BOOK REVIEW INSTRUCTIONS
HIST 189A / PROF. GENDZEL
FALL 2015 SEMESTER ONLY
DUE IN CLASS AT 1:30 PM ON OCT. 8 OR NOV. 19

WHAT IS THE ASSIGNMENT?
This writing assignment (5-7 pages) consists of three parts:

1. Choose a book from the HIST 189A Book Review Reading List posted on the course website. Prof. Gendzel can help you choose a book to match your interests. Any book not on the reading list must be approved by Prof. Gendzel in advance.

2. Check out your chosen book from the library or purchase it from your preferred retailer. There are no books in the Spartan Bookstore or on reserve at the library for this assignment. Ask librarians for assistance in obtaining your chosen book.

3. Read a book from the HIST 189A Book Review Reading List carefully, then summarize and critique the book using the format specified in this handout (see pp. 2-3 below). Divide your review into 2 parts as specified on p. 2 below.

Ask Prof. Gendzel if you don’t understand any part of this assignment, such as how to obtain an approved book, how to summarize the author’s thesis in your own words, or how to separate summary from critical analysis.

HOW WILL IT BE GRADED?
Your Book Review will be graded on the following basis: 40% Summary, 50% Critical Analysis, 10% Style and References. Download the HIST 189A Book Review Grading Rubric from the course website for more information on how your review will be graded. Print out the rubric and staple it to the back of your review when you turn it in. Any review of an unapproved book will receive a grade of “F” (0 points).

WHEN IS IT DUE? HOW DO YOU TURN IT IN?
The Book Review is due at 1:30 PM on Oct. 8, or at 1:30 PM on Nov. 19, if you turned in your Source Analysis Paper on Oct. 8. You must submit your printed Book Review in class to Prof. Gendzel on the proper day and time, and you must submit the same review electronically to TURNITIN through CANVAS before that time (see p. 5 for instructions). Print out and attach the HIST 189A Book Review Grading Rubric to the back of your review when you turn it in. Any review not submitted to TURNITIN through CANVAS will receive a grade of “F” (0 points).

CAN YOU TURN IT IN LATE?
Late reviews will be penalized 15 points for missing the due date/time by up to 24 hours. An additional 15 points will be deducted for missing the due date/time by another 24 hours or any portion thereof (including weekends, holidays, Thanksgiving break, “dead” days, etc.) until the late review is submitted to TURNITIN through CANVAS, which is the ONLY way to submit late reviews. No late reviews will be accepted more than 48 hours past the due date/time. Any review submitted more than 48 hours past the due date/time will receive a grade of “F” (0 points).
DIVIDE YOUR REVIEW INTO TWO ROUGHLY EQUAL PARTS LABELED
PART I: SUMMARY AND PART II: CRITICAL ANALYSIS.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PART I: SUMMARY

Part I of your review should summarize the author’s main argument completely but succinctly. Don’t summarize history (“this happened, then this happened”). Instead, summarize the author’s INTERPRETATION of history (“the author claims this happened because of this, and the result was this”). Explain what the author is trying to prove. Avoid excessive detail by focusing on the author’s thesis: the author’s overall explanation or interpretation of events. A thesis is NOT a simple summary of the book’s topic or purpose; it’s how the author EXPLAINS and INTERPRETS the topic. According to the author, why did history happen this way, and why does it matter? What claims does the author make about the cause, effect, and significance of events? You should quote from the author’s own words in Part I, but your summary must identify the author’s thesis in a single underlined sentence in your own words, stating The author’s thesis is that . . . . A thesis is NOT simply that something was “important” or “significant,” or that it “changed,” “had an impact,” or “played a role.” Why? How so? A thesis is an explanation: it must EXPLAIN the subject of the book in terms of cause, effect, and significance. When stating the author’s thesis in your own words, try using the word “because” in order to emphasize causation. Don’t hunt around for a thesis sentence that may or may not be somewhere in the book. Instead, read the whole book, then try to describe and summarize the author’s thesis in your own words, and underline it. A review that fails to identify and state the author’s thesis in your own words will not receive a passing grade.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PART II: CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Part II of your review should contain NO MORE SUMMARY. Instead, analyze how well the author proves his or her thesis. Why does the author’s explanation of history seem convincing—or not? Can you think of alternative explanations? Describe the author’s use of primary sources and quote from many of them to show how the author uses evidence. Are the author’s sources adequate to prove his or her argument? Why or why not? Could the same evidence be used differently? What other sorts of evidence might be missing? What is the author’s point of view? Do you detect any bias? NEVER say that the author “does a good job,” “makes a good point,” “is really persuasive,” etc. Instead, SHOW WHY you think so. What is the basis of your opinion about the author’s effectiveness as a historian? Demonstrate what the author does well and not so well. Critical analysis must evaluate the author’s thesis and use of evidence in this manner, with numerous examples and quotations. Don’t just assert your claims about the author (“The author is very effective”); instead, PROVE your claims with evidence from the book (“Here are some examples of the author’s effectiveness”). Your analysis must be substantive and specific; avoid vague, meaningless observations such as “I liked this book,” “this book was interesting,” or “the author does a good job.” Instead, discuss the author’s use of evidence, quote from the author’s sources, and explain WHY the author is convincing (or not). Even if the book has no footnotes or bibliography, what kinds of sources does the author rely on and quote from? Don’t say the author “has many sources.” What are they, and how does the author use them? Be specific and give examples: prove, don’t just assert. Show, don’t tell. A review lacking in this kind of specific, detailed critical analysis supported with evidence will not receive a passing grade.
FORMAT & STYLE

