

HSTAA 200 Discussion Group Syllabus

Section AC: Thursday 11:30-12:20, Smith 304

Section AF: Thursday 12:30-1:20, Mechanical Engineering Building 234

Jeff Brune, Teaching Assistant

Office: Smith 206A

email: jbrune@u.washington.edu

Office Hours: Monday 1:30-2:30, Wednesday 12:30-1:30, and by appointment

One of the main reasons for having a group discussion is to give you a chance to evaluate the material critically. That means that when you listen to the lectures and read the assignments, you should be asking questions about what is being presented and raise those questions in Thursday's discussion. What is the author's main point? How does the reading agree or conflict with Professor Gregory's lectures? How plausible is the author's argument? What would be other ways of studying this material? *Memorizing facts is not as important as learning how to think critically.* Don't be afraid to question your sources, including the assigned readings, Professor Gregory's lectures, and even your teaching assistant. ☺

For this section, I expect each student to do the following:

I. Come to Class Prepared to Speak

Everyone is expected to speak in class every week. This means that when you read, you should not just skim the material, but be thinking about the questions I have noted above. I recommend taking notes as you read, jotting down the author's arguments, questions you have, and, most importantly, your own evaluation of the material. You will be graded on you class participation and attendance (see below).

II. Show Respect Towards Each Other

I encourage students to challenge each others' beliefs, but please do so in a respectful way without attacking anyone personally.

III. Develop Your Writing Skills

Writing forces you to think critically and learn how to express yourself. In my opinion, it is the most important skill you can learn in college. I strongly encourage all students to use the history writing center. Make appointments in Smith 210-C, or call 543-5692. When writing assignments are due in a large class like this, the center usually gets booked, so make your appointments well in advance. Also, I will be happy to talk with you about assignments and look at preliminary drafts.

Finally, a word on attendance and grading. For the participation component of this course, I will give each student a grade every day: an A or B for those who speak, a C for those who attend but do not contribute to the discussion, and an F for those with an unexcused absence. This will count toward your final grade, and as it says on the main syllabus, you cannot pass this class without passing each of the course components, including discussion section. If for some reason you cannot be present, please notify me in advance and make arrangements to talk with me about the reading.