HISTORY 210
WAR AND DIPLOMACY IN AMERICAN HISTORY
READING LIST AND PAPER INSTRUCTIONS
SPRING 2013

Each student will write one paper this semester. The paper must be typed and double-spaced, and may not be more than five pages long, and it must be on a book from the reading list below.

You may choose from the following books, which are listed here in rough chronological order. Copies of many of these books are on reserve in the library on a first-come, first-serve basis. This means that if you want to read and report on (for instance) Bemis's *The Diplomacy of the American Revolution*, and it's already checked out, you're out of luck, unless you wish to purchase a copy on your own. Many of these are available in the Amazon.com used market and elsewhere for a very low price; some are also available on Amazon Kindle.

Samuel Flagg Bemis, *The Diplomacy of the American Revolution*

Samuel Flagg Bemis, *Jay's Treaty: A Study in Commerce and Diplomacy*

Alexander de Conde, *This Affair of Louisiana*

Reginald Horsman, *The Causes of the War of 1812*

Sam W. Haynes, *James K. Polk and the Expansionist Impulse*

Buckner F. Melton, Jr., *A Hanging Offense: The Strange Affair of the Warship* Somers

Bernard Brodie, *Sea Power in the Machine Age*

James M. McPherson, *Crossroads of Freedom: Antietam*

Gene Smith, *Lee and Grant*

Henry J. Hendrix, *Theodore Roosevelt's Naval Diplomacy: The U.S. Navy and the Birth of the American Century*

Thomas Boghardt, *The Zimmermann Telegram: Intelligence, Diplomacy, and America's Entry into World War I*

Thomas Boyd, *Through the Wheat*

Robert H. Zieger, *America's Great War: World War I and the American Experience*

Herman Wouk, *The* Caine *Mutiny*

Stephen E. Ambrose, *Citizen Soldiers*

George Wilson, *If You Survive: From Normandy to the Battle of the Bulge to the End of World War II, One American Officer's Riveting True Story*

Barrett Tillman, *Whirlwind: The Air War Against Japan, 1942-1945*

John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History*

Eric M. Bergerud, *Red Thunder, Tropic Lightning: The World of a Combat Division in Vietnam*

John M. Del Vecchio, *The 13th Valley*

Frances FitzGerald, *Fire in the Lake: The Vietnamese and the Americans in Vietnam*

Instructions

All papers must meet minimum formatting requirements or I won't accept them. You should use this set of requirements below as a checklist before you turn in your paper. The formatting requirements are as follows.

General instructions:

1. Papers must be typed and double-spaced, and printed on one side only.
2. Maximum length is five pages.
3. All margins must be one inch.
4. Font should be Times New Roman, 12-point.
5. All pages must be numbered.
6. Spell-check. (This is not the same thing as proofreading.)
7. Proofread. (This is not the same thing as spell-checking.)
8. Make heavy use of Strunk and White and my "Tips for Proper English" handout while writing. Ideally you should read Strunk and White all the way through before you begin to write your paper, and then refer to it as needed while writing.
9. Use footnotes or endnotes, following the Chicago/Turabian style, when appropriate. (MLA-style in-text citations aren't acceptable.)

Parts of the paper:

Each paper must contain several parts, in the following order.

1. Basic information: For a book, this should be the publication information (author, title, place of publication, publisher, publication year); for a movie, the title, studio, and year are sufficient. Examples:

> Doug Stanton, *In Harm's Way: The Sinking of the USS* Indianapolis *and the Extraordinary Story of Its Survivors*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2001.

2. A *précis*, or brief summary or theme, of the subject and contents of the book or movie: This section should be one paragraph in length, and it should describe these things as if to someone who is unfamiliar with the work. Various things that you might mention include the historical period or episode that the work discusses or depicts; the major events discussed in the work, and their relationship to the larger theme; the main characters (individual or corporate, e.g., a state or culture),

technologies, ideas, doctrines, or philosophies that the work examines, along with how they relate to the larger theme.

3. The *thesis*, or the central argument of the work: This section should be only a paragraph in length. A thesis is very different from a précis/summary/theme. For instance, if you asked Barack Obama and Mitt Romney about the *theme* of the Obamacare litigation in the Supreme Court last year, their answers would be similar: the litigation was about the constitutionality of Obamacare. But Obama and Romney would have very different *theses*, or arguments: Obama would argue thatthe Court ought to find Obamacare constitutional, while Romney would argue that the court should find it unconstitutional.

A thesis may be explicit or (especially in works of fiction) implicit. If you're having trouble discovering it, ask why the author or producer of the work chose to focus on the subject in question, and what point of view or conclusion he is trying to draw or convince you of. Ideally you should be able to describe this thesis in a single sentence. For those of you familiar with the five-paragraph essay, the thesis is the main point you are trying to make with your reader; it's similar to the first of the five paragraphs.

4. The *explication*: Again, to borrow from the five-paragraph essay, the explication is the section in which you give examples or illustrations of how the author or producer tries to demonstrate his thesis (i.e., the three middle paragraphs of the five-paragraph essay.) For instance, in the book *In Harm's Way*, author Doug Stanton's thesis seems to be that the loss of the cruiser USS *Indianapolis* in World War II was not the fault of her captain and officers. To illustrate this, your paper's explication might mention naval communications problems, the fact that the ship did not have access to the top secret intelligence that would have warned her of submarines in the area, the navy's refusal to assign escorts to the *Indianapolis*, and the navy's failure to notice that the ship was several days overdue in port. Your discussion of these factors might well take up a paragraph or two for each point, and you should mention (as in a five-paragraph essay) at least three such points.

5. The critique: Following the explication, you should state whether a reasonable person would conclude that the thesis is persuasive and adequately supported by the evidence the author gives. You should focus on the points you covered in the explication, but you are not limited to those points, especially if you want to challenge or rebut them with other examples from the work.

6. The subjective evaluation: Here you may mention your own personal reaction to the book (although avoid first-person tense), including such things as the general organization or structure of the work; the clarity of the writing style or of the director's telling of the story; the degree to which the work helps to explain, in a clearly understandable way, the subject matter; and any particularly great strengths and weaknesses of the work. This section may run from one to several paragraphs.

7. The summary: In a single paragraph, reiterate your own general conclusions as to the thesis, how well the author/producer supports that thesis, and how useful the work is as a whole.