

HOTA 2 Summer Assignment Book Review and Presentation Assignment

For this class, you are required to write a book review of a historical text from a period and topic that you are interested in history. Reviews of fiction or guidebooks will not be accepted. Your book should at least have 200 pages. I would like you to choose a book that you are really interested in or that will help you prepare yourself for the second half of this class. This will be the first step in creating your Internal Assessment.

Your book review should be 3-4 typed pages long (double-spaced, one-inch margins). I expect your book review to be free of grammatical and spelling errors, and otherwise well edited. Please refer to the next pages for tips about how to write good book reviews.

Writing Good Book Reviews

A book review does not only tell you what a book is about, but also whether it achieves what it is trying to do. Therefore, a book review is more than a summary of the content (even though this is an important component), but a critical analysis of the book and your reactions to it.

While you are reading the book, take notes about the following issues:

- What is the author's main goal in writing this book? (Convince you of his position on a controversy? Explain the background of an event? Raise awareness of a particular issue?)
- What are the author's main points?
- What kind of evidence does the author provide to make his or her points? How convincing is this evidence?
- Is the book well written? (Easily understandable? Good style?)
- What group of readers would find this book most useful (Lay people? Students? Experts in the area?)

A book review usually has the following components

1) Introduction (one or two paragraphs)

- Bibliographic information (author, title, date of publication, publisher, number of pages, type of book)
- Brief overview of the theme, purpose and your evaluation

2) Summary of the content (about two pages)

- Brief summary of the key points of each chapter or group of chapters
- Paraphrase the information, but use a short quote when appropriate

3) Evaluation and conclusion (about one page)

- Give your opinion about the book. Is the book easy to read or confusing? Is the book interesting, entertaining, instructive? Does the author support his arguments well? What are the book's greatest strengths and weaknesses? Who would you recommend the book to?