Book Reviews must be typed or word-processed, double-spaced, on 8.5” x 11” paper, with standard-size font (ca. 12 characters per inch) and one-inch margins all around. You may use double-sided pages to save paper. At the top of the first page, put your name and the date you are submitting your review. Title your review with the author and title of the book you read. Number your pages (1, 2, 3, etc.) and staple them together. Your review should be 5-7 pages long: slightly longer reviews are acceptable; shorter reviews are not. Do NOT insert extra space between paragraphs. Do NOT include a title page, cover page, folder, works cited page, or bibliography. Download the HIST 189A Book Review Grading Rubric from the course website, print it out, and attach it to the back of your review.

Part I of your review should include many brief quotations of the author’s own words (the author’s argument) and Part II of your review should include many brief quotations of the author’s evidence (primary sources used by the author)—but don’t overdo it. Don’t let quotations do your writing for you. Try to paraphrase and summarize in your own words, too. Don’t quote at random or at great length. Instead, use carefully chosen quotations that perfectly capture the author’s meaning, the author’s use of evidence, or your claims about the book. You must ALWAYS place quotation marks around other people’s words, which you must quote EXACTLY as written. Omit quotation marks only for single-spaced block quotations of more than five lines.

In your critical analysis, be as specific as possible. Avoid vague, general, simplistic, imprecise, trite, meaningless observations: “the author does a good job,” “makes a good point,” “gives lots of details,” “uses lots of facts,” “has lots of statistics,” etc. Spellcheck and proofread your review very carefully. Beware: word processing spellcheckers miss many errors of spelling, grammar, syntax, punctuation, sentence structure, word choice, and word usage.

REFERENCES IN CHICAGO STYLE ONLY!

Your review must include references (footnotes or endnotes) in CHICAGO STYLE. You MUST provide properly formatted references for every quotation, paraphrase, or statement that is not 100% your own words or ideas. Do NOT use APA style, MLA style, or ANY parenthetical references. Chicago-style references appear as superscript numerals at the ENDS of sentences, referring to footnotes at the bottom of the page, or to endnotes at the end of your review, each one citing a specific place in a specific source. Number your references consecutively (1, 2, 3), NOT with Roman numerals (i, ii, iii). After your first reference, all subsequent references to the same book, even on different pages of your review, can be cited as Ibid., followed by a comma and the page number that you are citing. Do NOT copy and paste book titles or references. Here are examples of proper Chicago style references:


2. Ibid., 101.

For more guidance in using Chicago Style, click on the “Links to Chicago Style Guides” posted on the course website (see URL on p. 1 of the syllabus).
DON’T PLAGIARIZE!
This assignment does NOT require ANY additional reading or research other than one approved book. You are expressly FORBIDDEN to use ANY other sources—especially from the Internet! Do this assignment on your own and write in your own words. Do NOT search the Internet for information about your book or reviews of your book. Do NOT use any databases, websites, encyclopedias, magazines, newspapers, book reviews, online reviews, other people’s papers, other books, or ANY other source for this assignment. To receive a passing grade on this assignment, you must place QUOTATION MARKS around words that you didn’t write and provide a properly formatted FOOTNOTE or ENDNOTE in Chicago style for every source of words or ideas not your own. Every source used in your review must be properly cited in your references. Failure to fulfill this simple requirement may result in a grade of “F” in the course on the grounds of cheating or plagiarism (see below under “Academic Integrity”).

From SJSU Academic Senate Policy S07-2: “San José State University defines plagiarism as the act of representing the work of another as one’s own without giving appropriate credit, regardless of how that work was obtained, and submitting it to fulfill academic requirements. Plagiarism includes: knowingly or unknowingly incorporating the ideas, words, sentences, paragraphs, or parts of, or the specific substance of another’s work, without giving appropriate credit, and representing the product as one’s own work.”

