Guide for Teaching Assistants
Department of History
University of Massachusetts Amherst

Compiled August 2016 by Katherine Fecteau with Department assistance
Introduction

As graduate students in the History Department, we receive funding primarily through teaching positions. In addition to the financial benefits these positions offer, they provide valuable professional skills and experience. However, teaching can be very challenging at times, and this guide is intended as a helpful resource to assist you throughout the coming semesters.

I would like to extend a heartfelt Thank You! to all the graduate students and faculty who contributed time, energy, and materials to this guide. Without you, this project would not have been possible.
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1:0 Professor’s Expectations

While each professor has specific expectations of and requirements for their Teaching Assistants, these are a few general guidelines to bear in mind:

Be professional
“I expect TAs to be utterly professional even if they are friendly. Thus no socializing with the undergrads, no personal comments or contacts or favored treatment.”

“You will act as first contact for students in matters of attendance and absence, content questions, exams, papers, assignment preparations, and disputes.”

Communicate with the Professor
“Check in regularly with the professor to verify their expectations and get advice on specific situations you’re unsure how to handle.”

Be knowledgeable
“The TA needs to know more than the students in the area and if they don’t, I expect them not only to stay ahead of the students in the assigned reading, but go beyond that in case questions emerge in discussion … I don't expect expertise, but they should know ‘enough,’ which is flexible.”

Manage responsibilities
“[TAs] should be at every lecture, they should keep track of their own students, they should be in their office hours when they say they will be. (And those hours should be long enough and convenient enough for the undergrads but not burdensome).”

Balance your relationship with students
“[TAs] are *not* expected to be at the students’ beck and call 24/7. No one should be! After all, TAs are first of all grad students… At the same time, they are paid to do this job and the students rely on them and so do I. It’s a balance.”

Contributions from Professors Audrey Alstadt, Jennifer Heuer, and Rob Weir
Overview
These discussions are intended to complement the lectures for History 150, offering you an opportunity to review information and questions that arise from the readings and lectures. Each week we will explore the history described in lectures, expanding upon and critically engaging with this material by incorporating the assigned readings. It is essential that you contribute during discussion sections, and I encourage open debate and constructive disagreement. However, it is critical that we maintain a respectful dialogue in order to have a space for free discussion.

Expectations
I expect you to arrive in class prepared to discuss the week’s lectures and readings. In other words:
1. Attend lectures.
2. Read the assigned materials before discussion. Have questions and comments on the material ready to contribute.
3. Bring course materials to discussion sections. We may reference past weeks’ readings as well as those assigned for the current week.
4. Regularly contribute to the discussions. If you are not comfortable sharing your thoughts in class, contact me and we can make alternate arrangements.
5. DO NOT use your cell phone during discussion.

Attendance
I will pass around a sign-in sheet at the beginning of discussion in order to take attendance. If you do not sign the attendance sheet, you will be considered absent. If you arrive late, I expect you to see me after class to sign in. Students are allowed up to TWO unexcused absences. Additional unexcused absences will lower your overall grade, as outlined by Professor Weir (syllabus page 3, 5). If you need to miss discussion for any reason, please let me know before class on Friday or as soon as possible afterward. We can then set up a meeting to review material from the missed discussion.

Participation
Students can earn up to three participation points each discussion:
1 Point – attend discussion
2 Points – attend discussion and contribute one comment or question
3 Points – attend discussion and contribute two or more comments or questions
If you miss discussion, you can meet with me afterwards to make up 1 point. Please remember that participation in discussion sections accounts for fifteen percent of your final grade.
Grading and Email

1. **Twenty-four hour policy:** please wait at least twenty-four hours after receiving a graded paper or assignment before contacting me with questions or concerns. Use this time to review my comments and identify specific areas that you would like me to clarify. I will be happy to discuss these questions in person during my weekly office hours.

2. Any assignment you hand in must include your name, section, and the due date. I may take up to two weeks to return graded material, but will do my best to return it sooner!

3. I will happily respond to emails as soon as I can, usually within twenty-four hours. If you email me before 2:00pm, there is a greater chance that I will be able to respond to you the same day. However, I will not respond to emails received after 7:00pm until the following day. Please be advised that if you e-mail me only a few hours before discussion or the night before a due date, I may not be able to respond in time.

Other Notes

1. Please let me know if you require any learning accommodations.
2. Please let me know if you prefer certain pronouns (ex. he/him, they/them, she/her).
2.2 Joie Campbell – History of Africa Since 1500

History 161: History of Africa Since 1500
Discussion sections; 01AA, 01AB, 01AC
Joie Campbell, Teaching Assistant
Email: joelynnncamp@umass.edu
Office: 716 Herter Hall
Office Hours: Tuesdays 9:00am-9:30am & 11:00am-Noon
Thursdays 9:00am-9:30am
(Or by appointment)

Friday Discussion Sections:
Section: 01AA 9:05am-9:55pm
Isenberg School of Management, Room 120
Section: 01AB 10:10pm-11:00pm
Isenberg School of Management, Room 123
Section: 01AC 12:20pm-1:10pm
Herter Hall, Room 111

Discussion Expectations
Discussion sections are an opportunity for you to review concepts, ideas, and questions that arise from the readings and lectures. You are expected to come to section prepared to participate in discussion-related activities, as they are worth a substantial part of your final grade for this course. Come to section ready to participate, raise questions of your own, address factual points based on the readings, and argue your own opinions about the readings and the lectures. Merely coming to discussion and not participating is not sufficient. Moreover, you are expected to be respectful of your peers and me. I encourage debates and I welcome differing viewpoints in discussion, but I will not tolerate disrespectful behavior, whether it is directed at me or other students.

Attendance and Lateness
I will take attendance at the beginning of discussion. Unexcused absences—you are afforded two unexcused absences for the discussion classes. Beyond your two unexcused absences, those absences not corroborated by a doctor’s note, sports schedule/note from your coach, or other formal documentation may lower your grade significantly. Simply emailing and informing me of your reason for missing class is not sufficient. You are expected to bring me a copy of your letter/note that I will keep for my records.
Habitual tardiness will not be tolerated. At my discretion, I will consider excessive tardiness as an unexcused absence.

Email and Other Communication
I initiate all email correspondence using my UMass email address. I would greatly appreciate it if you would only use your UMass account when communicating with me through email. There are chances that your message from a non-UMass address will get lost in spam folders otherwise. I encourage you to contact me with any questions or concerns you may have throughout the semester. You can reach me through email, during my office hours, or by scheduling an appointment. I am flexible and generally respond to any requests within a business day. If you do not hear from me within 48 hours, please try and contact me again. If you send me an email, please write in a respectful tone and please present your questions as clearly as possible.
Exams/Essays/Grades
All work handed in to me should include your full name and section number, with pages numbered, and stapled if necessary. You are expected to have command of the fundamentals of good writing and good thesis-driven argumentation, and to display them in your work. I encourage you to visit the UMass Writing Center located in the Learning Commons in the W.E.B. Du Bois Library. Please write legibly on all handwritten work; I cannot give credit for what I cannot read. This also holds true for grammar; I cannot give credit for what I cannot parse. The assigned papers for this course need to be typed using Times New Roman 12 point font with 1 inch margins. All citations will be in the form of footnotes using Turabian or Chicago Manual of Style 16th edition. I will not discuss individual grades via email or in class during discussion/lecture. I will happily meet with you during office hours or a scheduled appointment. Requests for disability accommodations or scheduling make-up exams should be directed to Professor Bowman.

Academic Honesty
Please review this section in the main syllabus. Academic honesty is taken very seriously in this course.

Laptop and Phone Policy
Please review this section in the main syllabus. Discussion sections will follow the policy set for lectures. Please turn off your cell phones prior to the start of discussion.

How to do well in this class
Readings: It is absolutely necessary that you do the readings assigned in the course. If you do not complete the readings as scheduled, a “domino effect” can ensue. If you have not done the readings, you will likely be confused in both lectures and discussion sections, which might affect your participation grade.

- **Mini Goals:** Break the readings up into chunks and assign a “chunk” per day. It seems less daunting and before you know it you have finished the given assignment and are moving onto the next one.
- **Plan Ahead:** Use the “Assignment Calendar” to schedule all of your assignments throughout your courses. Therefore, when you are looking at the assignments for an upcoming week and notice that you have a large project due, you can apportion your time and attention accordingly.
- **Just ASK!** Feel free to come to class with questions about the material and general subject matter. It not only shows me that you are engaging with the course material, but that you are putting in a good effort to understand it better as well.
- **Take notes:** Unless you have an eidetic memory, you are not going to remember every detail of a reading, lecture, or discussion.

Critical Engagement: Discussion is not about memorizing everything and repeating it. This course requires you to think hard about important issues in the history of the African continent. It is about critical thinking and analysis. Do not casually read the material and consider it done. Read critically. Think deeply. Make connections between the readings, the lectures, and the world as you understand it, to comprehend more clearly what is really going on with the events and ideas we will be studying.

External Knowledge: While we will touch on a plethora of subjects during lecture, readings, and discussion, it may be beneficial to share outside resources either through Moodle or during sections.
Overview
These graded discussion sections will deeply engage with the primary and secondary sources in the assigned readings. Beginning after the completion of add/drop, we will hand out detailed questions in advance of each reading and will call on students in discussion section to answer those questions. You should prepare written answers ahead of time and bring these (along with the assigned readings) with you to class. You have the right to pass on any question once during the semester but we have the right to call on you in subsequent sessions until you provide an answer. Repeated absences and/or lack of preparation will result in a lower engagement grade.

Goals
The goal of the course is to understand the development of key aspects of world history from the late fifteenth to the late twentieth centuries. Students will develop their ability to read and engage primary documents, strengthen critical thinking and writing skills, and understand the way diverse global norms and values change over time.

