

HS 101: Making of the Modern World: Europe  
Prof. Andrew Ross  
Use of History Essay  
Fall 2020

**Assignment Description:** Your final assignment in this course builds on your first two by asking you to analyze a work of contemporary commentary that uses European (or related) history. You will locate a single article or op-ed in a quality magazine or newspaper and analyze the way it uses history. In doing so, you will answer one or more of the following question(s):

*How does the article deploy history to make its argument?*

*In what way does its use of history seem accurate or questionable?*

*Would going back to a primary source document change the analysis presented in the article?*

*Does the article rely on or contradict information contained in your textbook?*

*Does the article's use of history seem overly selective?*

*Would a different historical example help prove the author's point?*

*Is the use of history in this article too simple or too complex?*

*In what ways does the article address historical change or continuity?*

You do not have to answer all of these questions. Rather, use them as a starting point to making your own claim about your chosen article. I suggest choosing one or two of these questions in order to construct a clear thesis.

**Assignment Goals:** This assignment addresses all four of our course objectives: understanding European history, synthesizing secondary sources, relating history to the present, and using sources to defend a claim. The assignment is thus the culminating experience of the course, bringing together what you have learned and the skills you have practiced all semester.

**Assessment:** Your essay will be assessed on the basis of the rubric included on this handout. The grade breakdown follows that of your primary source analysis and is as follows:

1. Argument: 30%
2. Evidence: 35%
3. Structure: 20%
4. Mechanics: 15%

**Requirements:** Essays should analyze **one article from a newspaper or magazine that addresses a historical topic (see next page for some examples), written within the last five years.** Your essay should construct an original argument that explains the goal of the article and its relative success. In order to prove your claim, make reference to the textbook and primary sources from the course. No additional research is required in order to complete this assignment.

Additionally, all essays should adhere to the following formatting guidelines:

1. Length: Submissions should be approximately 3-4 pages (about 750-1000 words)
2. Font and Style: 12-point, Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with 1" margins all

around

3. Header: Include your name, class, my name, and date in the upper left corner
4. Include page numbers and a brief title
5. Citations: Cite your sources using parentheticals (Author's Last Name, Page Number) and include a bibliography

**Deadline:** Essays are by your last class on Monday, December 7.

### **Some Selected Articles:**

- [Maya Jasanoff, "Misremembering the British Empire," \*The New Yorker\*, October 26, 2020](#)
- [Ta-Nehisi Coates, "The Case for Reparations," \*The Atlantic\*, June 2014](#)
- Any of the articles from the [1619 Project](#), *The New York Times Magazine*, 2019.
- [Rebecca L. Spang, "What the French Revolution teaches us about the dangers of gerrymandering," \*The Washington Post\*, July 14, 2019.](#)
- [Samuel Clowes Huneke, An End to Totalitarianism, \*Boston Review\*](#)
- [Leah Valtin-Erwin, "Looking Out for Each Other," \*Perspectives on History\*, September 2, 2020.](#)
- [Liz Mineo, "A Day of Reckoning," \*The Harvard Gazette\*, October 8, 2020](#)

### **Some Collections of Articles**

- ["Current Events in Historical Context," \*Perspectives on History\*](#)
- [The History News Network](#)
- ["Made by History," \*The Washington Post\*](#)

### **Some Reputable Magazines and Newspapers that Public Historical Work:**

- [The New York Times](#)
- [The Washington Post](#)
- [The New Yorker](#)
- [The Atlantic](#)
- [The Guardian](#)

### **Tips on Finding your own articles:**

- When using Google click "news" to search through magazines and newspapers.
- Within Google News, search for a topic we have covered in France (for instance: [French Revolution](#))
- Choose a topic of interest to you and simply add "history" (for instance: [voting rights history](#)).
- Choose a historical topic we have covered and add "current events" (for instance: [Christopher Columbus current events](#)).
- Make sure your chosen article is from a reputable source. For some tips, [see this website from Purdue](#). When in doubt, **ask me**.

***I highly suggest you e-mail me your article for approval before you begin***

*writing by Nov. 13.*

	Excellent (10)	Excellent/Good (9)	Good (8)	Satisfactory (7)	Satisfactory/NS (6)	Not Satisfactory (5)
Argument (30%)	Essay contains a clear argument or central claim that directly relates addresses the chosen article's historical analysis.		Essay contains an argument that addresses the chosen article's historical analysis, but could be more specific or clear.	Essay tries to state an argument or claim, but the relationship between the article and history may not be entirely clear; argument may need to be reconstructed by the reader.		Essay does not attempt to make an argument.
Analysis of Evidence (35%)	The essay features well-chosen evidence that supports all assertions and that directly relates to the argument. Evidence is well-explained and its relevance is immediately clear.		Evidence is used to support all assertions in support of the argument, but may need greater clarification	Evidence is alluded to, but is not effectively used to support the argument. Reader may have to infer the relationship between evidence and the claim.		Little or no evidence is presented.
Structure (20%)	Essay has a clear introduction, body, and conclusion. Body paragraphs proceed in a logical way, with clear transitions and topic sentences. Introduction effectively establishes claim and conclusion sums up the significance of the argument.		Essay has an introduction, body, and conclusion. Transitions between body paragraphs and topic sentences could be clearer. Introduction establishes claim and conclusion attempts to explain significance of the argument.	Essay attempts to lay out an introduction, body, and conclusion, but body paragraphs may not proceed in a logical way or lack topic sentences. Transitions are either unclear or missing. Introduction attempts to lay out central claim, but the conclusion does not attempt to explain its significance		Essay is difficult to understand owing to the lack of structure.
Mechanics (15%)	Essay is well-written, with no typographical mistakes. Citations are correct and all instructions have been followed.		The essay is well-written, with few typographical mistakes. Citations are mostly correct and instructions have been followed.	The essay has stylistic or mechanical errors that hinder its effectiveness. Typographical errors are present. Citations are not correctly formatted. Instructions basically followed, with minor errors.		Essay is difficult to understand owing to mechanical or stylistic errors. Citations are missing or very deficient. Instructions not followed.