YOUR NAME ON YOUR SUBMITTED BOOK REVIEW CONSTITUTES YOUR PROMISE THAT IT REPRESENTS 100% YOUR OWN INTELLECTUAL EFFORT, UNLESS YOU EXPLICITLY AND PROPERLY ACKNOWLEDGE EVERY SOURCE.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
See the policies on Academic Integrity, Cheating, and Plagiarism in the course syllabus and in SJSU Policy S07-2. Note that plagiarism will result in an automatic grade of “F” for this course—not just for this assignment, but for the entire course (SJSU Policy S07-2). You must consult with Prof. Gendzel in advance if you are somehow “unsure” or “confused” about what might constitute plagiarism. Even if you plagiarize from multiple sources, change some words, move sentences around, or add some words of your own, it’s still plagiarism. Likewise, even if you claim that you did not “mean to” plagiarize when you plagiarized, or that you “forgot” to include quotation marks and references, or that your computer must have “accidentally” omitted references, or that your “friend” typed your review and omitted quotation marks or references without your knowledge, or that you “didn’t know” you were not supposed to use any outside sources, etc., it’s still plagiarism and it’s still a violation of academic integrity. Claims of innocence, good intentions, forgetfulness, ignorance of rules, reliance on others, or technological failures do NOT excuse plagiarism. The way to avoid trouble is to follow instructions, set aside enough time to write, avoid the Internet, and restrict yourself to one approved book—nothing else.

A SIMPLE RULE: IF YOU COPY AND PASTE ANY WORDS FROM ANY WEBSITE INTO YOUR BOOK REVIEW, YOU WILL GET AN “F” IN THIS COURSE.
WHERE CAN YOU GET HELP?
Prof. Gendzel will gladly help you with your Book Review. Bring your rough draft to office hours well in advance of the due date. Prof. Gendzel can provide individual rough draft consultations during office hours or by appointment. Do NOT email your rough draft or any portion of your rough draft. Prof. Gendzel will ONLY look at rough drafts and suggest improvements in person in his office, not by email. You may also seek help from the SJSU Writing Center in CL 126 and from the History Department’s designated writing tutors. DO NOT work in groups or with anyone else on this assignment.

GRADING
See the Course Syllabus for information about how much the Book Review “counts” in your final course grade. See pp. 1-2 above and the Book Review Grading Rubric for information about how your grade on this assignment will be determined. Your Book Review will receive a standard letter grade worth the number of points indicated here:

A+ = 75  B+ = 66  C+ = 59  D+ = 51  F = some points (if on time)
A  =  72  B  =  64  C  =  57  D  =  49  F  =  0 (if no submission)
A- = 69  B- = 62  C- = 54  D- = 45  Plagiarism = F in course

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING TURNITIN THROUGH CANVAS
Log into CANVAS at https://sjsu.instructure.com by entering your 9-digit SJSU ID and SJSUOne password. (If you don’t have an SJSUOne account, go to http://its.sjsu.edu/services/sjsuone/ and follow the instructions for “First-Time Users.”) Once you are in CANVAS, select HIST 189A from the “Courses” dropdown menu on the upper left side of the screen. On the course page in CANVAS, click on "Book Review." Then click on the upload button on the bottom right side of the screen (the arrow points upward). You will see a screen that says “Submit File.” Click on “Select a file to upload,” select the file of your review, and click “Open.” (You can also drag and drop a file into this window to upload it.) Once a file is uploaded, you should see “Submission complete.” Then click on “Accept submission-save.” After a successful submission, you should see the date and time that it was submitted. Click on the small page icon in the lower right edge of the screen for a digital receipt if you want proof that your review was submitted on time. If you have any problems with CANVAS or TURNITIN, contact the eCampus Help Desk at ecampus@sjsu.edu or call 408-924-2337. You can submit an iSupport ticket online at https://isupport.sjsu.edu/ecampus.

You are required to submit your review electronically to TURNITIN through CANVAS by the due date and time listed in the Course Syllabus and on p. 1 of these instructions. The sole purpose of this requirement to check for plagiarism; your review will remain confidential. You are also required to submit a printed, stapled copy of your review (with grading rubric attached) in person to Prof. Gendzel at the due date and time listed in the Course Syllabus and on p. 1 of these instructions. Submitting different versions of your review to Prof. Gendzel and to TURNITIN through CANVAS qualifies as cheating and will result in a grade of “F” in the course (SJSU Policy S07-2). Both versions of your review, electronic and printed, must be identical and must be submitted on time in order to receive full credit. Any Book Review not submitted to TURNITIN through CANVAS will receive a grade of “F” (0 points).