Requirements
Students are expected to come to discussion prepared to discuss the week’s lectures and readings. This means the following:
1. Read the assigned materials before discussion.
2. Bring all course materials (including notes and textbooks) to discussion sections.
3. Review the questions for each discussion and prepare answers to each question that can be shared in class. (NOTE: These will be collected randomly, so hard copies are preferable.)

Additional Notes
Technology policy: The use of cell phones, laptops, tablets, or other electronic devices for any purpose other than the accessing of course materials is prohibited during discussion, and will result in a “0” grade for attendance during that session (I will be monitoring). Whenever possible, hard copies of notes and notebooks are preferable.
Name and Pronoun Policy: Students should at all times be addressed by the name and pronouns they prefer. Please advise me of your name’s proper pronunciation, and any name or pronoun preferences that may differ from your SPIRE account as early in the semester as possible. If I make mistakes, please feel free to (politely) correct me!

Important Dates
Monday, February 1
End of add/drop period
Tuesday, February 16
Monday Schedule
Wednesday, February 17
First Exam
Monday, March 7
Second Exam
Friday, March 18
NO SCHOOL – Spring Break
Monday, April 11
Third Exam
Wednesday, April 20
Monday Schedule
Final Exam
Date TBA (on SPIRE)

Attendance
Attendance at both the discussion section and lecture is mandatory. Please turn off all mobile phones and refrain from using them in class. If you have more than three (3) excused absences from discussion section you will automatically fail the course. You must complete all exams in order to pass the course. If you fail to do so you will automatically fail the course.
2.4 Julie Peterson – Indigenous People of North America

History 170: Indigenous Peoples of North America
Fall 2014

Prof. Alice Nash
anash@history.umass.edu
Office Hours: Monday 10:00 AM- 12:00 PM Herter 638
Tuesday 10:00 AM- 12:00 PM Thompson 4 (CPNAIS office)

TA: Julie Peterson
jgpeterson@umass.edu
Herter 712
Office Hours: Monday and Tuesday 11:00 AM- 12:00 PM

Lecture
Monday/ Wednesday 12:20 PM- 1:10 PM
Morrill Sci. II, Room 131

Discussion Sections
Friday 9:05-9:55 School of Management Rm 126
Friday 10:10-11:00 School of Management Rm 126
Friday 12:20-1:10 Bartlett 205

Expectations
The purpose of these discussion sections is for you to be able to fully understand
and engage with the week’s reading and lectures. To that end, I hope that we can create a
space where everyone feels comfortable speaking and we are respectful of each other’s
voices and opinions.

I expect everyone to come prepared for discussion every week. This includes
having completed the readings, ALWAYS bringing the text to class, turning assignments
in at the beginning of the session, arriving on time, and fully participating in discussion.
Your participation in these sessions determines 20% of your grade for this class.

Please refer to Prof. Nash’s syllabus for information regarding attendance in
discussion sessions. If for any reason you need to miss a discussion session, send me an
email BEFORE class or as soon as possible afterwards, and see me during office hours
to catch up on what you missed. If you are unable attend office hours, you may set up an
appointment with me via email. I encourage you to come in to my office hours not only
to catch up on missed discussion sessions, but also if you have any questions or concerns
about readings, lectures, assignments, or just want to chat.

If you have questions concerning your grade on a paper or exam, please allow 24
hours before contacting me.

Feel free to bring in extra material to share with us as it relates to the course.
Current events, videos and music, and other historical sources can all add value and
interest to our discussions together.
History 180, Western Science and Technology I
Sara Patton, Teaching Assistant
Email: spatton@umass.edu
Office: Herter Hall 712
Office Hours: Mondays 11:30am-12:30pm, Thursdays 1-2pm, and by appointment

Friday Discussion Sections
Section 01AA: 9:05-9:55am
Section 01AB: 10:10-11:00am
Section 01AC: 12:20-1:10pm
All sections are held in Lederle Graduate Research Center 173

Discussion Guidelines
Discussing the content of lectures and readings will help you gain a deeper understanding of the material and prepare you to succeed on papers and exams. To help you and your classmates get the most out of discussion time, please follow these guidelines:

- Sharing and Hearing: Discussions are an opportunity to share your ideas AND to engage the ideas of others by listening carefully.
- Speak in turn. Let each person finish speaking before you respond to their ideas or introduce your own ideas
- Engage respectfully with new ideas
- Feel free to ask questions

Attendance and Lateness
Please arrive on time to discussion sections. Arriving late disrupts discussion and shows disrespect to your peers. At the beginning of each section, I will pass around a sign in sheet. If you miss signing the sheet, you will be considered absent. If you arrive late, you are expected to see me after class. The opportunity to sign the attendance sheet will be given or denied at my discretion. Repeated absences or tardiness will negatively affect your participation grade. Certain scenarios are considered excused absences including: medical emergency, religious holiday, family emergency, sports or requirement for another course. A note from a coach, doctor or instructor is required for an excused absence.

Email
Please check your UMass email regularly. I will use email to send out updates about discussion sections and other class topics. Please feel free to email me if you have questions or concerns about lectures or discussions; I usually respond to emails within 24 hours. Please note that I will not reply to emails sent after 8pm until the next day.
Technology
Please show respect for your fellow students and me by turning off cell phones and other electronic devices. Laptops/tablets/other e-readers may be used to review assigned course reading only.

Grading
Once you hand in work or take an exam I will begin grading the material immediately. I may take up to two weeks to grade work, although I will do my best to get the work back to you in less than two weeks. If you miss lecture or discussion it is your responsibility to pick up your graded work. If you have questions about the grade you received, you may come see me within one week of receiving your graded work. After one week, the grade stands.

Response Papers are generally graded more quickly, and are graded on a +/√/- scale. A + indicates exceptional work, √ passing work, and – failing work. Response papers are due in hard copy at the beginning of your discussion section. I do not accept electronic submissions. If you must miss discussion for an excused absence, please email me in advance to discuss submission.

How to Succeed:
• Understand class expectations set by Professor Ogilvie and me
• Put deadlines and due dates on your calendar early in the semester
• Arrive on time and prepared for discussion
• Respect your classmates
• Ask questions
• Ask for help

Campus Resources
UMass Amherst Writing Center: https://www.umass.edu/writingcenter/
Online Writing Lab (OWL) at Purdue University: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/
The Chicago Manual of Style: Available online via UMass Amherst Library databases
Rebekkah Rubin, Teaching Assistant  
Email: rrrubin@umass.edu  
Office: Herter 712  
Office Hours: Mondays and Thursdays 1:00-2:00 (& by appointment)  

Friday Discussion Sections:  
Section: 01AA 9:05-9:55 Herter Hall 640  
Section: 01AB 10:10-11:00 Herter Hall 640  
Section: 01AC 12:20-1:10 Herter Hall 400  

Goals: I intend for the discussion sections to solidify your understanding of the topics covered in lecture and the readings through active learning and participation. We will also discuss best practices for engaging in historical work, whether it be reading primary sources or writing research papers. This is a collaborative process among all of us, and I am happy to hear your feedback and suggestions.  

Attendance: Regular attendance is expected and necessary for success in the course. Be proactive and contact me about any planned absences as soon as possible. You are expected to bring me a copy of formal documentation, such as a doctor's note, in order for an absence to be excused. Unexcused absences will lower your grade. Repeated tardiness will also lower your grade.  

Participation: You are expected to come prepared to participate in discussion. To successfully participate, you must complete the readings prior to class and bring the readings with you along with your notes and questions about the material. Participation is worth 15% of your final grade.  

Assignments: All papers should be handed in at the beginning of discussion sections. If you have a valid excuse for missing discussion on that day, please let me know before the paper is due so alternate arrangements can be made. Late papers will be docked 1/3 of a letter grade per day late. All papers should have 1” margins, 11 or 12pt font, and be double-spaced and stapled. Citations can be either in-line or as footnotes—you can choose but be consistent and make sure your citations are complete and accurate. Ask me or Professor Redman if you have any questions about citations.  

Sources of Help: Please come to my office hours if you have any questions or concerns about the class. I am happy to schedule other times to meet with sufficient advance notice. You can also reach me via email. During the week, I will generally reply within 24 hours. Weekend emails are not guaranteed a response until Monday morning.  
Other sources of assistance include Professor Redman and the UMass Writing Center.  

Classroom Behavior: Please be respectful of your instructors and fellow students. During discussion, cell phone use is prohibited and laptop use is strongly discouraged. If I suspect laptops are used for anything other than reviewing or taking notes, they will be banned.  

