

Journal guidelines

Keeping a journal is an important part of this course. Here are some guidelines.

Physical format

Use a loose-leaf notebook. If you use a computer for your journal, print out the pages and put them in a loose-leaf notebook. That way you can bring the journal to class and to exams and hand it in on the days it is due. If you prefer a smaller format than the standard 8.5 x 11 notebook, that's fine. Just make sure you can insert pages.

Contents

Your journal for this course is not a diary. Rather, it is a tool for learning about the history of Europe in the late Renaissance and Reformation and for deepening your understanding of historical thinking more generally. Your entries should reflect this purpose. They should include each of the following kinds of entries:

1. Summaries of reading, if you don't take more traditional notes. Ideally you should keep summaries separate from the rest of the journal, but not everyone does what is ideal. **Make sure that you distinguish summaries from your own interpretations.** Otherwise you run the risk of inadvertent plagiarism, which is nonetheless plagiarism. A good summary should note the main point, important subordinate points, and the kind of evidence used (if appropriate). The summaries should be short; you can always go back to the readings themselves if you need more detail.

2. Questions about the readings. What do you still want to know after finishing the reading? What is unclear about it? What new questions does the reading raise in your mind? These questions will help you direct your future reading; you should bring them to class for discussion.

3. Reactions to the readings. Are you convinced? What are the implications of the author's claims? What is the author's point of view? How does the reading relate to what we have read before, and to what we have talked about in class? Does the readings help you answer any of the questions that were raised earlier?

4. Reactions to lectures and class discussions. Are you satisfied with what you learned? With your contributions to discussion? Have your questions been answered? If not, was it because they never came up, or because you didn't find the answer satisfactory? Note down other reactions as well.

5. Reflections on the course material. Go beyond the individual readings to reflect on the aspects of early modern European life that we are studying. How do they interrelate? What are the similarities and differences with modern European or American life, or with other aspects of history that you know?

Assessment

I will look at your journal three times during the semester: once early on, to give you feedback on whether your early entries seem appropriate, and then as each exam approaches, to give you substantive comment on your entries. The second and third times I will also give you a grade on the journal. The first grade will be tentative, the second firm, though I may take into account classroom participation if the journal doesn't show as much depth of comprehension as you show in class. The journal grade will account for 10% of your final course grade.