

Making an Argument Assignments:

These short essay assignments will focus on honing your ability to construct an historical argument—good practice to prepare you for the essay component of your exams in this class, and more importantly, a **completely transferrable critical thinking skill**: No matter what your major or intended career, you need to know how to construct an evidence-based argument and how to dissect your own and other people's arguments.

Each assignment is worth 25 points. You must complete one of these assignments during each of the following time blocks, for a total of three (3):

- 8/30-9/13 (5-point bonus if submitted by 9/9)
- 9/23-10/16 (5-point bonus if submitted by 10/2)
- 10/25-11/8 (5-point bonus if submitted by 10/30)

You may, if you choose, complete four and drop your lowest score.

The assignment is due before class (by 11 am) on the day that features your chosen question--i.e., if you opt to do the starred question for 8/30, your essay is due by 11 am on 8/30. **No late submissions accepted.**

- All assignments must be submitted to the Turnitin dropboxes on our course Moodle page.
- Essays should be double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font, and formatted as .rtf, .doc, or .docx.
- Recommended length: approximately 450-600 words.
- **Before you write: Be sure you have read and understood "Argument and Thesis: The Essentials" (on Moodle).**
- Your essay should be based on the linked reading. No outside reading required.
- **Limit quotations to short phrases.** The bulk of your essay should be your own words, your own sentence structures, your own paragraphs. Be sure to use quotation marks and parenthetical citations for all quotations.
- Be sure you have a thesis! Be sure you have an evidence-based argument!

Options for first Making an Argument essay (remember: the essay is due in the Turnitin dropbox on Moodle by 11 am on the day that features your chosen question):

8/30 *Good Government? Political Crisis and Western Identity*

- How did a non-absolutist monarchy differ from an absolutist, and why did many political theorists prefer the latter?*
- What were the "exceptions to absolutism"? What sort of political alternatives did these exceptions offer?*

9/4 *External Encounters: Overseas Empires and the Expansion of the West*

- How did the growth of overseas empires change the definition of the West and the global balance of power?*

9/6 *Living in the Material World*

- When and what was "the Scientific Revolution" and why was it crucial in defining Western culture?*

9/9 *Living in the Material World (2)*

- What were the connections between the Enlightenment debate over progress, the idea of the "noble savage," and the changing definition of the West?*
- 9/11 *One of the West's Most Important Ideological Encounters: The French Revolution(s)*
- How did the 2nd French Revolution differ from the first? How was it a continuation?*
- 9/13 *The French Revolution Ends and Continues*
- Did Napoleon end or save the French Revolution? (Was he its heir or its undertaker?)*
 - What difference did the French Revolution make? Why is it worth an entire Western Civ textbook chapter?*

Options for second Making an Argument essay:

- 9/23 *Ideological Encounters: The Liberal Response*
- Think of the subtitle of today's lecture: To what developments was the emergence of liberal and conservative political ideologies a *response*? How so?*
- 9/27 *All Kinds of Encounters: The Promise and the Threat of Nationalism*
- What is the definition of "romanticism"? How does it contrast with "scientific rationalism"?*
 - Who saw nationalism as a promise? Who saw it as a threat?*
- 9/30 *1848!*
- Who ultimately won in the Revolutions of 1848?*
- 10/2 *The Transformation of Nationalism*
- What does the title of today's class session have to do with German unification under Bismarck?*
- 10/4 *Nationalism and Nation-Making*
- How did elites respond to the threat of mass politics?*
- 10/7 *Internal Encounters: Race and Nation*
- What was the Dreyfus Affair? What does it reveal about nation-making in France?*
- 10/9 *Internal Encounters: Masses and Classes*
- How did socialist successes in the 19th and early 20th centuries actually work to reduce the chances of socialist revolution?*
- 10/11 *Internal Encounters: Women and Men*
- Why were many people, including women, opposed to women's suffrage?* (Be sure to include the Different Voices feature, as well as the rest of today's reading, in your response.)
 - How successful was the women's movement before 1914?*
- 10/14 *Fin-de-Siècle: The West Encounters the Dark Side*
- What were the major scientific developments between 1870 and 1914? Why did they produce both optimism and anxiety?*
 - What is the significance of the Oscar Wilde trial?*
- 10/16 *External Encounters: The New Imperialism*

- What was new about the “new imperialism”?* (Be sure to include the “Different Voices” in your answer.)
- What are the connections between the new imperialism and the cultural crisis discussed in the preceding two main sections of this chapter?*

Options for third Making an Argument essay

10/25 *The Western Front*

- How does the history of the Western Front help you make sense of the poems in “Different Voices”?*
- In what ways did the war produce “the world turned upside down”?*

10/28 *The Eastern Front and the Revolutionary Aftermath*

- How did the execution of the tsar and his family reveal key features of Bolshevik ideas about law and justice?*

10/30 *The Making of the Modern Middle East*

- Did WWI change Western imperialism and the global balance of power?*

11/1 *A Turning Point?*

- In what ways was the war “a turning point that failed to turn”?*

11/4 *Interwar Ideological Encounters: The Radical Right*

- What did Hitler’s trial reveal about democratic stability in post-WWI Germany?*

11/6 *Stalin’s Revolution*

- Stalinism and Nazism were ideological enemies: Stalinism on the Far Left and Nazism on the Far Right; yet, they shared startling commonalities. What and why? (Be sure you use the Different Voices feature as well as the rest of today’s reading.)*

11/8 *World War II: The Axis Victorious*

- What were the motivations behind appeasement? Why did it fail?*