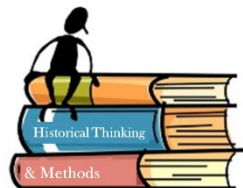# Mini-Historiography Project

Imagine the following scenario:

It is 1995. Hundreds of documents have been located in former Soviet archives suggesting that historians will have to re-examine the following two historical questions: What was Hitler's role in the decision for the "final solution" in comparison to his subordinates (e.g. Heinrich Himmler, Hermann Göring, Adolf Eichmann, etc.)? What was the date for when the decision was made to exterminate European Jews?

Because historians believe it is futile to study these documents without knowing what has been said by their colleagues on the origins of the 'final solution', you must write a historiographical analysis to determine the patterns of interpretation and how historians use the available evidence to support their interpretation. You are allowed, indeed encouraged, to make value judgments about how plausible the historian's interpretations are relative to each other. (REALITY CHECK: to make this project manageable, you are only reading three historical interpretations frozen in time and not studying all the potential resources that existed in 1995.) You are hoping to publish this essay in a journal dedicated to historiography or the history of the Holocaust.

Directions:

Follow the guidelines in the Historiographic Essay Manual on how to make reading notes, write, edit, and re-write a historiography essay. Consult Turabian on how to type your Works Consulted Bibliography and footnotes for this mini-historiography. This essay might be accomplished in four to five beefy paragraphs or probably between 4-6 pages in length. In the body of your paper, you are **NOT** allowed to devote one paragraph per historian. I You must take a topical or thematic approach that allows you to discuss more than one historian's interpretation in each paragraph.

Goals:

- ☐ To practice a mini-historiographic essay as a group in a supportive environment and identify potential writing challenges that we want to work on.
- ☐ To practice deciphering a historical argument by recognizing the difference between the use of facts and evidence from the historians' interpretation of these.
- ☐ To learn how to identify natural breaks in a historical essay that facilitates note making and comprehension. (This skill can easily be scaled up for book chapters and monographs.)
- ☐ To practice locating thesis statements in historical essays and recognize rhetorical devices historians use to advance their interpretations.
- ☐ To develop note-making skills to understand how essential organization and being alert while reading is critical to successful completion of a historiography project.
- ☐ To learn to assess the plausibility of a historical interpretation given the challenge that evidence is lacking.
- ☐ To practice proper footnoting skills in preparation for your historiography project.
- ☐ To write a historiographic essay identifying patterns of interpretation and how well the historians supported their interpretations through the use of facts and evidence.

Submission:

- ☐ Allow me to grade blindly, so leave your names off headers, footers, or any page that I can see as a I read.

☐ Upload to Brightspace Assignment Folder Mini-Historiography
☐ To evaluate, I will be using portions of the Rubric for Historiography Paper (see green highlighted rows).

Rubric for Historiography Essay

Before submitting, have you:
☐ proofread your paper several times?
☐ included a cover page with paper title, your name, course, and date?
☐ positioned page numbers in upper-right hand corner except first page?
☐ set your paper to one-inch standard margins, double-spaced except footnotes?
☐ used one of recommended fonts?
☐ uploaded your paper to Brightspace
☐ Submitted a clean, professional looking work
☐ **Met Gateway 1:** student incorporated a minimum number of 15 monographs and journal articles that are representative of trends and did not excessively or entirely rely upon journal articles (minimum of five monographs).
☐ **Met Gateway 2:** at least 90% of the essay discusses historiographical patterns, and not history. In short, if you cannot write a historiographic essay, you will not pass this assignment.

Please note that this rubric does not assign points or percentages to categories.
The rubric helps the reader stay on standard and communicate strengths and weaknesses.

Bibliographic Research		Excellent		Above Average to Satisfactory		Unsatisfactory
Works Consulted Bibliography		• <u>exceeds</u> significantly the minimum monographs and articles of 15 by several titles		• contains the minimum monographs and articles of 15		• contains less than the minimum monographs and articles
		• monographs and articles cover the span of time published since the historical event;		• monographs and articles originate from isolated time periods published since the historical event;		• no apparent logic in the selection of monographs and articles; • not representative of the trends in historical interpretation;
		• representative of the trends in historical interpretation		• may not be representative of the trends in historical interpretation		• shows difficulty in distinguishing between primary and secondary sources
Works Cited in the Footnotes		• the variety of monographs and articles cited in footnotes indicates an attempt to analyze a diverse number of historical interpretations		• heavy reliance on a select number of monographs and articles indicates an ability to recognize major trends in historical interpretations, but not the variety		• heavy reliance on a small number of monographs and articles indicates an inability to recognize major trends in historical interpretation
Historiographic Content		**Excellent**		**Above Average to Satisfactory**		**Unsatisfactory**
Thesis		• thesis is well-defined, complex, and accurately reflects the content of the paragraph topic sentences in the body of the paper		• thesis does not fully reflect the content of the paragraph topic sentences in the body of the paper		• confuses a focus statement with a thesis statement
		• thesis is located in the last sentence of the introductory paragraph		• thesis exists but is not located at the end of the introductory paragraph		• not only is there no focus or thesis, but essay lacks purpose
Historical Overview Located within the introductory portion of the essay.		• historical overview is concise and helps a non-informed reader understand the essential facts (e.g. locates the topic in time, place, and explains roles of historical individuals, introduces historical schools, such as traditionalists, revisionists, etc.)		• historical overview is informative, but struggles somewhat with which facts are/are not important to mention		• historical overview fails to provide sufficient information for a uninformed reader to understand; • or exceeds a paragraph; • or dominates the paper
Historical Facts Limited to providing context for analyzing books and articles.		• explanations demonstrates an ability to focus on the historiography and not the event		• selection demonstrates occasional, isolated difficulty in focusing on the historiography		• selection demonstrates significant difficulty in distinguishing between the historiography and the event

