

Assignment III: Précis (10%)
HIST 1200/1201: History and Trump
Due Tuesday, October 31st, by 5:00PM

Précis are concise summaries of a given body of material. A précis should reflect critically on the readings, identify connections, and spark questions for discussion and debate. They are effectively condensed book reviews, and historians often use them when writing literature reviews. You'll also end up writing "response papers" in some history classes, which are much like a précis of what you read for class that day.

Directions:

Find a scholarly history book related to your research project and prepare a précis of 750 words (3 pages). As you do so, please make sure to address the following questions. Answer each one of the "Basics" questions and then choose several of the "Evaluation" questions to address that will allow you to craft a coherent analysis of the book within the word limit. You may not get to all of them, but you should attempt to address as many as possible:

Basics:

- What is the broad topic of the book and what specific issue(s) does it address?
- In your own words, succinctly state the author's argument in 1-3 sentences.
- What kind of evidence and sources does the author use to support his/her arguments?
- What existing scholarly literature does the author reference? How do they position their own book in relation to this previous work? (Include a footnote citing at least two other books, articles, etc. the author engages with)

Evaluation:

- What are its strengths and weaknesses of the argument? Is it persuasive?
- Is there anything unique, unusual, striking, interesting, or new about the author's approach?
- What is difficult, unclear or nonsensical?
- Is anything "missing" from the book? Are there other issues, lines of argument, or sources, that you think should have been incorporated?
- Do you get a sense of whether or not other historians agree or disagree with the conclusions by this author?

Format Guidelines:

- Evaluations must be submitted as Word documents and must be written in formal English essay form (no bullet points or question formats).
- Include your name and page numbers.
- Include footnote citations for all sources, formatted according to the Chicago Manual of Style.