Academic Integrity: Discussion and collaboration with other students is encouraged; however, work you submit must reflect your own understanding, in your own words. Plagiarism is a serious offense. If you have any questions about plagiarism, academic integrity, or source citations, please ask me or Professor Redman.
3.1 Long List of Teaching Tips

Professors and graduate students alike are almost always happy to compare teaching strategies and offer advice. The following tips are a part of the department’s collective knowledge and experience:

Before Discussion

- **Prepare a syllabus**
  “I strongly recommend that you prepare a 1-2 page syllabus of your own that gives students your contact information and puts forth your expectations of them. This should be done even though they will have a course syllabus. State basics such as what you expect about attendance, when you will answer emails, how close to a deadline you will examine rough drafts, and the late work policy. (Make everything as specific as you can—open-ended details = trouble.)” (Professor Weir)

- **Prepare a lesson plan**
  “Sketch a formal lesson plan for each week's session so that you have an organized agenda. Put the essentials up front in that plan. It doesn't have to be elaborate, but a written plan keeps you focused. It also shows students that you are organized and models behavior you expect of them. Now that you have that plan, pay attention only to the essentials! Don't feel as if you have to ‘cover’ any set amount of information. It is more important that students deepen how they think than that they master every detail. Sweat the basics, but not the peripherals.” (Professor Weir)

- **Perform reconnaissance**
  “I've found it necessary to scope out the rooms in advance – either by arriving very early the first day or by going a day or two before. This helps with planning and with gathering necessary supplies (cable, dry-erase markers, etc.).” (Shay Olmstead)

During Discussion

- **Use nametags**
  “I make my students wear name tags for the first ~8 weeks or so (or until I run out of name tags). This is both for me, because I have a visual memory and need to see the written name plus their face to remember it, but it’s also good for encouraging the students to talk to one another using their names. I get the ‘all-purpose labels’ from staples rather than the actual name tags because they're cheaper and more come in a package.” (Shay Olmstead)

- **Learn names**
  “Learn your students’ names. You are grading them individually and you owe it to them to learn their names and take into consideration their individual contributions. Also, it is a matter of respect.” (Gregg Mitchell)

- **Set the tone for discussion**
  “It's crucial to get students talking from the first discussion section, and to keep the momentum going early on. This can be done with a series of low-stakes introductions—have students give names, but also odd facts about themselves (give examples—you have a twin sister, your car broke down this morning, you love…), do favorite and least favorite, favorite TV program / movie and something they thought was awful, etc. (Professor Heuer)
“Depending on the size of the discussion (can get unwieldy with really big sections), I advocate doing a name game, going around the room, where a student says their name, and the names of people before them, ending with you. Repeat this in future classes, reversing direction and/or —challenge students to see who can name as many people as possible, when they falter, do another round of intro, possibly just with names. This serves a lot of purposes: it gets them used to talking (so it helps avoid the risk of discussion just becoming ping-pong between you and a few engaged students), gets them to know each other, and (esp. if you're bad at names and faces) helps reinforce who's who for you, while putting it in the guise of a bonding activity.” (Professor Heuer)

- **Vary the discussion**
  “Have a repertoire of different kinds of class exercises, so that if something falls flat, you have another idea immediately in mind. Different class sections will have different personalities—what works well in one class, won't in another, so it's really helpful to have something in reserve. This doesn't have to be complicated: you can switch gears easily if you have students do a think-pair-share exercise, a quick go-round the room brainstorming (i.e. on adjectives to describe a work you're discussing), a video you play for a minute (if the classroom is set up for that) to get their reactions, etc. But having an immediate go-to makes things more comfortable.” (Professor Heuer)

- **Help students visualize**
  “When we have ‘compare/contrast’ or ‘list possible answers’ types of discussions, students have found it very useful when I keep class notes on the board as we talk.” (Shay Olmstead)

- **Use handouts strategically**
  “A handout can be really useful when you are planning to have students answer questions, e.g., in group work. Anything that would benefit from visual presentation is a candidate for presentation via handout. Keep in mind, though, that students are more likely to pay attention to the handout if receiving one is a rarity rather than the status quo.” (Reproduced from Linguistics Department TA Guide, 2008)

- **Repeat questions**
  “When a student asks a question or makes a comment, repeat it for the whole class. Students, particularly those in the front, tend to direct their speech to you, and they’re inaudible to everyone else. You need to repeat the student’s statement or question loudly. Also, when answering a question from a student in the front, keep your voice up. Avoid the tendency to engage in a quiet dialogue.” (Reproduced from Linguistics Department TA Guide, 2008)

- **Make transitions clear**
  “Use transitions as an opportunity to gain or reclaim the students’ attention. It is not easy to start class, but it is important to have a clear dividing line between the time when they don’t need to pay attention to you and when they need to start paying attention to you. Speak up, announce the beginning, and say what you’re going to do.” (Reproduced from Linguistics Department TA Guide, 2008)

  “When you transition from one topic to the next, make the demarcation line clear. Have some bit of stage business for the transition – erasing the board, writing a new topic on the board, etc.” (Reproduced from Linguistics Department TA Guide, 2008)
“Getting their attention back after group activities is hard. Make them move their chairs back into normal position to signal that the group activity is over and normal classroom behavior is resumed.” (Reproduced from Linguistics Department TA Guide, 2008).

- **Accept silence**
  “Be comfortable with silence. Don’t talk too much because you’re uncomfortable. Let the students learn that they have to speak up.” (Julie Peterson)

  “If there is a lull in discussion, relax. This doesn’t mean you’ve failed. Every conversation needs a chance to catch its breath. It may mean that your topic is exhausted or it may be a pause for people to digest what they’ve heard. If the lull comes too frequently, though, you may need to give more attention to the types of topics you’re picking.” (Reproduced from UMass Amherst Handbook for New Instructors)

- **Summarize, but pick your moment**
  “Resist summing up until it’s clear an issue has been exhausted. It’s helpful for you to scribble notes of your own so you can make summative statements and add important material that was left out, but biting one's own tongue is one of the keys to good discussion. It’s often frustrating to listen to others dance around an issue when you could clarify it instantly, but things students discover on their own will stick with them longer than things you simply give them. Whenever appropriate, ask another question instead of summing up. However, make certain that you do sum up. I often spend the last 2-3 minutes of discussion groups simply stating something to the effect of: Okay, based on what you folks aid, I’d say our major take away points are: X, Y, Z. This stuff is magic! You will impress your students when you do this.” (Professor Weir)

**Grading and Returning Work**

- **Anticipate**
  “Bring a stapler to discussion section when physical copies of a paper are due. Students never remember to staple anything.” (Professor Heuer)

- **FERPA**
  “Pay attention to FERPA, federal privacy law. This is relevant even in small things—for example, put grades on the back of paper or exam, or on attached sheets at the back, rather than on the front of the assignment, so that other students don’t see what grades you’ve given other people.” (Professor Heuer)

  “Never, ever mention a student by name to another professor, grad student, or undergrad student. DO NOT gossip.” (Gregg Mitchell)

- **Back up your gradebook**
  “Save your grades, attendance records, etc. on UMass Box Online Storage or another secure site, ideally one that the prof. for the class can also access easily. This means that if you encounter any problems (computer dies or is lost, you lose the paper copies of a roster, etc) you don't lose your records; a prof. being able to access them also means that if something unexpected happens (like you're in a car accident or hospitalized for appendicitis) you don't need to worry about providing access to those records.” (Professor Heuer)
• **Address plagiarism**
  “Distribute the plagiarism course policy through a handout or the course syllabus. Be sure to go over your plagiarism policy with your students. Define what plagiarism is, allow time for questions, and make clear that plagiarism is a serious offense that you will not tolerate.” (Reproduced from UMass Amherst Handbook for New Instructors)

  “If a student commits plagiarism, talk to the student after class or during office hours. Cite evidence of where you believe the student plagiarized material and be sure to get the student’s perspective on their work (e.g., their reasons for plagiarizing, their understanding of the consequences) before moving forward in filing a plagiarism charge. TAs should always check with the professor they work with for additional advice on handling student plagiarism.” (Reproduced from UMass Amherst Handbook for New Instructors)

• **Clearly communicate expectations**
  “Students had to write a one page paper each week reflecting on course readings, due at beginning of discussion Friday, in hard copy form. The professor also allowed students to rewrite them for a better grade once. While I mentioned it verbally, I didn't get it in the syllabus that students have one week from the return of the paper to rewrite and turn it back in. (Papers were always returned the following Friday, meaning that they were due back the next discussion). I ended up with students trying to bring me rewrites during lectures, students at the end of the semester who suddenly wanted to rewrite papers from months ago etc. It was a headache, and I'm quite sure some students didn't think the policy was applied uniformly--and it probably wasn't. Lesson for me: state it clearly in the syllabus, verbally and then stick to it.” (Sara Patton)

  “Be very clear about your grading policies. For example, my students can earn three participation points per week, and a rough total of 33 over the semester. I explain this for them on the first day to try to prevent number shock later in the semester. The clearer you are, the less ammunition students will have to contest grades.” (Katherine Fecteau)

• **Ask students to grade themselves**
  “I have students grade themselves on the backs of their papers before they hand them to me. I assumed that students always believe they have written an A paper, and this is often not the case. It’s interesting to see what students think they have earned, and we frequently agree on the grade.” (Katherine Fecteau)

• **Pace yourself while grading**
  “Think about when you would like to return students’ work (one week response time? Two weeks?). Then, designate a certain number of exams or essays you will grade per day. For instance, if you have a class of 25-30 students, try to grade four or five papers per day if you want to have all papers returned between one and two weeks.” (Reproduced from UMass Amherst Handbook for New Instructors)

• **Use comments effectively**
  “Focus on the most important criteria being specified in the assignment, considering first those matters that seem to you to have to do with learning your subject. Second, consider such matters as organization, style, and grammar.” (Reproduced from UMass Amherst Handbook for New Instructors)
“Try to avoid correcting all perceived errors of grammar and usage. As an alternative, you might note them in only the opening paragraphs or with a dash in the margins.” (Reproduced from UMass Amherst Handbook for New Instructors)

- **Return student work quickly**
  “Get assignments back promptly. This is especially important with early assignments, as students need feedback to do well on subsequent work. This can be challenging if you’re new to grading—check with the professor for tips on how to go through specific papers, exams, etc. as efficiently as possible. If there are multiple TAs for the course, coordinate with the other person, so that your grades are consistent.” (Professor Heuer)

- **Discuss contested grades**
  “Be open-minded and listen to the student’s concerns, but ultimately it’s okay to be firm about the grade the student earned (you do not GIVE grades; students EARN grades). With tests and papers, I will often photocopy an exceptional example (with the student’s permission, of course) to have on hand. I think it helps to be able to show students what an A+ paper looks like. If you and your student are truly at an impasse, don’t hesitate to get a second opinion from your professor.” (Katherine Fecteau)

- **Monitor participation**
  “I have people sign in on a piece of paper and use a dot/check mark system to track participation. I put dots next to people's names as I put them on stack and check off when they've spoken. This is easier to do when sitting in front of the list; it is hard to do when simultaneously writing on the board. It's also easier if they don't move after they write their name down!” (Shay Olmstead)

