

## **Information about TA's in Professor Larry Adams' Online Courses**

### **This is how we do the History courses.**

**This is the information that is given to students on the Calendar. They are told that the Calendar is the key to the class and that all instructions, information, assignments, and exam dates are posted on the Calendar.**

#### **Assignment 1 – Prof. Adams**

I am the Professor for this course. I also have a teaching assistant who will help me with the course. His name is Luke Evans. He is highly qualified and is working on his Graduate Degree. He graduated from Baylor with a BA in History with High Honors. He will help primarily with the discussion questions. After learning a little about how the "Discussion board" works in this course, respond to the first Discussion posting. This is on the Bulletin Board and the Topic is 'Introduction'. This will be a request to tell us a little about yourself. This Introduction posting will not count as one of the graded discussions. You can always contact me by using the mail in this course or by posting a question on the "Main" topic board on the Discussions. You can also contact Luke if you have questions that you would like him to look at. The mail you send is private, however, the Bulletin Board is open for the class to see.

#### **Email sent by Luke Evans the first week of class:**

Hello everyone, welcome to HIS 1301. My name is Luke Evans and I am the TA for this semester. I am sending this as a guide for the discussion questions.

Prof. Adams has already outlined quite a bit about the discussions on the calendar and on the Discussion FAQs Bulletin Board.

I will just give you a few pointers and ideas as to what I am looking for on the discussion questions. The purpose of the discussions is to help you to THINK about history, rather than just do the reading and write an answer.

1. I am looking for a good understanding of the issues that you are to deal with in the question. Generally if you have done the reading and thought a little bit about the question, then you will do fine. Answering the question in a knowledgeable manner is easily the most important part of your answer.
2. I am looking for creativity and refreshing spins on the questions. This area is what generally puts a discussion into the "A" category.
3. I am looking for you to stay on topic and avoid going down "rabbit trails". Probably some of the questions you will have personal opinions on. And your worldview will undoubtedly have an effect on your responses. It is fine if you incorporate some of these things into your responses but make sure you stay on the topic and actually answer the question asked.

4. In your responses to other students, I am looking for responses and dialogues that will promote interest in the topic and that are well-thought through. For example, rather than just saying "I agree with your response", tell us all why you agree and why you disagree and give some EVIDENCE for your answer. Also, be sure that you are always courteous and professional in your interactions with other students. This is not a chat room, it is a college course, and I expect you to treat it as such.

There are 8 questions to answer over the semester, and the top 5 will be graded. These questions will end up totaling 20% of your grade. Each question will be worth up to 20 points, and the top 5 questions will be added together at the end of the semester for 1/5 of your grade (for example, if your top 5 discussion question grades are 4 "20's" and 1 "17" then your final discussion grade will be a 97, and that is 20% of your final average).

Be sure that you do well on these questions, but don't spend too much time on them either, because focusing on the tests is more important (especially since the tests are challenging). Also, to receive full credit on each question, you MUST post your own response to the question and also you MUST respond to AT LEAST 2 of your fellow student's responses to the question. This is meant to encourage discussion (hence the name "discussion question") among all of you. It is NOT meant for you to tell someone how bad you thought their response was. It is fine to disagree, but do so in a classy professional manner. If I feel that a response is not up to par in this area, I will not grade it.

These questions will hopefully challenge you and teach you a little bit about history. But most of all, I hope that you enjoy this section of the class.

Please email me regarding any questions you might have about the discussion questions or other issues. The first question will be posted on Monday of next week, so we will be starting up here pretty soon. Thanks.

Luke

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### **Assignment 1 – Prof. Adams**

I am the Professor for this course. I also have a teaching assistant who will help me with the course. His name is Stephen Terrell. He is highly qualified and is working on his Ph.D in Political Science. He has completed all of his course work and taken his

comprehensive exams. He only lacks his final dissertation. He will help primarily with the discussion questions. After learning a little about how the "Discussion board" works in this course, respond to the first Discussion posting. This is on the Discussion Board and the Topic is 'Introduction'. This will be a request to tell us a little about yourself. This Introduction posting will not count as one of the graded discussions. You can always contact me by using the mail in this course or by posting a question on the "Main" topic board on the Discussions. The mail you send is private, however, the Bulletin Board is open for the class to see.

**These Instructions are given to the students in an FAQ section on the Discussion Board. They are told to review the FAQ's for instructions on the discussion questions.**

### **Discussion Instructions and Information**

During each discussion period, we are looking for thoughtful discussion participation from those who have done the reading assignment. Our general expectation of what this looks like is one substantive response of a couple of paragraphs persuasively articulating your position on the main subject along with one to three shorter posts responding to the ideas and issues raised by others on the board.

The discussion participation should not look like an essay contest but more like an ongoing academic conversation that is more formal than everyday conversation or chat. To this end, try not to repeat what has already been said a number of times or simply agree with what someone else has said without adding something of your own. Don't be afraid to disagree with someone else's post; however, be careful not to make that someone the subject of your post. Instead, focus on the position or argument with which you disagree and offer persuasive evidence or reasoning to the contrary. Also, try to post early in the discussion period so others will have an opportunity to respond to your post.

Grading is done by going through and rating each of your responses. The highest rated response is considered your "key response." Although it is usually the case, there is no absolute rule that says your highest rated post will be a direct response to the discussion starter question. Points are then added to that score based on the quality of each of the next three highest rated responses. Therefore, for any one discussion period, only up to four responses can influence your grade. Finally, the automatic deductions, if any, are applied.