

## **History 162: American History: 1877-Present – Carl Antonucci**

### **CRITICAL BOOK REVIEW**

**Object:** This assignment is designed to introduce and cultivate critical reading and thinking skills, develop information literacy, and engage students in the academic writing process. The assignment is worth 20% of the final grade.

#### **Assignment:**

Choose a figure from American History from 1877-present and read a biography of that person (at least 150 pgs). After reading the biography, write a critical review of the book that is 4-6 typed, double-spaced pages. All citations, as well as the bibliography, must be in the Chicago style. This is a CRITICAL book review, meaning that you will need to analyze the book carefully. Among the questions you should consider are:

*Why did the author of the book choose to write a biography of this person?*

*What was the purpose of the book? Does the author state a purpose?*

*What are the main arguments of the book?*

*What is the thesis?*

*Would you characterize the biography as sympathetic to the subject or critical?*

*Are you convinced by the arguments/thesis of the author?*

*What are the strengths and weaknesses of the book?*

*Can you discern a bias in the author's work?*

These are just some of the questions to consider in your paper. The bottom line is that you are expected to engage the materials and ask why the author presents the life of the subject the way they do. All authors have an agenda. It is highly recommended that you do a little research on the author to find out who they are. The more you know about the author, the better you will be able to discern his/her purpose.

In order to help with the research for this paper, an Information Literacy Search Sheet is to also be completed. The Information Literacy Search Sheet is worth 10% of the grade for the paper. Two library instruction sessions will be

provided to the class in order to assist with the research for this paper and completion of the Information Literacy Search Sheet.

## **ALL BOOKS MUST BE APPROVED BY THE INSTRUCTOR IN ADVANCE.**

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of others without giving credit where credit is due. If you use the exact words of another person (no matter what the length), you *must* put those words in quotation marks and include a citation to indicate their source. If you use someone else's ideas or paraphrase someone's words, you must also cite that. You must also indicate the source of specific facts you use in a paper.

**The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary defines plagiarism as follows:**

- to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own
- to use (another's production) without crediting the source
- to commit literary theft
- to present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source

In short, to plagiarize is to give the impression that you have written or thought something that you have in fact borrowed from another. Writers may use another person's words and thoughts but must acknowledge them.

The penalties for plagiarism may be severe, ranging from failure on the particular piece of work, to failure in the course, to expulsion from the university in extreme cases.

**THE DUE DATE FOR THE PAPER IS MARCH 31, 2015.**