  “On the first day of class I hand out index cards to each student (and I give out a different color to each section) and have them write: their name, year (first, sophomore, etc), the email that they prefer to use, extracurricular activities/sports/work that takes up their time, and a fun fact about themselves that sets them apart from their peers. I then print out all of their pics from SPIRE and I glue each student's pic on the "postage stamp corner" of their card. As students come into class I set their cards aside so that I am left holding the students who aren't there. I jot the date of their absence on the card then or at the end of class, and then later put it into the computer. I can also use the cards as a way of keeping track of participation in class. If a student says something great, I squiggle on a smiley face and the date. At the end of the semester, this helps me visualize how they did in participation. In the meantime, I use the cards as a way to learn their names. I also keep these cards (forever) so that if and when a student asks me for a letter of recommendation years later (which I just had happen recently) I can quickly remind myself who the heck the student is and what kind of a student they were in my class.” (Karen Sause)

- **Handling Conflicts**
  - **Hope for the best, but prepare for the worst-case scenario**
    “Have a plan for handling minor and major disruptions. What will you do if a student is openly texting during class? What will you do if someone makes an openly racist, sexist, or homophobic comment in discussion? It’s impossible to prepare for everything, but a bit of reflection ahead of time can go a long way.” (Katherine Fecteau)
• **Remain calm if a conflict arises**
  “Diffuse heated exchanges quickly. At times, instructors can feel on shaky ground managing heated exchanges … make sure to step in if the conversation breaks down to personal attacks (e.g., ‘Let’s step back to see where we agree). Try to stabilize discussion without dismissing students’ emotions. It is okay to acknowledge strong feelings in the room but keep the discussion from becoming too volatile.” (Reproduced from UMass Amherst Handbook for New Instructors)

  “Remind the class of discussion guidelines. These are often excellent times to remind your students of attributes of good discussion (i.e., listening, respectful disagreement with ideas).” (Reproduced from UMass Amherst Handbook for New Instructors)

**Miscellaneous**

• **Schedule your evaluations**
  “Don’t wait until the end of the semester to receive feedback from your students. As you teach your class, you’ll want to know how a certain class discussion or activity went, whether or not the students understand the course material, and whether you’re teaching the course in a professional, coherent, engaging way.” (Reproduced from UMass Amherst Handbook for New Instructors)

  “I have students fill out an informal TA evaluation after the midterm so I can get an idea of how they are responding to my teaching. I give them a sheet of paper with questions like ‘what do you enjoy about this discussion?’ ‘what changes would you make?’ and ‘comments for me?’ That way, I still have half the semester to make changes if need be.” (Katherine Fecteau)

• **Save everything**
  “Make sure to save a copy of emails that you send to and receive from your students. That way if students have complaints or (on very rare occasions) make accusations against you, you have a clear paper trail of what was said. When in doubt, include your professor in the email conversation.” (Katherine Fecteau)

  “Photocopy graded rubrics before you hand them back. That way, you have a copy of your comments for your record and can refer to them if a student has questions.” (Katherine Fecteau)

  “Keep records of what you did in your discussion sections in case you have to jog your memory at any point.” (Katherine Fecteau)

**Outlook**

• **Be respectful**
  “Be open-minded about others’ opinions, even ones you disagree with. However, if someone’s opinions make someone else uncomfortable, be ready to intervene.” (Gregg Mitchell)

• **Give the benefit of the doubt**
  “Do not assume that the students are trying to lie, cheat, or take advantage of you. Most of the students you teach want to engage with the material.” (Gregg Mitchell)
• **Do not sell yourself short**

  “Don’t say anything to the effect of ‘I’m only doing my job’ or ‘I know that this is a Gen-Ed course and that you don’t want to be here’ in an attempt to appeal to students who might have a lower interest level in your course.” (Reproduced from UMass Amherst Handbook for New Instructors)

  “Remember that while you may not be an expert on the area of history you are teaching, you ARE an expert in learning history and being a student.” (Katherine Fecteau)
3.2 Spire

Alternate Roles
You can easily switch between your student and TA pages in Spire by checking the “Use alternate role” box when you first access the Spire page. By logging in with the box unchecked, you will be directed to your student page. By logging in with the box checked, you will be directed to your TA page.

Classroom Information
Once you have logged in as a TA, you will be directed to your main faculty page on Spire. By clicking on the “Faculty Home” tab at the top of the page, you can access the combinations for the AV cabinets in your assigned classrooms.
If you need equipment for your classroom (to connect your laptop to the projector, show movies, etc.) talk to Amy Fleig. She can either lend you the equipment temporarily or put you in touch with campus AV services.

**Email**

Spire can automatically generate an email list with the official addresses of the students on your roster. Once you have logged in to your faculty page, you can generate these lists by selecting the “Class Email Lists” option under the “Faculty Home” tab.

This option will direct you to a page where you can select the lists you want to generate. It may take some time for Spire to create the list, so do not be concerned if you have to wait for an hour.
Activities

It is important to plan and vary the activities that you do with your students. The following examples of activities offer some options and suggestions:

- **Ice-breaker**
  “I found a good icebreaker/way to learn everyone's name/take attendance was to ask everyone a question at the beginning of class. Questions were simple, like what is your favorite movie? Favorite type of food? Where would you go on vacation if you could go anywhere in the world? The first class session, I had them write the following information on an index card (for my reference):
  - Name
  - Year/Major
  - Hometown
  - Why they decided to take the course
  - Anything else they want me to know
  - If you could take three historical figures or famous people to dinner (alive or dead, together or separately), who would it be and why?
  Then I had them share that info (all but the info they wanted me personally to know and why they took the class) with the rest of the students.” (Julie Peterson)

- **Short papers in advance**
  “Asking students to send a short summary in advance works well. You can avoid endless hours of reading this material simply by pulling out two-three from each session, circling something on them, and then asking their authors to elaborate in discussion. If you mix up whose papers you single out each week, it casts the impression you are poring over each submission!” (Professor Weir)

- **Spontaneous papers**
  “The two-minute paper works well, in which you give students a literal two minutes to jot down their thoughts about the week's lectures and readings. Choose students randomly to share what they wrote.” (Professor Weir)

- **Spontaneous paper variation**
  “You can start class by having everyone write for a couple of minutes in response to a question (not necessarily to collect their responses, but to get them into the right headspace to start discussion). Start discussion by having them ask about take-aways or questions from lecture. Wrap up discussion (especially if you realize you’ve covered what you expected to do and have five minutes left) by asking everyone for their conclusion about what is most important about the material you’ve just been discussing... etc.” (Professor Heuer)

- **Primary source analysis**
  See page 27 (Julie Peterson and Matt Herera)

- **“Role-playing”**
  Example – “Imagine you are a founding member of one of these Civil Rights movement organizations: Red Power/American Indian Movement, Black Power/Black Panthers, Chicano/Latino Movement, Gay rights movement. Create
a manifesto stating your goals, the techniques you plan to use to achieve your
goals, and accomplishments you have achieved.” (Julie Peterson).

- **“Role-playing” variation**
  Example – “Imagine you belong to one of the following demographic groups in postwar America: GIs, women, African Americans, Builders. Where do you choose to live and work? How are you affected by postwar legislation like the GI Bill, the Federal Highway Act, and the implementation of federal agencies like HOLC and the FHA? Is suburbanization overall a positive or negative experience for you? What cultural trends do you see developing as a result of suburbanization?” (Julie Peterson)

- **Drawing**
  “As a synthesis activity after the midterm, I broke students up into teams of two-four (three worked best) and tasked them with drawing a picture representing what a natural philosopher looked like, how they did their research, how they described nature/the heavens/sickness, etc. Students got remarkably into it and produced really thoughtful drawings they presented to the class. I then collected and reused their drawings as a starting point for the cumulative final review.” (Sara Patton)

- **Break students into groups**
  “I always found that splitting students up into small groups worked best to foster discussion. They were more likely to get deeper into the text or class material, even the students who maybe hadn't done all the reading etc. Sometimes I had them answer a set of questions and turn them in to me, just to hold them accountable, but mostly I would just have each group present the answer or summarize what they had discussed in front of the other students.” (Julie Peterson)

Reproduced from Elizabeth F. Barkley’s *Student Engagement Techniques: A Handbook for College Faculty* (2010):

- **Summary of another student’s response**
  This privileges the speaking student’s response, suggesting that learning is a shared endeavor, and encouraged good listening habits by the responding student.

- **Quotations**
  A quotation is assigned to each member of the group, who then each respond and share their quote.

- **Stations**
  Groups of students rotate between stations or “exhibits.” The “exhibits” can be minimal: a short reading to discuss or objects; or more intensive: with audio or visual media to interact with.

- **Jigsaw**
  Students work in homogenous groups to become experts on a topic (with each group working on a different topic). After each group member is comfortable with the material, students switch into heterogeneous groups and teach their group about the topic.
• **Believing and doubting**
  First, small groups respond empathetically to a reading (this is the believing part). They can reread the article from the doubting side, pointing out anything that might not be true, likely, or trustworthy. You can conclude by having students consider why the author is writing and for whom.

• **Letter writing**
  Students choose two figures and then write a letter to figure one as figure two.

• **Think pair share**
  Students work individually, then compare work with a partner, synthesizing a joint solution to share with the class.

• **Circular response**
  Each student gets a chance to express their thoughts on a prompt, but must begin with a summary of the previous speaker. By moving around the circle, students are sure to have a chance to participate.

