

HIST 133B: BOOK ESSAY HANDOUT

1. Topic List (due Feb. 8 [Feb. 1 for no-exam option]): What can/should I write about?

- Think about Germany during this period--what's interesting about it? Look through the syllabus, textbook, and collection of essays for ideas. You will need to be more specific within each of the broad topics listed here so that I can help you find books:
- Broad topics: World War I, 1918 revolution, Weimar culture, politics and economics, biographies of famous or "ordinary" Germans (politicians, artists); Nazi or other political parties, foreign policy, social or other groups (workers, Jews, women, gypsies, gays, Christians, ...), army, resistance movements, youth, important events (Night of Long Knives, Kristallnacht, ...), concentration camps, the Holocaust.
- To be more specific, you'll need additional criteria. What are your personal interests? Do you have a non-history major or minor (film, psychology, art history, communications, economics, biology, ...)--would you like to study that aspect of a broader topic? Have you studied other countries during this period? Seen any historical films you'd like to know more about?
- Alternatively, you can also suggest some books yourself. Browse the library stacks (D804-D810 is Holocaust; DD240-DD256 Germany in this period), or type keywords into amazon.
- Based on your topic list, I will suggest some books, and then I'll meet with you to finalize the selection.

2. Book essay draft (due March 1 [Feb. 22 for no-exam option])

- Your essay should summarize the book's main argument(s) and address the following questions: What question(s) does the author want to answer? What sources does s/he use? Finally, evaluate the book: Does it convincingly answer its questions? Does it leave relevant points out? Would you recommend it? To whom, why or why not?
- **Content/Grading.** When I grade, I look for five things:
 1. *First*, a *thesis statement* tells me what the book is trying to argue or explain.
 2. *Second*, I look for a description of the *argument* supporting that thesis.
 3. *Third*, I look for concrete *evidence*—specific cases or examples—used to support that argument. A paper with any two of these three is a "C;" all three elements earn a "B."
 4. *Fourth*, I look to see whether *counterevidence* is discussed—whether you raise questions that the book does not address, or suggest examples that do not support the book's argument. If elements one, two and three are also present, this would bring a paper into the "A" range.
 5. *Finally*, I look to see whether a paper is *carefully written* and proofread, and has clear organization or perhaps even stylistic grace. This can lift a paper up to a "+" or, with two or more typos/errors per page, drop it down to a "-."
- **Length.** Your book essay should be at least 1800 words—6-7 double-spaced, typed pages, with 1½x1x1 margins and 12 point, proportional space font.
Number the pages! By hand is ok if you are word-processor challenged. Otherwise one point off!
- **Lateness.** Late submissions will be penalized one point per day, beginning at 11am.

3. Final version (due March 13 [March 6 for web option])

- Addressing the comments and corrections noted on the paper I hand back to you can get up to 5pts additional credit. This may be on a separate sheet, or in an electronic version with edit tracking "on."

4. Last but not least:

- This course fulfills the **general education writing requirement**. If you do not submit all parts of the book essay assignment, you cannot receive credit for this course (i.e., you will fail).
- **Plagiarism**—presenting someone else's work as your own, or deliberately failing to credit or attribute the work of others on whom you draw (including materials found on the web or that you submitted for other courses)—is a serious academic offense, punishable by dismissal from the university. It hurts the one who commits it most of all, by cheating them out of an education. I report offenses to the appropriate university authorities for disciplinary action.