the book and write a 1-2 page **summary description** of it. Note that this should be a separate section from the book essay itself, although in the end this summary can be integrated into your final book essay. (Make a sub-heading for it in your draft.)
- Write a short **introduction** about the question(s) your essay addresses, perhaps how you found or why you chose this particular book, and how your book addresses those questions (what sources does it use?). This is the place for a **thesis statement**.
- In the **main body** of your essay you should discuss how the book addresses and answers your question.

Final essay (due March 10 [March 3 for web option])

- §6. **Content/Grading.** When I grade, I look for five things.
1. *First*, a *thesis statement* tells me the goal of the paper, what it is trying to argue or explain.
 2. *Second*, I look for an *argument* supporting that thesis.
 3. *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."
 4. *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.
 5. *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. **Length.** Your book essay should be at least 1800 words—6-7 double-spaced, typed pages, with 1½x1x1 margins and 12 point, proportional space font.
Number the pages! By hand is ok if you are word-processor challenged. Otherwise one point off!
- §8. **Due dates.** Late submissions will be penalized one point per day, beginning at 11am. I do this because students entering late disrupt the class and distract me.
- §9. **Grading.** The book essay counts for **20%** of your final grade (30% with the proposal and draft). It is worth taking seriously!
Any submitted work that is not proofread or does not have numbered pages will be reduced by one point.
- §10. This course fulfills the **general education writing requirement**. If you do not submit all parts of the book essay assignment, you cannot receive credit for this course (i.e., you will fail).
- §11. **Plagiarism**—presenting someone else's work as your own, or deliberately failing to credit or attribute the work of others on whom you draw (including materials found on the web)—is a serious academic offense, punishable by dismissal from the university. It hurts the one who commits it most of all, by cheating them out of an education. I will report offenses to the appropriate university authorities for disciplinary action.