**Asking questions**

• **Open-ended questions**
  “Try to avoid straight question-and-answer format. Ask open-ended questions that encourage students to elaborate rather than simply give "the" answer. Encourage nuance by asking students why an issue matters and how many different levels of significance are embedded within it. Ask them also to explore points of view.” (Professor Weir)

• **Affective questions**
  “Some students respond better to affective questions. Ask them what they think and feel about an issue and why that's the case. Follow-up questions are good in most situations, but they are especially effective in affective questioning because at some point you need to move from how they feel about an issue to why it's important in the first place. A simple question that helps is: Why should others feel the way you do? What lessons did you draw that you want others to consider?” (Professor Weir)

• **Knowledge questions**
  “Can the students recall, identify, list information that was presented in a text or lesson plan? In other words, the basic information: who, what, when, here, how many. Discussions might often begin with knowledge questions.” (Reproduced from UMass Amherst Handbook for New Instructors)

• **Comprehension questions**
  “Can the students understand the meaning of the knowledge or information recalled?” (Reproduced from UMass Amherst Handbook for New Instructors)

• **Application questions**
  “Can students apply their knowledge and comprehension appropriately? Can they solve a problem with the knowledge? Predict the outcome of a certain event?” (Reproduced from UMass Amherst Handbook for New Instructors)

• **Synthesis questions**
  “Can students put together component parts to create new ideas?” (Reproduced from UMass Amherst Handbook for New Instructors)
• **Analysis questions**
  “Can students break information into component parts and see relationships as well as apply information to new situations?” (Reproduced from UMass Amherst Handbook for New Instructors)

• **Redirection**
  “Redirection is a discussion leader's best friend! When there is an opinion or interpretation on the table, pick someone at random and ask that person to comment on the original comment. Ask something such as: Can you add still another dimension to what X said? If they say, simply, that they ‘agree’ with X, ask them to state their reasons.” (Professor Weir)
4.2 Primary Source Analysis Worksheet

Primary Source Analysis Worksheet

What type of document is this? (Newspaper article, government report, poem, etc)

Document Date:

Author: Author’s Position/Title:

Who is the audience for this document?

What are three important points made by the author in this document? (Don’t quote here, try to put the author’s arguments and main points into your own words)

Why do you think the author wrote this document?

What evidence do you have for why it was written? Quote from the document.

List two things this document tells you about life in the United States at the time it was written.

Write a question to the author left unanswered by the document.
1.2 What Does It Mean to Think Historically?

By Thomas Andrews and Flannery Burke
January 2007

Introduction
When we started working on Teachers for a New Era, a Carnegie-sponsored initiative designed to strengthen teacher training, we thought we knew a thing or two about our discipline. As we began reading such works as Sam Wineburg's *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts*, however, we encountered an unexpected challenge. If our understandings of the past constituted a sort of craft knowledge, how could we distill and communicate habits of mind we and our colleagues had developed through years of apprenticeship, guild membership, and daily practice to university students so that they, in turn, could impart these habits in K–12 classrooms?

In response, we developed an approach we call the "five C's of historical thinking." The concepts of change over time, causality, context, complexity, and contingency, we believe, together describe the shared foundations of our discipline. They stand at the heart of the questions historians seek to answer, the arguments we make, and the debates in which we engage. These ideas are hardly new to professional historians. But that is precisely their value: They make our implicit ways of thought explicit to the students and teachers whom we train. The five C's do not encompass the universe of historical thinking, yet they do provide a remarkably useful tool for helping students at practically any level learn how to formulate and support arguments based on primary sources, as well as to understand and challenge historical interpretations related in secondary sources. In this article, we define the five C's, explain how each concept helps us to understand the past, and provide some brief examples of how we have employed the five C's when teaching teachers. Our approach is necessarily broad and basic, characteristics well suited for a foundation upon which we invite our colleagues from kindergartens to research universities to build.

Change over Time
The idea of change over time is perhaps the easiest of the C's to grasp. Students readily acknowledge that we employ and struggle with technologies unavailable to our forebears, that we live by different laws, and that we enjoy different cultural pursuits. Moreover, students also note that some aspects of life remain the same across time. Many Europeans celebrate many of the same holidays that they did three or four hundred years ago, for instance, often using the same rituals and words to mark a day's significance. Continuity thus comprises an integral part of the idea of change over time.

Students often find the concept of change over time elementary. Even individuals who claim to despise history can remember a few dates and explain that some preceded or followed others. At any educational level, timelines can teach change over time as well as the selective process that leads people to pay attention to some events while ignoring others. In our U.S. survey class, we often ask students to interview family and friends and write a paper explaining how their family's history has intersected with major events and trends that we are studying. By discovering their own family's past, students often see how individuals can make a difference and how personal history changes over time along with major events.
As historians of the American West and environmental historians, we often turn to maps to teach change over time. The same space represented in different ways as political power, economic structures, and cultural influences shift can often put in shocking relief the differences that time makes. The work of repeat photographers such as Mark Klett offers another compelling tool for teaching change over time. Such photographers begin with a historic landscape photograph, then take pains to re-take the shot from the same site, at the same angle, using similar equipment, and even under analogous conditions. While suburbs and industry have overrun many western locales, students are often surprised to see that some places have become more desolate and others have hardly changed at all. The exercise engages students with a non-written primary source, photographs, and demands that they reassess their expectations regarding how time changes.

Context
Some things change, others stay the same—not a very interesting story but reason for concern since history, as the best teachers will tell you, is about telling stories. Good story telling, we contend, builds upon an understanding of context. Given young people's fascination with narratives and their enthusiasm for imaginative play, pupils (particularly elementary school students) often find context the most engaging element of historical thinking. As students mature, of course, they recognize that the past is not just a playful alternate universe. Working with primary sources, they discover that the past makes more sense when they set it within two frameworks. In our teaching, we liken the first to the floating words that roll across the screen at the beginning of every Star Wars film. This kind of context sets the stage; the second helps us to interpret evidence concerning the action that ensues. Texts, events, individual lives, collective struggles—all develop within a tightly interwoven world.

Historians who excel at the art of storytelling often rely heavily upon context. Jonathan Spence's Death of Woman Wang, for example, skillfully recreates 17th-century China by following the trail of a sparsely documented murder. To solve the mystery, students must understand the time and place in which it occurred. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich brings colonial New England to life by concentrating on the details of textile production and basket making in Age of Homespun. College courses regularly use the work of both authors because they not only spark student interest, but also hone students' ability to describe the past and identify distinctive elements of different eras.

Imaginative play is what makes context, arguably the easiest, yet also, paradoxically, the most difficult of the five C's to teach. Elementary school assignments that require students to research and wear medieval European clothes or build a California mission from sugar cubes both strive to teach context. The problem with such assignments is that they often blur the lines between reality and make-believe. The picturesque often trumps more banal or more disturbing truths. Young children may never be able to get all the facts straight. As one elementary school teacher once reminded us, "We teach kids who still believe in Santa Claus." Nonetheless, elementary school teachers can be cautious in their re-creations, and, most of all, they can be comfortable telling students when they don't know a given fact or when more research is necessary. That an idea might require more thought or more research is a valuable lesson at any age. The desire to
recreate a world sometimes drives students to dig more deeply into their books, a reaction few teachers lament.

In our own classes, we have taught context using an assignment that we call "Fact, Fiction, or Creative Memory." In this exercise, students wrestle with a given source and determine whether it is primarily a work of history, fiction, or memory. We have asked students to bring in a present-day representation of 1950s life and explain what it teaches people today about life in 1950s America. Then, we have asked the class to discuss if the representation is a historically fair depiction of the era. We have also assigned textbook passages and Don DeLillo's *Pafko at the Wall*, then asked students to compare them to decide which offers stronger insights into the character of Cold War America. Each of these assignments addresses context, because each asks students to think about the distinctions between representations of the past and the critical thinking about the past that is history. Moreover, each asks students to weave together a variety of sources and assess the reliability of each before incorporating them into a whole.

**Causality**

Historians use context, change over time, and causality to form arguments explaining past change. While scientists can devise experiments to test theories and yield data, historians cannot alter past conditions to produce new information. Rather, they must base their arguments upon the interpretation of partial primary sources that frequently offer multiple explanations for a single event. Historians have long argued over the causes of the Protestant Reformation or World War I, for example, without achieving consensus. Such uncertainty troubles some students, but history classrooms are at their most dynamic when teachers encourage pupils to evaluate the contributions of multiple factors in shaping past events, as well as to formulate arguments asserting the primacy of some causes over others.

To teach causality, we have turned to the stand-by activities of the history classroom: debates and role-playing. After arming students with primary sources, we ask them to argue whether monetary or fiscal policy played a greater role in causing the Great Depression. After giving students descriptions drawn from primary sources of immigrant families in Los Angeles, we have asked students to take on the role of various family members and explain their reasons for immigrating and their reasons for settling in particular neighborhoods. Neither exercise is especially novel, but both fulfill a central goal of studying history: to develop persuasive explanations of historical events and processes based on logical interpretations of evidence.

**Contingency**

Contingency may, in fact, be the most difficult of the C's. To argue that history is contingent is to claim that every historical outcome depends upon a number of prior conditions; that each of these prior conditions depends, in turn, upon still other conditions; and so on. The core insight of contingency is that the world is a magnificently interconnected place. Change a single prior condition, and any historical outcome could have turned out differently. Lee could have won at Gettysburg, Gore might have won in Florida, China might have inaugurated the world's first industrial revolution.

Contingency can be an unsettling idea—so much so that people in the past have often tried to mask it with myths of national and racial destiny. The Pilgrim William Bradford, for instance,
interpreted the decimation of New England's native peoples not as a consequence of smallpox, but as a literal godsend.  

Two centuries later, American ideologues chose to rationalize their unlikely fortunes—from the purchase of Louisiana to the discovery of gold in California—as their nation's "Manifest Destiny." Historians, unlike Bradford and the apologists of westward expansion, look at the same outcomes differently. They see not divine fate, but a series of contingent results possessing other possibilities.

