

Historiographical Paper Assignment HIS 2307

The paper assignment from the syllabus is as follows:

Students will write an historiographical paper analysing five scholarly sources on the same topic. The topic will be of your choice, pertaining to the history of Native peoples in Canada. The paper will be 10 to 12 pages long and include proper citations in a recognized format.

Each source analysed will have at least ten pages of content devoted to the selected topic. The historiographical paper will contrast the conclusions of the sources, taking into consideration the historians' sources, methods, biases and theoretical/narrative approach, as well as the historians' backgrounds (to the extent known) and the date and context of publication.

In meeting the above requirements, a successful paper will demonstrate the following skills:

- Comprehension of the concept of an historiographical analysis. I want to be sure that you see this as an *analysis of a body of writing*, rather than an analysis or summary of an historical event.
- Comprehension that history (meaning the body of writing that comprises our knowledge of history) changes over time. Whether or not you use the suggested chronology-of-publication structure for your paper, I want to get the sense from your paper that you are portraying a change or development of scholarly discourse over time.
- Ability to identify five scholarly sources that comprise a body of knowledge about a selected topic in Native history.
- Ability to define a scope of study that is reasonable for the ten-page constraints of the paper. There should be a narrow enough focus that it works as a direct comparison between the five sources, and a broad enough focus to fill the ten pages with meaty analysis.
- Without spending more than a page actually summarizing the historical event your sources are studying (and perhaps without a need for this "background" section at all), demonstration that you know the historical event sufficiently to analyse the historiography. Basically, I'm looking for *absence* of confusion, contradiction, or wrong information about the historical event.
- Ability to identify and comment on the primary sources that your authors are relying on for their information. (You might not do this for every single one of the five sources, but you should do it at least once.)
- Ability to identify and comment on the secondary sources that your authors are relying on for their information. (You might not do this for every single one of the five sources, but you should do it at least once.)
- Ability to identify how conclusions or ideas transfer from one author to another, by identifying a case where an author either accepts or contradicts a previous author's work. (You might not do this for every single one of the five sources, but you should do it at least once.)
- Ability to comment on *how* your authors are using their primary or secondary sources – are they ignoring key sources? accepting them at face value? reading between the lines? looking critically at who wrote them? identifying the sources' limitations? (You might not do this for every single one of the five sources, but you should do it at least once.)
- Ability to identify and comment on any biases in conclusions, language or narrative approach that your authors demonstrate. (You might not do this for every single one of the five sources, but you should do it at least once.)