

History

Types of Assignments:

- * **Primary Source Based:** Straightforward narrative of the past, while answering questions like: Why did these things happen? What do they mean?
 - o Not merely a "plot summary," but situating primary source in context using lectures and readings
 - o What is a primary source?
 - Manuscripts, records, or documents providing original research or documentation
 - o What is most important in this type of paper?
 - Skillful use of quoting primary material- balance of letting the work speak for itself and explaining/interpreting information
 - Clear storytelling- shouldn't be garbled or trying to sound TOO scholarly, but effective in it's clarity
 - Build suspense/hide inevitability- imagination plays a role because you cannot create your evidence, just inherit it
- * **Secondary Source Based:** Looking at many authors' opinions, presenting the different positions, and arguing the pros and cons of these views
 - o What is a secondary source?
 - Materials or sources that contain information that has been cited, translated, or based upon a primary or original source
 - o What is important in this type of paper?
 - Take a stance
 - Skills of synthesis should be demonstrated- being able to compare and contrast different author's perspectives

Sample Assignment:

Short (1-2 pages typed) responses to the readings, in which you summarize the major arguments and/or conclusions of the readings and write down the issues the readings raise in your mind, the aspects of the reading that remain unclear to you, or any questions you would like to see discussed.

-HIS 206: The Holocaust

Some Things to Remember:

- * Write about the past in the past tense
- * Support generalizations with evidence
- * Acknowledge any paraphrase or summary (with citation)
- * Quote when you want to preserve the original language, paraphrase when you think you can say it better

Types of Assignments:

- * **Journal Entries:** Personal Response to the reading and/or class discussions
 - o What is important in this type of paper?
 - Show comprehension of material while relating it to yourself
- * **Essay:** Specific to one topic, response and summary of reading
 - o What is important to this type of paper?
 - Close examination of one element from reading

*In-class and take-home essays are also common in this discipline

Sample Assignment: What was the book and who was the author? Address, where appropriate: the author's intent, the work's content, and their religious and historical context(s). How was mysticism defined/portrayed/treated in this book? What was importance of mystical experience(s) in this work?

-REL 389w: Senior Seminar

History and Religion

Guidelines from Professor Bakhmetyeva:

A good history paper

1. Has sharply focused, limited topic.
2. Has a clearly stated argument.
3. Includes original thoughts of the author.
4. Is built, step by step, on evidence.
5. Documents its sources.
6. Is written dispassionately (without bias).
7. Speaks to its intended audience.

Quotes from Interviews:

"A dramatic opening is good- [the student] should present a charged problem or moment, then step back and question it, explain it."

-Professor Jarvis

"[A student] needs to find ways to get past description. Why did it happen? Why does it matter?"

-Professor Applegate

"History is less like storytelling and more like story *explaining*."

-Professor Bakhmetyeva

“Occasionally, writing fellows in the past have gotten upset with the content of my religion students’ papers. It’s important for the fellow to remember that the student cannot do anything about Mohammed’s view towards women.”

-Professor Homerin

Questions for Writing Fellow/Consultant to ask Tutee:

How heavily does your professor weigh grammar and presentation vs. ideas?

Have you met with your professor to discuss this topic and material yet?

Which kind of citation has your professor specified for you to use?

Bibliography:

Applegate, Cecilia. Personal Interview. 28 Feb. 2006.

Bakhtmeteva, Tatyana. Class Interview. 21 Feb. 2006.

Brown, Theodore M. Personal Interview. 23 Feb. 2006.

Homerin, Emil. Personal Interview. 27 Feb. 2006.

Jarvis, Michael. Personal Interview. 23 Feb. 2006.

Marius, Richard and Melvin E. Page. *A Short Guide to Writing about History*. New York: Pearson, 2005.

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