

**Assignment Description:** Understanding Historiography through an Annotated Bibliography

**Due Dates:** All three pieces are due 1 week following the group discussions (week 6)

### **Part 1: Building the Annotated Bibliography**

You will describe the historiography (the body of literature about an historical problem) of your topic through assembling an annotated bibliography of 10 secondary sources. By historiography, we mean the study of the history and methodology used by professional historians to understand a historical topic. Historiography, as opposed to the narrative story of the past, describes how historians have debated the meaning of the past. Historians often disagree with each other about how they tell the story of the past and may use very different methods, sources, and tools in order to make their arguments. This variety results in divergent versions of the historical record. This assignment challenges you to describe and engage with the professional literature relating to your own research question. Each source must be correctly cited using Chicago Style, and should answer the following questions for each source:

1. What is the author's major argument?
2. What methods, or lens, is the author using to make her argument?
3. What type of evidence does this author use to make her argument and its effectiveness?
4. What narrower questions can you ask as a result of reading this source?
5. What opportunities does this source provide to identify other relevant sources? (For examples, footnotes, references, mentions of scholars and other major areas of discussion relating to this topic).

Each source will require approximately 1 page to properly answer all of the questions. Each of the ten sources needs to be properly cited in Chicago Style, followed by a paragraph addressing the previous five questions. Please take time to revise this portion of the assignment after your receive feedback from your partner (below). 100 points total. See rubric 1 for the specifics of how you will be assessed. You will be deducted 10 points for each missing source.

\*You are highly encouraged to meet with your librarian for assistance with this project.

### **Part 2: Large Group Defense – Presentation and Critique**

Conducted in one class period – 10 minutes per student.

Presentation: 5 minutes – 25 points.

Critique: 5 minutes – 25 points.

Prior to the large group defenses, you will be put into pairs so that you can receive constructive comments on your ability to convey some of the major interpretations of your historical problem. You will be given the opportunity to present the major conversations you have identified and explain where your emerging argument fits into the historical debate. Make sure that you provide your historiography to your partner at least 72 hours prior to your scheduled presentation time. You will have 5 minutes to speak to the class about the secondary literature you have identified and where your argument fits into the ongoing dialogue, which will be followed by a 5 minute feedback session structured around your partner's responses to these main points:

1. What pieces of the historiography are unclear and need to be better explained?
2. Has your partner clearly articulated the differences in how other historians approach his/her topic?
3. What other angles or resources might be used or explored?

Critique Guidelines: During each presentation, students are expected to engage with their partners by asking questions, challenging assumptions and providing constructive suggestions for further areas of exploration. See Rubric 2 for presentation and critique assessment specifics. You will be graded both on the presentation of your historiography as well as your critique of the historiography of your partner.

### **Part 3: Reflection**

In a one page response, briefly summarize the feedback and response from your partner. After reflecting on this process, which historical arguments that you identified are most useful to your project? Which arguments are most compelling to you and why? What new angles might you consider based on your impressions and on the feedback you received? From the feedback you received, what arguments might you have missed and what other resources might you consult next to deepen your understanding of the major issues relating to your topic? See rubric 3 for assessment specifics.