

Historical Thinking Essays

Due Friday, November 18, 2016

Objective

By Friday, November 18, students will submit an 8- to 10-page historical thinking essay that uses (or challenges) compelling insights from John Lewis Gaddis's book, *The Landscape of History* (2002) to explain how history students might best visualize or "map" the story of their assigned Dickinson college class (1840-1880) for a possible public presentation. The goal of this essay will be to demonstrate a high degree of creativity in historical imagination through the power of a short, well-written essay.

Guidelines

- This essay is a preliminary study for an online exhibition, and might be incorporated into the exhibition itself, but should not be written as a first-person account. Instead, students should use this opportunity to offer an informed critical assessment of Gaddis's theories by summarizing them fairly and then testing them against some examples from their own primary source research.

- Such essays will offer neither a comprehensive narrative of the assigned Dickinson class, nor a full critical review of Gaddis's theories, but will instead rely upon well-selected examples to illustrate (or challenge) key points from his collected Oxford lectures.

- One possible essay structure might look like this:
 - Introduction (1 p)
 - Quotation snippet from Gaddis or narrative vignette from Dickinson research and then thesis statement
 - Background (2-3pp)
 - Overview and analysis of Gaddis's historical thinking claims
 - Case Study (2-3pp)
 - Application of Dickinson research to Gaddis's claims
 - Analysis (2-3pp)
 - Explanation of significance of this test and discussion of how it fits into larger conversation about historical thinking
 - Conclusion (1 p)
 - Return to opening snippet or vignette with new layer of appreciation in light of thesis statement

- Essays should be formatted in a Word document with a title page, and Chicago-style footnotes and should be submitted by email. Late essays will be penalized 5 points per day.