Contingency demands that students think deeply about past, present, and future. It offers a powerful corrective to teleology, the fallacy that events pursue a straight-arrow course to a pre-determined outcome, since people in the past had no way of anticipating our present world. Contingency also reminds us that individuals shape the course of human events. What if Karl Marx had decided to elude Prussian censors by emigrating to the United States instead of France, where he met Frederick Engels? To assert that the past is contingent is to impress upon students the notion that the future is up for grabs, and that they bear some responsibility for shaping the course of future history.

Contingency can be a difficult concept to present abstractly, but it suffuses the stories historians tend to tell about individual lives. Futurology, however, might offer an even stronger tool for imparting contingency than biography. Mechanistic views of history as the inevitable march toward the present tend to collapse once students see how different their world is from any predicted in the past.

**Complexity**

Moral, epistemological, and causal complexity distinguish historical thinking from the conception of "history" held by many non-historians. Re-enacting battles and remembering names and dates require effort but not necessarily analytical rigor. Making sense of a messy world that we cannot know directly, in contrast, is more confounding but also more rewarding.

Chromecless distill intricate historical processes into a mere catalogue, while nostalgia conjures an uncomplicated golden age that saves us the trouble of having to think about the past. Our own need for order can obscure our understanding of how past worlds functioned and blind us to the ways in which myths of rosy pasts do political and cultural work in the present. Reveling in complexity rather than shying away from it, historians seek to dispel the power of chronicle, nostalgia, and other traps that obscure our ability to understand the past on its own terms.

One of the most successful exercises we have developed for conveying complexity in all of these dimensions is a mock debate on Cherokee Removal. Two features of the exercise account for the richness and depth of understanding that it imparts on students. First, the debate involves multiple parties; the Treaty and Anti-Treaty Parties, Cherokee women, John Marshall, Andrew Jackson, northern missionaries, the State of Georgia, and white settlers each offer a different perspective on the issue. Second, students develop their understanding of their respective positions using the primary sources collected in *Cherokee Removal: A Brief History with Documents* by Theda Perdue and Michael Green. While it can be difficult to assess what students learn from such exercises, we have noted anecdotally that, following the exercise, students seem much less comfortable referring to "American" or "Indian" positions as monolithic identities.
Conclusion
Our experiments with the five C's have confronted us with several challenges. These concepts offer a fluid tool for engaging historical thought at multiple levels, but they can easily degenerate into a checklist. Students who favor memorization over analysis seem inclined to recite the C's without necessarily understanding them. Moreover, as habits of mind, the five C's develop only with practice. Though primary and secondary schools increasingly emphasize some aspects of these themes, particularly the use of primary sources as evidence, more attention to the five C's with appropriate variations over the course of K–12 education would help future citizens not only to care about history, but also to contemplate it. It is our hope that this might help students see the past not simply as prelude to our present, nor a list of facts to memorize, a cast of heroes and villains to cheer and boo, nor as an itinerary of places to tour, but rather as an ideal field for thinking long and hard about important questions.

—Flannery Burke and Thomas Andrews are both assistant professors of history and Teachers for a New Era faculty members at California State University at Northridge. Burke is working on a book for the University Press of Kansas tentatively entitled Longing and Belonging: Mabel Dodge Luhan and Greenwich Village's Avant-Garde in Taos. Andrews is completing a manuscript for Harvard University Press, tentatively entitled Ludlow: The Nature of Industrial Struggle in the Colorado Coalfields.

Notes


It was the end of my first semester teaching journalism at American University. The students had left for winter break. As a rookie professor, I sat with trepidation in my office on a December day to electronically post my final grades.

My concern was more about completing the process correctly than anything else. It took an hour to compute and type in the grades for three classes, and then I hit "enter." That's when the trouble started.

In less than an hour, two students challenged me. Mind you, there had been no preset posting time. They had just been religiously checking the electronic bulletin board that many colleges now use.

"Why was I given a B as my final grade?" demanded a reporting student via e-mail. "Please respond ASAP, as I have never received a B during my career here at AU and it will surely lower my GPA."

I must say I was floored. Where did this kid get the audacity to so boldly challenge a professor? And why did he care so much? Did he really think a prospective employer was going to ask for his GPA?

I checked the grades I'd meticulously kept on the electronic blackboard. He'd missed three quizzes and gotten an 85 on two of the three main writing assignments. There was no way he was A material. I let the grade mar his GPA because he hadn't done the required work.

I wasn't so firm with my other challenger. She tracked me down by phone while I was still in my office. She wanted to know why she'd received a B-plus. Basically, it was because she'd barely said a word in class, so the B-plus was subjective. She harangued me until, I'm ashamed to admit, I agreed to change her grade to an A-minus. At the time, I thought, "Geez, if it means that much to you, I'll change it." She thanked me profusely, encouraging me to have a happy holiday.

Little did I know the pressure was just beginning.

The students were relentless. During the spring semester, they showed up at my office to insist I reread their papers and boost their grades. They asked to retake tests they hadn't done well on. They bombarded me with e-mails questioning grades. More harassed me to change their final grade. I began to wonder if I was doing something wrong, sending out some sort of newbie signal that I could be pushed around. Then I talked to other professors in the School of Communication. They all had stories.

My colleague Wendy Swallow told me about one student who had managed to sour her Christmas break one year. Despite gaining entry into AU’s honors program, the student missed
assignments in Swallow's newswriting class and slept through her midterm. Slept through her midterm! Then she begged for lenience.

"I let her take it again for a reduced grade," Swallow says, "but with the warning that if she skipped more classes or missed more deadlines, the midterm grade would revert to the F she earned by missing it. She then skipped the last three classes of the semester and turned in all her remaining assignments late. She even showed up late for her final."

Swallow gave the student a C-minus, which meant she was booted out of the honors program. The student was shocked. She called Swallow at home hysterical about being dropped from the program. To Swallow, the C-minus was a gift. To the student, an undeserved lump of Christmas coal.

"She pestered me for several days by phone," says Swallow, who did not relent and suggested the student file a formal grievance. She didn't. "The whole exchange, though, made for a very unpleasant break. Now I wait to post my grades until the last minute before leaving for the semester, as by then most of the students are gone, and I'm less likely to get those instantaneous complaints."

Another colleague told me about a student she had failed. "He came back after the summer trying to convince me to pass him because other professors just gave him a C," says Leena Jayaswal, who teaches photography. Never mind that he didn't do her required work.

John Watson, who teaches journalism ethics and communications law at American, has noticed another phenomenon: Many students, he says, believe that simply working hard -- though not necessarily doing excellent work -- entitles them to an A. "I can't tell you how many times I've heard a student dispute a grade, not on the basis of in-class performance," says Watson, "but on the basis of how hard they tried. I appreciate the effort, and it always produces positive results, but not always the exact results the student wants. We all have different levels of talent."

It's a concept that many students (and their parents) have a hard time grasping. Working hard, especially the night before a test or a paper due date, does not necessarily produce good grades.

"At the age of 50, if I work extremely hard, I can run a mile in eight minutes," says Watson. "I have students who can jog through a mile in seven minutes and barely sweat. They will always finish before me and that's not fair. Or is it?"

Last September, AU's Center for Teaching Excellence hosted a lunchtime forum to provide faculty members tips on how to reduce stressful grade confrontations. I eagerly attended.

The advice we were given was solid: Be clear upfront about how you grade and what is expected, and, when possible, use a numerical grading system rather than letter grades. If the grade is an 89, write that on the paper rather than a B-plus.

"The key," said AU academic counselor Jack Ramsay, "is to have a system of grading that is as transparent as possible."
Yet even the most transparent grading system won't eliminate our students' desperate pursuit of A's. Of the 20 teachers who came to the session, most could offer some tale of grade harassment.

"Most of the complaints that colleagues tell me about come from B students," said James Mooney, special assistant to the dean for academic affairs in the College of Arts and Sciences. "They all want to know why they didn't get an A. Is there something wrong with a B?"

Apparently there is. "Certainly there are students who are victims of grade inflation in secondary school," said Mooney. "They come to college, and the grading system is much more rigorous. That's one of the most difficult things to convey to the students. If you're getting a B, you're doing well in a course."

But his interpretation is rarely accepted by students or their parents. And the pressure on professors to keep the A's coming isn't unique to AU. It's endemic to college life, according to Stuart Rojstaczer, a Duke University professor who runs a Web site called Gradeinflation.com. At Duke and many other colleges, A's outnumber B's, and C's have all but disappeared from student transcripts, his research shows.

Last spring, professors at Princeton University declared war on grade inflation, voting to slash the number of A's they award to 25 percent of all grades. At Harvard, where half of the grades awarded are A's, the university announced that it would cut the number of seniors graduating with honors from 91 percent to about 50 percent.

Despite those moves, Rojstaczer doesn't think it will be easy to reverse the rising tide of A's. He points out that in 1969, a quarter of the grades handed out at Duke were C's. By 2002, the number of C's had dropped to less than 10 percent.

Rojstaczer, who teaches environmental science, acknowledged in an op-ed piece he wrote for The Post two years ago that he rarely hands out C's, "and neither do most of my colleagues. And I can easily imagine a time when I'll say the same thing about B's."

Arthur Levine, president of Columbia University Teacher's College and an authority on grading, traces what's going on to the Vietnam War. "Men who got low grades could be drafted," Levine says. "The next piece was the spread of graduate schools where only A's and B's were passing grades. That soon got passed on to undergraduates and set the standard."

And then there's consumerism, he says. Pure and simple, tuition at a private college runs, on average, nearly $28,000 a year. If parents pay that much, they expect nothing less than A's in return. "Therefore, if the teacher gives you a B, that's not acceptable," says Levine, "because the teacher works for you. I expect A's, and if I'm getting B's, I'm not getting my money's worth."

Rojstaczer agrees: "We've made a transition where attending college is no longer a privilege and an honor; instead college is a consumer product. One of the negative aspects of this transition is that the role of a college-level teacher has been transformed into that of a service employee."
Levine argues that we "service employees" are doing students a disservice if we cave in to the demand for top grades. "One of the things an education should do is let you know what you do well in and what you don't," he says. "If everybody gets high grades, you don't learn that."