		Excellent		Above Average to Satisfactory		Unsatisfactory
		• the facts are wisely selected and sufficiently explained for an uninformed reader to understand		• the facts do not always sufficiently provide background for the uninformed reader to understand;		• the facts do not provide sufficient background for the uninformed reader to understand;
Command of Historiography		• when analyzing individual authors, explains how each author uses evidence to persuade their readers		• when analyzing individual authors, does not consistently point out how the authors use evidence to persuade their readers		• frequently fails to recognize how the author uses evidence to persuade their readers
		• when analyzing individual authors, consistently, accurately summarizes, paraphrases or quotes authors' interpretations (or theses)		• when analyzing individual authors, struggles once or twice accurately summarizing, paraphrasing, or quoting authors' interpretations (or theses)		• when analyzing individual authors, struggles consistently accurately summarizing, paraphrasing, or quoting authors' interpretations (or theses)
		• when analyzing individual authors, assesses the plausibility of the interpretation		• when analyzing individual authors, occasionally assesses the plausibility of the interpretation		• when analyzing individual authors, never or rarely assesses the plausibility of the interpretation
		• acknowledges relevant similarities and differences in books and articles		• does not always acknowledge relevant similarities and differences in books and articles		• frequently fails to acknowledge relevant similarities and differences in books and articles
Author's point of view: education/training; background; available evidence to conduct their research; working assumptions that might be revealed through there methods or rhetorical choices		• when discussing individual authors, points out, when relevant, how the author's point of view shaped their interpretations		• when discussing individual authors, makes selected attempts to account for authors' point of view		• makes no attempts to account for author's point of view
		• Notes Authors' expertise and recognizes how their research methodology shapes their P.o.V		Regularly notes authors' expertise, but struggles more with explaining methodology		• rarely or never makes reference to author's expertise to suggest point of view Never discusses methodology
Patterns of Interpretation (some potential examples): Stand-on-my-shoulders; Competing schools of interpretation; Traditionalist-Revisionist;- Neo/Post Traditionalist-Revisionist Generational differences; Disciplinary approaches; Methodological differences		• patterns identified represent a sophisticated understanding of the historiographical interpretations		• patterns identified represent a simplistic yet knowledgeable understanding of historiographical interpretations		• fails to recognize patterns in interpretation most of the time
		• complex pattern requires the analysis/discussion of multiple authors in a single paragraph		• simplistic pattern requires the analysis/discussion of two or three authors in a single paragraph		• devotes one paragraph per author.
Second Concluding Paragraph: This paragraph should discuss unanswered questions, topics that deserve to be revisited, etc that originate out of the historiography essay. It should also discuss what sources will be used to explore the questions raised.		• uses historiographical analysis to shape content of second concluding paragraph: •• new directions for research; poses well-formulated historical questions informed by the historiography; •• specifically discusses primary source collections that the student plans to explores; •• demonstrates that they exist		• uses historiographical analysis to shape content of second concluding paragraph, but the discussion is vague, lacks specificity with respect to new directions for research; raises questions but may not be worded effectively • does not fully discuss primary source collections that they plan to explore		• fails to see how the historiography can define future research evident by superficial construction; • guessing/imagines that sources exist and are available simply because the question has popped into their mind
Conventions in Historical Writing		**Excellent**		**Above Average to Satisfactory**		**Unsatisfactory**
Introduction		• effectively provides historical overview, context, and thesis		• provides historical overview and thesis statement, but an uninformed reader may struggle		• historical overview fails to provide thesis and/or context to

