**Book Review Instructions**

After you read your selected book, write 2 – 3 pages long analytical review of it. Make sure you analyze, not summarize. You will look at the arguments of the book and evaluate how well the author supports these arguments, the book strengths and weaknesses. Unlike in book report, in book review you need to provide reasoned arguments regarding the merits and/or problems of the work and detailed analysis regarding aspects such as scope, theoretical perspective, use of evidence, etc.

\* **Consider these questions, when reading your book**:

What is the focus – central theme of the book?

What is the book thesis / argument?

How well is the argument supported?

How well is the book organized (does it help with supporting the thesis)?

\* **Things to consider when making an evaluation**:

How does the work help us to understand the topic/issue/time period/event?

Does the work fulfill the author’s goal? – Does it do what the author said it would do?

What theoretical perspective / methodological approach does the author use? Does it / How does it shape their argument?

What type of evidence does the author use? How effectively?

Did the author convinced you about their argument? Why or Why not?

\* **Structure of a book review**:

1. Introduction

- short and direct

- has to provide

background - introduce author and the work with any relevant historical or historiographical

background)

thesis - your evaluation of the book: the main argument of the book, your evaluation of the strength and weaknesses and your view of how the book demonstrates those strength and weaknesses

2. Summary of key arguments

- brief summary or overview of the book: identify the main arguments in the book and summarize them

Book thesis + similarities and differences with other historians (pay attn. to the book’s

introduction)

Organization of the book, major arguments

Types of evidence

3. Evaluation / Analysis

- this should be the bulk of your review

- explain and develop your own thesis (evaluation)

- use specific examples and quotations to prove your assessment of the book

4. Conclusion

- summation of your review

- contribution of the book to the field

- book’s limitations

- book’s suggestions for future research