But, as I'd already seen, many students aren't interested in learning that lesson -- and neither are their parents. When AU administrator James Mooney polled professors about grade complaints, he was appalled to learn that some overwrought parents call professors directly to complain. "One colleague told me he got a call from the mother of his student and she introduced herself by saying that she and her husband were both attorneys," said Mooney. "He thought it was meant to intimidate him."

Though I haven't received any menacing phone calls from parents, Mom and Dad are clearly fueling my students' relentless demand for A's. It's a learned behavior. I know, because I'm guilty of inflicting on my son the same grade pressure that now plays out before me as a university professor.

Last fall when my Arlington high school senior finally got the nerve to tell me that he'd gotten a C in the first quarter of his AP English class, I did what any self-respecting, grade-obsessed parent whose son is applying to college would do. I cried. Then I e-mailed his teacher and made an appointment for the three of us to meet. My son's teacher was accommodating. She agreed that if my son did A work for the second quarter, colleges would see a B average for the two quarters, not that ruinous C.

There's a term for the legions of parents like me. The parents who make sure to get the teacher's e-mail and home phone number on Back to School Night. The kind who e-mail teachers when their child fails a quiz. The kind who apply the same determination to making sure their child excels academically that they apply to the professional world.

We are called "helicopter parents" because we hover over everything our kids do like Secret Service agents guarding the president. (My son refers to me as an Apache attack helicopter, and he's Fallujah under siege.) Only we aren't worried about our kids getting taken out by wild-eyed assassins. We just want them to get into a "good" (whatever that means) college.

"Parents today have this intense investment in seeing their kids do well in school," says Peter Stearns, provost at George Mason University and author of Anxious Parenting: A History of Modern Childrearing in America. "This translates into teachers feeling direct and indirect pressure to keep parents off their backs by handing out reasonably favorable grades and making other modifications, like having up to 18 valedictorians."

High school administrators who haven't made those modifications sometimes find themselves defending their grading policies in court. Two years ago, a senior at New Jersey's Moorestown High School filed a $2.7 million lawsuit after she was told she'd have to share being valedictorian with another high-achieving student. A similar episode occurred in Michigan, where a Memphis High School senior who'd just missed being valedictorian claimed in a lawsuit that one of his A's should have been an A-plus.
That hyperconcern about grades and class rankings doesn't disappear when kids finally pack for college. Along with their laptops and cell phones, these students bring along the parental anxiety and pressure they've lived with for 18 years.

One of my students, Rachael Scorca, says that her parents have always used good grades as an incentive. And they've continued to do so during college. "In high school, my social life and curfew revolved around A's," explains Scorca, a broadcast journalism major. "I needed over a 90 average in order to go out during the week and keep my curfew as late as it was. Once college came and my parents couldn't control my hours or effort, they started controlling my bank account. If I wasn't getting good grades, they wouldn't put money in my account, and, therefore, I wouldn't have a social life."

But most of my students tell me the pressure to get top grades doesn't come from their parents any longer. They've internalized it. "I'd say most of the pressure just comes from my personal standards," says Molly Doyle. "It's also something I take pride in. When people ask me how my grades are, I like being able to tell them that I've got all A's and B's."

During my second semester of teaching, I received this e-mail from a student who'd taken my fall class on "How the News Media Shape History" and wasn't satisfied with his grade. He (unsuccessfully) tried bribery.

"Professor. I checked my grade once I got here and it is a B," he wrote. "I have to score a grade better than a B+ to keep my scholarship and I have no idea how I ended up with a B. In addition, to that I have brought you something from The GREAT INDIAN CONTINENT."

I invited him to come to my office so I could explain why he'd gotten a B, but after several broken appointments, he faded away.

Other students were more persistent, particularly a bright young man who'd been in the same class as the briber. He'd gotten an A-minus and made it clear in an e-mail he wasn't happy with it: "I have seen a number of the students from the class, and we inevitably got to talking about it. I had assumed that you are a tough grader and that earning an A-minus from you was a difficult task, but upon talking to other students, it appears that that grade was handed out more readily than I had thought. Not that other students did not deserve a mark of that caliber, but I do feel as though I added a great deal to the class. I feel that my work, class participation, and consistency should have qualified me for a solid A."

When I ignored the e-mail, he pestered me a second time: "I know it's a great pain in the ass to have an A-minus student complain, but I'm starting to wonder about the way grades are given. I would be very curious to know who the A students were. While other students may have outdone me with quiz grades, I made up for it with participation and enthusiasm. I really feel that I deserved an A in your class. If I was an A-minus student, I assume that you must have handed out a lot of C's and D's. I don't mean to be a pain -- I have never contested anything before. I feel strongly about this, though."
I shouldn’t have done it, but I offered to change the grade. My student was thrilled. He wrote, "With grade inflation being what it is and the levels of competition being so high, students just can't afford to be hurt by small things. I thought that you did a great job with the course."

But when I completed the required paperwork, the grade change was rejected by a university official. Though no one questioned me the first time I did it, grades can be changed only if they are computed incorrectly. "How fair is it to change his grade?" an assistant dean asked me. "What about other kids who might be unhappy but didn't complain?"

I e-mailed my student to let him know that he would have to live with an A-minus. "The gods who make these decisions tell me that they rejected it because it's not considered fair to all the other students in the class," I wrote. "The grade you got was based on a numerical formula, and you can only change a grade if you made a mathematical error. I'm sorry."

"That seems illogical to me," he e-mailed back. "If a student feels that a grade was inappropriate and wishes to contest that grade, that student obviously must contact the person who gave it to them. Who was I supposed to contact? What was the process that I was to follow? The lack of logic in all this never fails to amaze me!"

I told him whom to contact. I'm not sure if he ever followed through, but I saw him recently and he smiled and stopped to talk. Nothing was mentioned about the grade.

The day before this spring semester's grades were due I bumped into another professor racing out of the building. What’s the hurry? I asked.

She told me she had just posted her grades and wanted to get off campus fast. But she wasn't quick enough. Within eight minutes, a B-minus student had called to complain.

A few hours after I entered my final grades, I got an e-mail from a student, at 1:44 a.m. She was unhappy with her B. She worked so hard, she told me. This time, though, I was prepared. I had the numbers to back me up, and I wouldn't budge on her grade. No more Professor Softie.

Alicia C. Shepard is a journalist-in-residence at American University and is working on a book about Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein.
HIST 111 – Discussion Section AD
10:10 – 11:00am – Morrill Sci. Ctr. (III) rm. 319

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39
## Paper Grading Rubric

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<tr>
<th>Exceeds Expectations (10)</th>
<th>Meets Expectations (6-9)</th>
<th>Approaching Expectations (5-7)</th>
<th>Does Not Meet Expectations (0-5)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Intro/Thesis (10%)</strong></td>
<td>Thesis clearly and provocatively advances an original argument; introduction engages the reader and clearly outlines paper</td>
<td>Clear and specific thesis that sets up the central argument(s); introduction clearly outlines the paper</td>
<td>Thesis vague or not central to implied argument(s); introduction is clear but incompletely outlines paper</td>
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<td><strong>Conclusion (5%)</strong></td>
<td>Conclusions critically reflect on the topic and positions it within arguments from the course</td>
<td>Conclusions are convincing and function to position paper within an external context</td>
<td>Conclusions superficial or unconvincing; relevance of the paper is not clear</td>
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<td><strong>Structure/Length (15%)</strong></td>
<td>Paper structure is fluid and guides reader through arguments; scope of paper is clearly defined and appropriate to the arguments; within length requirements</td>
<td>Paper is organized in a coherent and logical manner; scope of paper is appropriate; within 15% of length requirements</td>
<td>Paper inconsistently organized but attempts to guide reader through arguments; scope of paper may be too broad/narrow; within 20% of length requirements</td>
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<td><strong>Evidence (25%)</strong></td>
<td>Engages with arguments from course readings; synthesizes and critiques the arguments from readings in a nuanced manner; draws on evidence from multiple different weeks of material</td>
<td>Appropriately cites course readings and outside materials to develop arguments; demonstrates comprehension of arguments and distinguishes argument from opinion</td>
<td>Uses sources inconsistently; arguments inconsistently supported by evidence; may contain unsubstantiated opinion</td>
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<td>Historical Analysis (35%)</td>
<td>Shows thorough understanding of the topic and goes beyond recitation of facts; may have minor factual or conceptual inconsistencies</td>
<td>Shows basic understanding of ideas and information; may have some factual, interpretive, or conceptual errors</td>
<td>Lacks an understanding of topic; no clear historical analysis</td>
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<td>Critically and insightfully engages topic; historical analysis is central to argument; considers counter-arguments</td>
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<td>Mechanics (10%)</td>
<td>Grammar, punctuation, spelling are correct; formatting follows Chicago Manual of Style conventions*</td>
<td>Grammar, punctuation, and spelling mostly correct; evidence of proof reading; formatting generally consistent with Chicago Style</td>
<td>Grammar, spelling, or punctuation interfere with readability; little or no attempt to use style conventions</td>
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<td>Some grammatical, punctuation, or spelling errors; appears not to have been proof read; formatting inconsistent</td>
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*A good resource to help with your writing - [http://writing-program.uchicago.edu/resources/collegewriting/](http://writing-program.uchicago.edu/resources/collegewriting/)*
### 5.4 Paper Comments – HI 181

