

Guidelines for Book Essays

1. Students enrolled in this course will complete three (3) book essays, one for each of the assigned readings. Each essay consists of four basic parts: an identification of the book; an analysis of the book consisting of a statement of theme and the correct identification of the author's thesis; a brief critique of the book that includes an objective and subjective evaluation; and testing conclusions. Each of these parts are explained in greater detail below.
2. **Identification of the Book:** At the top of the first page of the actual essay (not on the cover page) include a bibliographical entry for the book the essay is focusing on. Here are the bibliographical entries that will be required for each essay presented in order of assignment:

- a. H. W. Brands. *American Colossus: The Triumph of Capitalism, 1865-1900*. New York: Anchor Books, 2010.
- b. Stephen Kinzer. *Overthrow: America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2006.
- c. Nancy MacLean. *Democracy in Chains: The Deep History of the Radical Right's Stealth Plan for America*. New York: Viking Books, 2017.

Body 1

3. **Analysis:** The analysis of the book consists of two parts. First, write a statement of theme for each book by answering each of the following questions as each applies to the book the essay is focusing on: **who** is the book about; **what** is the book about; **where** do the major events described in the book take place; and **when** do the major events described in the book take place. Second, correctly identify the author's thesis by locating it in the Prologue or Introduction of the book. Once you have located the correct thesis quote it in its entirety and cite the page number in parenthesis at the end of the quoted statement. **Please Note:** Failure to identify the correct thesis will result in a **50-point deduction** off your overall book essay. **THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS RULE.**

Very Important



4. **Criticism:** The critique of each book consists of providing an objective evaluation and an subjective evaluation of each book.

Body 2

- a. **Objective Evaluation:** Look to see if the author of the book includes a bibliography and/or endnotes in their book. Does the author's selection of source material inspire confidence in their work? Does the author seem well-informed based on your review of this material? Does the author's thesis seem logical? Answer these questions in your essay and you will produce an objective evaluation of the book.
- b. **Subjective Evaluation:** What is your opinion of the book? Does the book seem like it will be interesting and enjoyable, or dull and boring? Would you recommend to a friend or colleague who was not a student in this course? What

about the book do you think you would like the most? What do you think you would like the least? Answer these questions in your essay and you will produce a subjective evaluation of the book.

Body 3

5. **Testing Conclusions:** After completing the analysis and critique of the book, test your conclusions by locating *at minimum* two (2) published reviews of the book. Read each review and state whether or not the review was positive, negative, or neutral. Afterwards, indicate which of the two published reviews you thought was best and briefly explain why.
6. The analysis, criticism, and testing conclusions make up the body of the book essay. In addition to the essay itself, students must also include a cover page and a works cited page. The cover page must include the student's first and last name, the title of the course, the course identification numbers, and the date the final draft of the essay is due in the upper-right hand corner of the cover page. Additionally, each page of the book essay, with the exception of the cover sheet, must include the student's last name and page number in the upper-right hand corner of the page. All book essays must use font style Times New Roman and font size 11. The main body of all book essays must be double-spaced, but the information appearing on the cover sheets and works cited page must be single-spaced. Samples modeling the correct format for both the cover page and works cited page will be provided to students during the semester. **Please Note:** Final Book Essay drafts that do not include all of these items, a correct coversheet, the student's last name and page number in the upper-right hand corner of every page except for the cover page, and a works cited page will not be accepted by the professor. **THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS RULE.**
7. The works cited page will include complete bibliographical entries for the two published reviews used to test conclusions. Students must utilize the Hanging Indention for each item included on the Works Cited page. Students who fail to do so will have points deducted from their overall book essay grade. **THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS RULE.**
8. At the end of the semester, the four book essay grades will be averaged together into a final book essay grade, which will count for 50% of your overall course grade.

Works Cited Page Guidelines:

1. Each entry on the Works Cited page must include all of the following information in the order presented:
 - a. Author's last name followed by a comma, then the author's first name followed by a period.
 - b. The title of the review in quotation marks followed by a comma;
 - c. The title of the publication where the review appeared italicized;
 - d. Followed by page numbers indicating where the review is located or date of publication.
2. Each item must be listed alphabetically on the Works Cited page by the author of the review's last name.
3. Each item listed on the Works Cited must utilize the Hanging Indention.
4. Each item on the Works Cited page must be single-spaced, but separate each item by an additional space.

5. The entries on the Works Cited page must be on a separate page and appear as the last page of each book essay.

Sample Entries as they should appear on the Works Cited page:

DuVal, Kathleen. "Frontier Rebels' Review: The Revolution Out West," in the *Wall Street Journal*: 18 December 2018.

Ingram, Daniel. "A Review of *Frontier Rebels: The Fight for Independence in the American West, 1765-1776* by Patrick Spero," in *The American Historical Review*. Vol. 125, No. 2 (February 2020): 223-224.

Book Essay Checklist: Before uploading the final draft for each book essay, review the checklist below and make sure you have followed all of the guidelines mentioned above. Remember, students who do not meet these guidelines will have significant points deducted from their book essay grade. **THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS RULE.**

1. _____ Have you placed your first and last name, the title of the course, the course numbers, and the date the final draft of each book essay is due in the upper right-hand corner of an otherwise blank cover sheet?
2. _____ Does your last name and page number appear in the upper right-hand corner of every page except for the cover sheet?
3. _____ Did you place the bibliographical entry for the book the essay focuses on at the top of the first page of the actual essay—**NOT** on the cover sheet—as instructed?
4. _____ Is the bibliographical entry referred to in #3 above single-spaced?
5. _____ Is the main body of the book essay double-spaced?
6. _____ Is the information in the upper right-hand corner of the cover sheet single-spaced? Is the bibliographical entry at the top of the first page of each book essay single-spaced? Are the entries on the Works Cited page single-spaced?
7. _____ Have you correctly used the Hanging Indention on the items listed on the Works Cited Page?
8. _____ Have you used font style Times New Roman throughout the entire book essay, including the cover sheet?
9. _____ Have you used font size 11 throughout the entire reaction paper, including the cover sheet?
10. _____ Are there any blank pages included at the end of the book essay.

Optional Deadline for One (and ONLY one) Book Essay: 11:59 PM Monday, 2 August 2021:

An optional deadline will be established on the Canvas homepage for this course that will allow students the option of turning in one, and only one book essay. I will grade those book essays as if it were a final draft; if the student earns an "A" for that book essay then they are done with it and need only to complete the remaining three book essays. If the student earns a grade less than an "A," I will comment on the errors that need to be corrected. Those students will then be able to correct those errors and resubmit that book essay on 11 March 2021 along with the remaining three book essays.

Students may submit their single book essay at any time before 2 August 2021, but the option for this kind of assistance expires at 11:59 PM on Monday, 2 August 2021.

Assistance with Correctly Identifying the Thesis Statements for the Book Essays:

In order to avoid the 50-point penalty for submitting a book essay that incorrectly identifies the thesis for the assigned books, students are encouraged to seek the professor's assistance; but you must not wait until the last minute for that assistance. The videos posted on the Canvas homepage for the book essays show students where to look for the correct thesis statements. Once you think you have correctly identified the thesis, send it to me in an email. Quote the thesis in its entirety. If you have correctly identified the thesis, I will let you know. If you do not correctly identify the thesis, I will let you know and provide some additional guidance to help you find the correct thesis.

The option to receive this kind of assistance for the book essays expires at 11:59 PM on Thursday, 5 August 2021. I will not respond to any student's request for me to confirm whether or not any student has correctly identified the thesis of the assigned readings after this deadline. **THERE WILL BE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS RULE.**