

**HIS 3100A**  
**History and Perceptions of History in Canada**

**Reading Report Questions**

Each Reading Report must be two pages (typed, double-spaced). You do not need a bibliography, but you must attribute your quotes and other citable references using footnotes or parenthetical citations. For full marks, each report must make specific and significant reference to four of the assigned readings; and the student must attend the seminar to participate the relevant discussion. Readings Reports must be submitted in class on the relevant week, or by email during the same week before Friday at 5:00 PM.

*Hint:* Make the references to each of the four works very explicit. I will be looking for your coverage of these four texts when assigning marks.

*Seminar 1 Question:*

Because of the prolonged state of war between the French and the Iroquois, French-Iroquois warfare is a major theme of contact-era Canadian history. In textbooks and popular portrayals, this state of war is often told from the records (and perspective) of French settlers and missionaries. For this seminar, I have tried to include authors who consider reasons for war from the Iroquois as well as the French perspective. Based on four of the assigned texts, describe the major reasons why Iroquois people engaged in warfare during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

*Seminar 2 Question:*

These readings discuss both the “mythology” and the “history” of the Loyalists. Based on four of the assigned texts, describe the “Loyalist Myth” and how it compares to the historical record.

*Seminar 3 Question:*

Consider the following website (<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/railroad/>), an interactive “journey” on the underground railroad, an educational presentation by National Geographic. Based on any four of assigned texts, compare the portrayal of the underground railroad on this website to the portrayals in your readings.

*Seminar 4 Question:*

What impression do you have of Sir John A. Macdonald from your previous education and exposure to Canadian history (at school and in the popular media)? Write a few sentences about what you believe to be the popular impression of Sir John A. Then, compare this to the various academic portrayals in your readings. Based on four of the assigned texts, what do the readings present that is consistent with or different from the popular perception of Sir John A.?

OR

Review the very first paragraph of the biography advocating Sir John A. for the CBC's Greatest Canadian ([http://www.cbc.ca/greatest/top\\_ten/nominee/macdonald-john.html](http://www.cbc.ca/greatest/top_ten/nominee/macdonald-john.html)). Compare this paragraph to the various academic portrayals in your readings. Based on four of the assigned texts, what do the readings present that is consistent with or different from the CBC's introduction of Sir John A.?

*Seminar 5:*

Write a summary of the similarities and differences between the two newspaper articles you have identified. How would you account for these similarities and differences? Are the newspapers getting their information from different sources? Writing from different regional or political perspectives? What other factors may affect their perspectives? Append a printout of each article to your reading report.

*Seminar 6:*

The Manitoba Métis Federation has said: "Hanged as a traitor, today Riel is considered the Father of Manitoba and a Father of Confederation."<sup>1</sup> How would the authors of your articles respond to this statement? Cite four of the assigned articles.

*Seminar 7:*

In writing history about racism or discrimination, some historians tend to focus on the people acting in a discriminatory manner or their actions of discrimination, while others focus on the actions of those who are the subjects of discrimination (in this case, the Chinese). The former approach may leave the impression that the subjects of discrimination are passive or helpless, that they lack what historians call "agency" or the power to make their own decisions. On the other hand, one could argue that to give the Chinese too much "agency" may be misleading given their discriminatory environment.

Based on any four of the assigned readings, consider how much "agency" each text gives to Chinese people living in BC during this period. Describe which reading gives the Chinese the *most* agency, and which one gives them the *least* agency. Which article do you think strikes the most effective portrayal in his regard? Explain your choices.

*Seminar 8:*

Pretend that your four authors are presenting a roundtable discussion about WW1-era nationalism at an academic conference or other venue. Where do you think their findings or perspectives would agree, and where do you think they would take issue with the others' tone or presentation? Describe one or more areas of disagreement, and explain the different perspectives you think your authors bring to the table.

---

<sup>1</sup> Manitoba Métis Federation Press Release, "Partnership brings Last Poems of Louis Riel Home" (n.d.) Accessed December 3, 2008 on the Manitoba Métis Federation website: [http://mmf.mb.ca/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=548&Itemid=2](http://mmf.mb.ca/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=548&Itemid=2).