Assignment Description:
Students will write an original essay of historiography, please note that historiographical essays are very different than research essays.
A historiographical essay analyzes how a single idea, topic, or issue has been treated in existing scholarship. You must have an original thesis, but your claim is not based on primary resource analysis. Instead, you are making a claim about the existing literature on your subject. “Literature” in this sense simply refers to the historical work already published on the topic. To find secondary sources, use research databases available through the library’s website (I recommend Academic Search Premier, JSTOR, or the library’s 1Search).

The Historiography Paper makes up 30% of your final grade in this course and will be divided into four parts, due throughout the term:

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Prospectus:
Students will submit a one-page prospectus stating their selected topic. The prospectus should include your thesis question that you intend to answer in the course of your paper.

Bibliography:
Students must compile at least twenty sources to be cited in their papers. All sources must come from monographs or peer-reviewed journal articles. Blogs, Wikipedia articles, and the link are not acceptable bibliographical sources for the purposes of this paper. Bibliographies must be formatted using Chicago Manual of Style.

Possible approaches to pursue in thinking about your topic:
1. Are there rival interpretations of this particular event, person, or idea? What do you think is at stake in these interpretations? What kinds of sources are preferred by different authors?
2. Are there competing narratives that present historical significance differently? Whose voices dominate these narratives (and at whose expense)?
3. Have conversations about this topic been related to scholarly trends, or perhaps by world events? How has the scholarly discourse surrounding the topic changed over time?
4. In order to understand the historiography of your topic, you should plan to read lots of book reviews, and to read the introductions (at least) to important books in the field. In
addition, you should be familiar with the arguments presented in short-form peer-reviewed scholarly essays in important historical journals.

**Specifications:**
The main subject, and your own interpretive claim about past events, ought to be laid out plainly in your introduction. That claim is called a thesis. This thesis is your argument, and you will devote the paper to using evidence to persuade your reader that your argument is strong. To be effective, the paper should be organized according to three key points and/or themes that guide the course of your argument. Include a conclusion that reiterates your thesis and recapitulates the main themes.

**Papers must be:** 4500-5000 words, Times New Roman, 12-point font, double-spaced, with one-inch margins

1. **Introduction:** The introductory section should be approximately three paragraphs and should accomplish these three tasks:
   a. **Paragraph 1:** should include a “hook,” i.e. a story or anecdote from the past that establishes the main issue, question, or tension to be explored in the paper. Then explicitly state the issue/question/tension for the reader. Good research questions often ask “why” or “how.”
   b. **Paragraph 2:** should include a discussion of how the topic has been approached already, by other scholars (secondary sources) Include only the ones that are most pertinent to your paper’s question.
   c. **Paragraph 3:** should make your own interpretive claim. This is your thesis. It is what you intend to prove. After stating your thesis, mention how your primary source(s) will help you to demonstrate it, and identify three key themes you intend to develop in the paper in support of the thesis.

2. **Headings and Body Paragraphs:** Each theme should have a heading. Spend several paragraphs within each theme, using specific historical evidence to tell your story and to make your points. Ensure that each topic paragraph makes a claim, and that each paragraph includes historical evidence from either primary or secondary sources.

3. **Conclusion:** Your conclusion should be no more than one paragraph. It serves to remind the reader what the main claim of the paper has been, and what the key themes have been. You can also provide “food for thought” in the conclusion, to provoke the reader to think of any consequences of your story worth thinking about.

4. **Citations:** Use footnotes when citing sources (when in doubt, follow the Chicago Manual of Style, the standard in the historical profession). Avoid extremely long quotations. Whether quoting or paraphrasing, ALWAYS cite your sources. Expect heavy penalties for not citing sources.