**Comments on paper by ________________________________**

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<tr>
<th>Introduction and conclusion</th>
<th>Strong</th>
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<td>Paper has a clear, precise focus (thesis)</td>
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<td>Introduction indicates what the body of the paper will contain</td>
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<td>Introduction and conclusion explain why the topic is interesting and important</td>
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<th>Body of the paper</th>
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<td>Paper uses sources effectively, with 5 quotations and 5 other citations</td>
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<td>Each paragraph is focused on one topic and discusses it</td>
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<td>Taken together, paragraphs form a coherent and convincing argument</td>
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<th>Style and mechanics</th>
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<td>Sentences are clear</td>
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<td>Paper has proper notes and bibliography</td>
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<td>Mechanics—spelling, grammar, punctuation are correct</td>
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| Overall | |
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| GRADE: | |
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**The strongest aspect of this paper is . . .**

**The aspect that could use the most attention is . . .**

**Any other comments . . .**
5.5 Essay Commentary

ESSAY COMMENTARY

Student: ________________________

Commend:

____ Well-defined thesis
____ Clear development of topic
____ Effective use of examples
____ Good use of detail
____ Logical and convincing
____ Well-structured
____ Stylistically strong
____ Well-written
____ Clean copy
____ Command of topic
____ Good use of secondary sources
____ Good use of primary sources
____ Analytical/original
____ Strong conclusion
____ Well-cited/documented

Recommend:

____ Need stronger thesis
____ Narrow broaden topic
____ Use more examples
____ Need to explain more
____ Correct logic inconsistencies
____ Reorganize for flow/clarity
____ Consider mood/tone changes
____ Fix awkward prose/syntax
____ Needs editing/proofreading
____ Fact checking and detail needed
____ Broaden use of sources
____ Use more primary sources
____ Probe topic more deeply
____ Don’t leave unresolved issues
____ Internal ID of speakers needed
____ Need to document more carefully

Additional Comments:
### HIST 170 – Indigenous Peoples of North America

Midterm Examination

*Wednesday, October 21 2015*

Name ________________________________  Section __________________

Grade: ____________________________

Comments:

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Student information sheet

Note: Completing this sheet is optional. If you feel uncomfortable filling out any part, leave it blank.

Name

Major, or if undeclared, areas of interest

Home town/H.S.

Reason(s) for taking this course

Other courses you're taking this semester

Any reasons you might miss class (give dates if possible)

Your favorite book

Anything else you would like us to know about you
6.2 Class Participation Reflection

Class Discussion Guidelines

Instructions: Please take a few minutes to reflect on the factors that help you to participate in class discussions. Think back to other classes you’ve been in. What happened in those classrooms that encouraged you to participate – or, what happened in those classrooms that discouraged you from participating? Think in particular about your role in those classrooms as well as your classmates’ and the instructor’s roles. Then, answer the following questions.

1. What is one thing you can do to prepare yourself to participate in class discussions?

2. What is one thing your classmates can do that will encourage you to participate?

3. What is one thing your instructor can do to encourage all students to participate?

You do not have to put your name on this slip, but I will collect them to learn more about how I can make our class discussions engaging, productive, and safe for all students.
Pro-tips for **Passing** a History Examination!

HIST 111 – Shay Olmstead

- Answer the question that is asked
  a. Stay on topic
  b. Boil your answer down into a single 1-2 sentence Thesis Statement

- Provide detailed examples that support your argument
  a. At least two, but no more than three
  b. Explain and expand upon your answers, & relate them to your thesis
  c. Cite your sources, generally – i.e. (lecture), (textbook), (discussion)
     ** It helps to pick examples you know a lot about **

- Organize your argument for best effect
  a. Have a thesis statement in an opening / introductory paragraph
  b. Separate each idea into its own paragraph
  c. Have a conclusion that ties everything together
  d. Transition words are your friends!
     ** I should be able to understand where your argument is going**

- Mechanics – don’t stress, but don’t throw out
  a. Overall, your essay essay must be READABLE:
     i. Legible handwriting
     ii. Free from major/confusing grammatical errors
     iii. Be professional – don’t abbreviate, use emoticons, etc.

**And the single most important suggestion:**

- Treat the reader (that’s me) like they are an *absolute idiot*
  a. Do not make assumptions about my knowledge of the events
  b. Spell out everything that is relevant to your argument
  c. Be explicit in explaining why your example is relevant, or why your point makes sense
  d. Explain your thinking in detail!
6.4 “How to Write a Good Essay”

(From Professor Ogilvie's History 181, Spring 2013)

HOW TO WRITE A GOOD ESSAY

When you answer an essay question in an examination, it's important to be clear and direct. Since you don't have a lot of time, it's tempting to just start writing what you think. You should resist that temptation. If you just start writing, you're likely to express yourself in a confused and disjointed way, even if you have a good answer to the question.

Instead, you should take a moment to plan your answer. Your first paragraph should set out, in a schematic form, the points you want to raise in your essay. There are two reasons for doing this. First, it means that you don't need to think about topic sentences for your paragraphs: you will already have thought about them. Second, if you run out of time to finish the essay, your first paragraph will indicate to the grader that you have at least thought about a point, even if you didn't have time to develop it. Some students find it helpful to write a mini-outline on a piece of scrap paper before they start to answer an essay question. For this exam, we suggest outlining the answers for all the questions in advance.

In answering an essay question, just as in writing a paper, you should not try to cram in everything you know, regardless of its relevance. Instead, you should think about which facts are relevant to answering the question and what they mean. Since the exam is closed-book, you do not need to provide exact quotations or page references, but you should indicate the source of your information (i.e. "Newton defined scientific knowledge..."). To support your argument, you should give precise examples from the lectures and readings. The questions point out some of the relevant supporting facts, but you should draw others from the readings and lectures.

We understand that most of you are not history majors and that this is probably your first course in history of science. What we expect is that you show us (1) that you know the stories and concepts from readings and lectures, (2) that you understand the explanations that Pickstone, Bowler and Morus, and I have offered, (3) that you can express the reasons that those explanations seem sensible, and (4) that if you disagree with any of those explanations, you will offer good reasons for disagreeing.

EVALUATION

The exams will not be graded on a curve or against each other. They will be evaluated according to the following standards of form and content: I presume that a grade of B indicates satisfactory mastery of the course material. Grades below B reflect decreasing mastery, while grades above B indicate exceptional or outstanding knowledge and ability. Following those principles, the essays will be marked as follows:

- A B essay is clearly organized, with a thesis and at least two supporting points. It will show knowledge of course material insofar as it is useful for supporting the thesis. The thesis should address the question that is posed.
- An essay that is disorganized, has no thesis, has little supporting evidence, or makes serious factual errors will receive a lower grade.
- Essays that show exceptional command of the course material and especially clear and precise argumentation will be graded A or A-.

Short answer questions will be graded on two criteria: the short answer must (1) correctly define the term and (2) indicate its significance for the history of science and technology. A good short identification for the term “prism” might be, “triangular glass solid used by Isaac Newton to study the white light and determine that it was composed of distinct colors.”

HOW TO STUDY FOR THIS EXAM

Review your lecture notes and the outlines on the website. Review your response papers, and decide whether you think you were right. Work out the relationships between the essay questions and the list of names and concepts. Skim, quickly, all the assigned readings to review the main points. Use the indexes in the books to quickly refresh yourself on specific points.

If you use reference works to study, such as Britannica Online or Wikipedia, keep two principles in mind. (1) In the history of science, concepts change. Knowing how entropy is defined today is not the
same as knowing what it meant in the 19th century and how it related to other concepts. (2) Reference works sometimes contain errors. So do textbooks, but if there’s a conflict between an assigned book and a reference work, the former wins out. As for Wikipedia, be careful; anyone can edit it, and sometimes, it’s clear that the editors are not very well informed about the subject.

Get together with classmates and discuss the essay questions and list of names and concepts. It’s OK to discuss answers before the exam, as long as you don’t exchange anything during the exam itself.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

Use the space below to jot down any questions you want to bring up in the review/discussion section.
7.1 Department Resources

Department Faculty and Staff
Your assigned professor is obviously an excellent ally and resource, but the rest of the department faculty are equally willing to offer advice and tips. Additionally, Amy Fleig (Office Manager), Mary Lashway (Graduate Program Assistant), Suzanne Bell (Undergraduate Program Assistant), Adam Howes (Human Resources and Finance Assistant), and Jessica Johnson (Outreach Director) are invaluable resources to you as a TA.

7.2 Campus Resources

Library
The UMass Libraries offer a variety of services and resources that may be helpful to you at a Teaching Assistant: http://www.library.umass.edu/services/writing-and-publication

Student Services

- **Turnitin - Plagiarism Prevention** The University Libraries support the "TurnIt-In" service, which matches writing against a database of other writings to detect potential plagiarism. See Turnitin for more information, or contact your turnitin@umass.edu.

- **RefWorks and Citation Management.** The University Libraries support "RefWorks", a personal bibliographic database and reference list generator. See Citation Management for more information, or contact your liaison librarian.

- **Citation Practice Workshops.** Librarians are available to meet with individual students and to conduct workshops in classes on citation practice, and citation management software (such as RefWorks, Zotero, etc.). Contact your liaison librarian for more information.

- **Writing Center.** The University offers a Writing Center, hosted in the Learning Common of the W.E.B. Du Bois Library (lower level), which offers peer-based support and feedback for writing. See the Writing Center for more information.

- **Graduate Students, and Theses and Dissertations.** The Scholarly Communication Office consults with graduate students on questions of copyright, citation, open access, and how to disseminate their publications, including their theses and dissertations. Contact the Scholarly Communication Office for more information, at scholarworks@library.umass.edu.
Center for Teaching
The Center for Teaching offers a variety of services for graduate students and faculty alike, including:

- Hand-outs and readings on a number of teaching-related topics
- Guidance in developing a teaching portfolio
- Mid-Semester Teaching Assessments, which allow your students to anonymously provide feedback
- Consultation for syllabus or course development, grading, and a variety of other topics.

For additional information on the services offered by the Center for Teaching, visit http://www.umass.edu/ctfd/teaching/ta_support.shtml