

SIGNATURE ASSIGNMENT / CORE OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT / PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS GUIDELINES

Students are required to complete a Core Objective Assessments/Signature Assignment.

This is a 1,000+ word (about 3-5 page) written paper analyzing and examining primary and secondary source documents designed to evaluate the State Core Objectives of critical thinking, communication, social responsibility, and personal responsibility.

It must be completed and submitted on Canvas by December 7; no late submissions will be accepted.

This assignment is worth 100 points (or 10%) of your class grade. Do not blow it off! But do not be tempted to cheat or plagiarize.

Assignment

History is based on the study of primary sources: they are history's raw materials. Primary sources are documents and accounts that originate in the time period they discuss. Primary sources are like eyewitness accounts in a court of law. (Secondary sources are written works that reflect on earlier times. Though based on primary sources, secondary sources are like hearsay in a court of law.) Primary sources may include personal memoirs, letters, oral interviews, court records, photographs, and so forth. Though they are written or recorded close in time to the historical event they describe, they are not necessarily "factual" or "true." The reliability and validity of historical primary sources are open to interpretation (just like eyewitnesses in court may disagree about details and motives). Remember, all people have biases, preconceptions, and agendas.

The purpose of this assignment is for you to read one of the assigned primary source documents below (the links are also on Canvas) and complete a written essay that analyzes and critically assesses the document. To complete this assignment, students will: create an argument through the use of historical evidence, analyze and interpret primary and secondary sources, and analyze the effects of historical forces on this period of United States history. Students will demonstrate their critical thinking skills, communication skills, and how they view social and personal responsibility through interpreting historical documents.

Based on your chosen primary source, your essay must address the following questions and issues:

- Who wrote the document? Who is the intended audience of the document?
- What is the author attempting to illustrate or do with the document? Why was the document written?
- What can be learned about the culture that produced this document? What can be learned about the mentality of the author?
- At the time the document was written, there were different cultural groups in the United States other than the one represented by the author of the document; identify one or more of these cultural groups and explain how they might react differently to this document.
- Describe an ethical situation, issue, or problem presented in the document and explain how the author proposes to resolve that situation, issue, or problem.
- What do you think about the importance of this document to American history? Do you agree or disagree with the author? Explain.

You may answer these questions in an essay format in any fashion you see fit, remembering to use proper forms of writing such as good grammar and spelling, clear expression, and logical organization.

You may quote from your chosen primary source without using citations (I will know what you're quoting). To help you interpret the document, you MUST consult at least **two other BOOKS**, secondary sources, for this paper (you may cite more if you wish). *But cite BOOKS ONLY, nothing else* (no articles, encyclopedias, websites, etc.) When you use quotations, ideas, or information come from any book you consult, you must properly cite it in your paper. That means using parenthetical citations (or footnotes) to cite your facts; and that means including a works cited/bibliography list.

Your submissions should be saved in a standard format (.doc, .docx, or .pdf) and submitted **by 11:59 pm on December 7** (see the due dates in your syllabus) through Canvas. You can submit the assignment by clicking the button for the "Departmental Assessment" module on Canvas and then click the assignment link labeled "HIST 1301 Signature Assignment." **No late assignments will be accepted.**

Format and Style

- Length should be **at least 1,000 words** (about 3 *full* pages), but no more than about 5 pages
- 12 pt. standard font (like Times New Roman)
- Your text should be double-spaced with 1 inch margins; make sure there is no wasted space on your paper (like between paragraphs, etc.)
- You do not need any fancy title pages, etc., just place the title of your paper and your name at the top of your paper (come up with any title for the paper you would like)
- You must cite at least two secondary source books to help you interpret your primary source (remember, just books)
- Since this assignment is a formal piece of writing, use proper grammar, spelling, and do *not* use contractions—you will be graded on your written communication skills; for more on proper style, see the links provided on Canvas under "Useful Links"
- When you are writing about history (the past), use verbs in the past tense (e.g., "Washington was the first president to..." *not* "Washington is the first president to...")
- When you refer to persons (including the document's author) in the text, use his/her complete names on first use and just his/her last name thereafter, and do not use titles (Pres., Dr., Ms., etc.)

Citations and Plagiarism

- You may quote from your chosen primary source without using citations (I will know what you're quoting) but if you use quotations, ideas, or information from your textbook or any other book, you must cite it using parenthetical citations (or footnotes) and include a works cited/bibliography list
- You must cite at least two secondary source books to help you interpret your primary source—**books** only, but nothing else (no articles, encyclopedias, websites, etc.; **just books**)—put your **library** (and your professor) to good use (your textbook can count as one of your secondary source books)
- You may use any citation format you feel comfortable with: MLA, APA, or CMS (Chicago/Turabian); your works cited/bibliography list should appear at the end of your assignment (this does not count as part of your 1000+ words); for more on citation styles, see the links on Canvas under "Useful Links" and <http://libguides.navarrocollege.edu/citations>
- You may cite print books from the library or e-books from the library or online sources (like Google Books); you can find many books through your Navarro College Library, many of the resources may be accessed online (with your username and password), so click [Navarro College Libraries](#) and try searching for a term (see what pops up!)—remember, *books only*
- Your paper will be run through plagiarism-checking software and scrutinized by me for evidence of plagiarism; plagiarism is any form of cheating, copying, or stealing of words, phrases, and ideas from other students, the textbook, other books, the internet, or any other sources (this includes direct copying, changing key words [paraphrasing or "synonymizing"], etc.), recycling past papers, using someone else's work, and so forth; if you are not sure what constitutes plagiarism, check out the links on Canvas under "Useful Links" and this tutorial <http://library.uta.edu/plagiarism/>

- As per my syllabus, **students caught cheating, copying, or plagiarizing in any way, at any point in the course, will automatically receive a failing grade of F for the entire course, without exception;** further sanctions may be pursued
- **Remember, it is better to get a poor grade (or even a zero) on an assignment than fail an entire course**

Primary Source Documents

Choose *one* of the following documents (you may click on the link below, or find them listed with the assignment on Canvas) for your paper:

- [*The Growth of Cities in Nineteenth Century America* \(1899\), Adna Ferrin Weber](#)
- [*The Absurd Effort to Make the World Over* \(1883\), William Graham Sumner](#)
- [*The Call to Negro America to March on Washington* \(1941\), A. Philip Randolph](#)
- [*The Truman Doctrine* \(1947\), Harry S. Truman](#)
- [*The Situation in Little Rock* \(1957\), Dwight D. Eisenhower](#)
- [*Remarks on East-West Relations at the Brandenburg Gate in West Berlin* \(1987\), Ronald Reagan](#)