

Honors US History Summer Reading Assignment

As you all know, Honors courses are very demanding in and out of the classroom. In this class, there is a great deal of expectation that the students will be willing and able to complete a significant amount of work on their own. Accordingly, there is a summer reading and writing assignment required for the course. The assignment will be due the first day of class and if you fail to complete the assignment satisfactorily, you will not remain enrolled in the course.

Assignment

- You need to obtain and read Everyday Life in Early America by David Freeman Hawke. The book's ISBN number is 0-06-091251-0. As you read the book, please write a synopsis of each of the chapters in the book. The synopses should not be a plot summary, rather an analysis of the thesis of the chapter and the manner in which the author supports that thesis. The synopsis should be concise and may be completed in note form. As much as you can, read for ideas rather than for specific content. This will count as your first project grade for the course.
 - Our first day of class will be a discussion of the book. To that end, should be thinking about the following questions as you read:
 - Is there a singular identity of those who settled America?
 - What was the most important thing in colonial America, the individual or the community?
 - What values of colonial Americans are similar/different than "American" values today?
 - Have specific examples for each of the above.
- You will also need to obtain our primary text for the course, A People's History of the United States: 1492-Present by Howard Zinn (ISBN number 13: 978-0-06-083865-2). You need to read Chapters 1, 2, and 3 by the start of school. Our second day of class will be a discussion of this book. To that end, be prepared to discuss the following:
 - What is Zinn's purpose in writing the book?
 - How do the first three chapters support that purpose?
 - What are your reactions to the book so far?

If you have questions on the assignment, please feel free to email me over the course of the summer.

Following is a list of excellent historical movies. So when you are looking for a movie this summer, think to yourself why not watch something that is entertaining and will help me in Honors U.S. History.

Movies

The Patriot (Revolutionary War)
1776 (early America, Constitution)
The Last of the Mohicans (French and Indian War, early America)
Amistad (slave trade, early 1800's)
Lonesome Dove (frontier America)
Jerimiah Johnson (frontier America)
Dances with Wolves (frontier America, Native Americans)
Gettysburg (Civil War)
Glory (African-American soldiers in Civil War)
All Quiet on Western Front (WWI)
In Harm's Way (WWII)
Saving Private Ryan (WWII)
Patton (WWII)
The Right Stuff (space race)
Mississippi Burning (race relations)
Thirteen Days (Cuban Missile Crisis)
All The Presidents Men (Watergate)
Nixon (Watergate)
Born on the Fourth of July (Vietnam)
Good Morning Vietnam (Vietnam)

Television

This summer instead of watching Friends or The Simpsons reruns, watch one of these channels.

- History Channel
- A & E
- PBS

Radio

I know, who listens to talk radio? Check out these programs on NPR. You could also download the podcast and listen to them on your family vacation, perhaps with your family.

- This American Life
- Speaking of Faith
- All Things Considered
- The Moth