

Assignment III: Précis (10%)
HIST 1200/1201: History and Trump
Due Tuesday, October 31st, by 5:00PM

Précis are concise summaries of a given body of material and serve as condensed book reviews. Historians often use them when writing literature reviews, and you may end up writing versions of them as “response papers” in other courses. When written for class discussion, a précis should reflect critically on the reading, identify connections, and spark questions for debate. For the purposes of this assignment, however, you will focus on condensing the book into a summary and briefly evaluating it.

Directions:

Find a scholarly history book related to your research project and prepare a précis of 750 words (3 pages). Your summary should address **each of the following questions:**

- What is the broad topic of the book and what specific issue(s) does it address?
- In your own words, succinctly state the author’s argument in 1-3 sentences.
- What kinds of evidence and sources does the author use to support her/his arguments?
- What existing scholarly literature does the author engage with? How do they position their own book in relation to this previous work? Include a footnote(s) **citing at least two other books, articles, etc.** that the author engages with.
- What are the strengths and/or weaknesses of the book and its interpretation? What parts are either persuasive or not persuasive and why?

If you are writing a précis for future classes, you might want to address the following questions in addition to a summary of the book:

- Is there anything unique, unusual, striking, interesting, or new about the author’s approach?
- What parts of the book are unclear or difficult to follow?
- Is anything “missing” from the book? Are there other issues, lines of argument, or types of sources that you think should have been incorporated?
- Do you get a sense of whether or not other historians agree or disagree with the conclusions by this author?
- How does the book relate to other readings? Does it confirm, contradict, or complicate them?
- What particular questions does the book raise for class discussion?

Format Guidelines:

- Evaluations must be submitted as Word documents and must be written in formal English essay form (no bullet points or question formats).
- Include your name and page numbers.
- Include footnote citations for all sources, formatted according to the Chicago Manual of Style.