	statement so that an uninformed reader thoroughly understands		understand project; reader will struggle
Body of Paper	• all paragraphs are devoted to illustrating your historiography	• all paragraphs are devoted to illustrating your historiography; but rarely a sentence slips needlessly into historical explanation; an uninformed reader may think you are trying to solve the historical problem	• the majority of the paragraphs are not devoted to illustrating your historiography; an uninformed reader would definitely struggle or know more about the history of the topic, but not the patterns of interpretation
Paragraph Topic Sentences	• all paragraphs begin with an effective topic sentence that gives the subsequent sentences direction and refers to the thesis	•not all paragraphs begin with an effective topic sentence that gives the subsequent sentences direction and refers to the thesis; yet the paragraphs are coherent and dedicated to historiography	• the majority of the paragraphs lack an effective topic sentence; an uninformed reader would definitely struggle
Proportion of Text Detail use of quotations, paraphrases, summaries in proportion to the student's own analysis and discussion; ability to manage proportion of text detail suggests the student is knowledgeable, confident, and familiar with the content	• uses quotations when the passage is memorable or striking in a way that cannot be achieved through paraphrasing or summarizing	• sometimes uses quotations when paraphrasing or summaries would have been as effective. • paraphrases or summarizes when a quotation would have been more effective	• paper is no more than a series of quotations, paraphrases, and/or summaries.
	• quotations are used in judicious quantity and quality to justify interpretation of books and articles	• on rare occasions quotations are inappropriately lengthy, ineffective in justifying your interpretation, and/or unconvincingly analyzed	• quotations are consistently inappropriately lengthy, ineffective in justifying your interpretation, and/or unconvincingly analyzed
	• effectively frames quotations consistently		• routinely fails to frame quotations effectively
Conclusion (two paragraphs) For Mini-historiography, only write the first concluding paragraph.	• first concluding paragraph restates the thesis and how it was proven (e.g. restates paragraph topic sentences and themes of historiography patterns)	•first concluding paragraph does not fully restate thesis and/or essential themes of historiography patterns	• first concluding paragraph fails to summarize the major points of the essay; difficult to comprehend
	• second concluding paragraph discusses in specific detail new directions for research and/or raises historical questions, notes primary source collections that the student plans to explore, and demonstrates that they exist	• second concluding paragraph vaguely discusses new directions for research and may raise unanswered questions but may be poorly phrased; • does not fully discuss primary source collections that they plan to explore	• second concluding paragraph fails to discuss new directions, how they will attempt to research, or simply guessing that sources exist or are available
Structure/Organization	Paragraphs are organized in a logical manner		Paragraphs are out of place; presentation is disorganized; an uninformed reader would definitely struggle
	Sentences are organized in a logical manner		Sentences are disorganized and makes the reader struggle

	Commendable Rare errors; very readable; no confusion for the reader	Acceptable Causes confusion for reader at isolated moments	Unacceptable interferes with clarity of expression and reader struggles
Clarity of Expression			
Sentences are kept manageable (avoids wordiness)			
Avoids the passive voice except when appropriate			
Writes about the past in the past tense			

We will use this as a diagnostic to identify writing challenges that you want to work on.

Effective sentence segues (a.k.a. connectors, transition words, chaining words and ideas)			
Effective paragraph transitions end each paragraph (a.k.a. connectors)			
Quotations are framed by providing an informative context, attribution of the author, and follows quotation with an explanation of its significance			
Word Choice (WC) is accurate			
WC avoids repetition except when necessary to create coherency			
Avoids conversational language, slang, and jargon			
Avoids personal pronouns I, me and you			
Word Usage (WU)			
Grammar Criteria includes generally applicable principles about language	**Excellent** estimated either 1 or no mistakes (suggests mastery and rare error represents a slip)	**Above Average to Satisfactory** estimated 2 mistakes (suggests a pattern of error, though it could be sloppy proofreading)	**Unsatisfactory** number of mistakes suggests that student's grammar or syntax errors interfere with their ability to communicate effectively
Sentence has a verb-subject			
Verb-Subject agreement			
Correct verb tense			
Singular/Plural noun and pronoun agreement		We will use this as a diagnostic to identify writing challenges that you want to work on.	
Pronouns with clear antecedents			
Logical word order			
Spelling			
Punctuation (commas, semicolons, colons, periods, question marks)			
Documentation (Credibility and Academic Integrity)	**Excellent** Always	**Above Average to Satisfactory** Minor slips, but research is always retraceable	**Unsatisfactory** Cannot always retrace student's research
Quotation marks enclose source words verbatim			
If applicable, block quotations exactly follow Turabian			
Footnote numbers are in ascending order		We will use this as a diagnostic to identify writing challenges that you want to work on.	
Footnote format exactly follows Turabian			
Format for abbreviated footnotes exactly follows Turabian			
Works consulted bibliography exactly follows Turabian			
Overall Grade:			
Student has garnered professor's trust that they are doing the work through individual consultations where they may bring notes, etc.		YES	NO

Comments: