HISTORY 1301 – Critical Essay Guidelines Kelley, Spring 2022

Today, we are bombarded with information from numerous sources. All writers—whether scholars, historical figures, journalists, etc.—write for a reason and make choices about how they prove their case. This can dramatically alter how we view people, places, and ideas, so it is important to assess writing critically rather than taking it at face value. Critical Essay are designed to get you thinking more deeply about historical articles, what makes an effective writer, and how this influences our understanding of the past.

Students must complete TWO critical essays this semester and have three opportunities to do so. If you chose to do three essays, I will count the highest TWO scores. Each critical essay opportunity aligns with one of the three class sections, and you must write your essay on one the secondary source articles assigned for that section (see below for options). They are due on the dates listed below.

## Due Dates:

Critical Essay 1 Opportunity: Wednesday, February 9 before 11:59 p.m. Submit on blackboard

Critical Essay 2 Opportunity: Wednesday, March 23 before 11:59 p.m. Submit on blackboard

Critical Essay 3 Opportunity: Monday, April 25 before 11:59p.m. Submit on blackboard

## Assignment:

For each critical essay, students will write an assessment of **at least 550 words** on one of the assigned articles in blackboard (see options below). This essay must:

1) Identify the author’s purpose in writing the article and/or their main argument(s);

2) Explain how the author attempts to prove their argument(s) using evidence from the text;

3) Evaluate if the author was successful in convincing you and why;

4) Explain why this topic connected to your life in some way.

For each Critical Essays students must use an article from the options provided below:

### For Critical Essay 1, students can choose from the following articles:

* Joseph Cullen, “James’ Town”
* Wellington Newcomb, “Anne Hutchinson Versus Massachusetts”
* John Hollitz, “The Price of Patriotism”

### For Critical Essay 2, students can choose from the following articles:

* John Hollitz, “Resistance and Western Expansion: Tecumseh and William Henry Harrison”
* Constance Rynder, “All Men and Women Are Created Equal”
* Dee Brown, “The Trail of Tears”

### For Critical Essay 3, students must use one these articles:

* John Hollitz, “Yankees and ‘Border Ruffians’ in ‘Bleeding Kansas’: David Atchinson and Sara Robinson”
* John Talbot, “Combat Trauma in the American Civil War”
* Dorothy Wickenden, “Lincoln and Douglass: Dismantling the Peculiar Institution”

## Length and Format:

* At least **550 words**
* Double-spaced
* 12-point Times New Roman font
* One-inch margins on all sides
* Do not include extra spaces between paragraphs or the title and the essay
* Heading should include you name and a title for your paper on the FIRST page only.
* Avoid quotes as much as possible, but if you must use them the cannot be longer than 2 lines and must be contextualized and explained.

## Citations:

You are not allowed to use any source but class materials. For this paper you do not need to cite material gleaned from your class lectures or the assigned readings unless you are quoting them directly. However, **be sure to identify the author’s full name in the essay.**

It is best to avoid quotes, because too often students fall into a habit of simply quoting info rather than processing it, which does not showcase understanding or intent. If you must use a quote from the article, it cannot be more than two lines and you must provide context and explain it. You must also cite the page/paragraph in parentheses at the end of the sentence before the period. Here is an example: Joseph Cullen set the tone early by noting “that for some watching on shore the ships disappearing from view there must have been much anxiety” (2). If you quote from the optional textbook then it should look like this (YAWP, Chapter 1, Section 1, para. 3).

## Writing Expectations:

* Your essays should be written clearly and concisely, and your paper must be organized in a logical fashion.
* Pay attention to generating paragraphs with clear topic sentences. The topic sentence contains your main point, and then the rest of the paragraph should contain evidence and to support the topic sentence.
* Avoid very short (under 4-5 sentences) or very long (more than a page) paragraphs.
* You also need to take the time to make sure that your essay meets university-level standards of grammar, spelling, capitalization, etc. Be sure to watch out for run-on sentences.
* Finally, the essay must demonstrate that you have followed the directions of this assignment in terms of length, citations, and subject matter.

## Scholastic Dishonesty:

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense. Any student who uses an unauthorized source or tries to pass of the work of another as their own (whether this is another student, the internet, a piece of historical writing, or a purchased paper) will be penalized up to and including receiving a zero on the assignment.

## Late Papers:

If there is a compelling reason why the student cannot submit a paper on the stated due date, the student should reach out the professor at least 24hrs in advance to secure an extension. If no extension has been granted, then last submissions will be docked 5 points per day.