

Group Presentation Guidelines

I will provide a model for the group presentations in my handout and discussion of Moore, *Formation of a Persecuting Society*. Here are some more abstract guidelines that may help you too.

1. Short annotated bibliographies

Using the library research tools presented in class on Jan. 30, available online at <<http://people.umass.edu/ogilvie/492H/library.html>>, prepare a short (1-2 page) annotated bibliography on the subject and readings. The bibliography may include the following categories:

- Reviews of the assigned reading (essay reviews are especially helpful)
- Other books addressing the same themes, especially those that take a different approach or reach different conclusions
- Recent journal articles on the subject(s) of the book
- Primary sources in English, available at UMass or in the Four College libraries (including reliable online sources), that could be used to pursue research on the subject(s) of the book

If you can come up with other categories that seem relevant, you are welcome to include them. The annotations should be brief (a phrase or sentence) and indicate the nature of the review, book, article, or source.

2. Preparing material for class

Your annotated bibliography should be typed (*single-spaced!*), following the accepted bibliographic conventions for history (see the History Department style sheet, online, or Kate Turabian, *A manual for writers of term papers, theses, and dissertations*, 6th ed., bibliography style). You should prepare enough copies for everyone in class, including me and Tom. If you give a printout to me at the class meeting prior to your group discussion, I will have the history department photocopy them; otherwise, it is your group's responsibility to make enough copies.

3. Presenting and leading a discussion on the readings

Your responsibility in class is to present the readings and lead a discussion on them. A good presentation should introduce the book to the class. Everyone, of course, should have read it. But your group should read it especially carefully, with attention to the following questions:

- Is the book a monograph (a focused work on a specific subject, using a lot of primary sources), a synthesis or essay (broader, drawing mostly on secondary sources), or a textbook (very broad, using almost exclusively secondary sources)? What do you think was the intended audience of the book?
- *What* is the author writing about? (i.e., what are his or her subjects?)
- What *questions* does the author attempt to answer? (i.e., what phenomena does the book try to explain?)
- What is the historical *problem* that the book addresses? (i.e., why should we care?)
- What arguments does the author make? Are they plausible?
- What evidence does the author use? Is it adequate to support the arguments?
- How does the book relate to earlier attempts to explain the same phenomena? What does it contribute to our understanding of its subject?
- How does the book relate to later attempts to explain the same phenomena? What influence did it have on the historiography of its subject?

You need to know all this in order to present the book and lead a discussion, but you don't need to say it all. Your presentation should *summarize* the most important aspects of the book and *raise questions to discuss* about its approach and conclusions. In particular, you should think about how the book relates to the other material we have read and discussed in class; that is a good way to start a discussion that takes the book seriously but doesn't remain narrowly focused on its contents. It's good to read carefully and weigh the arguments and evidence used by the author, but it's also good to step back and consider the implications more broadly than the author does himself or herself.

Division of labor

The advantage of working in a group is that you can divide up tasks. For instance, one person might be assigned the task of tracking down book reviews, two might be charged with finding books and articles, one might look for primary sources in the Valley. You should review your results and decide whether they are adequate; if one person is having trouble, the others might assist him or her. But you shouldn't feel like each person has to do everything.

The same is true of analyzing the book for presentation and discussion. If a book has several themes, you might divide up the themes. Alternately, you might decide that one person should present the historical questions and problems that the author addresses, another should summarize the argument, and a third should raise questions about the evidence and its relation to the argument, while a fourth should discuss the book's place in historiography. You should divide up presentation and discussion leadership so that everyone in the group has more or less equal responsibility in the classroom. But each of you should feel free to help out the others—to add information, qualify a remark, or just help out if the speaker feels tongue-tied or gets nervous.

Assessment and grading

Half the grade for the presentation will be based on the thoroughness and accuracy of the handout that you prepare, and the judgment that you show in making selections. You will undoubtedly find more material than you can include in a 1-2 p. handout, so you will need to make choices about what to include. If I have questions about the choices you make, I will ask your group before I assign the grade.

The other half will be based on presentation and discussion leadership in class. I will consider the thoroughness and accuracy of your presentation of the book and the creativity and effectiveness of the ways you attempt to evoke (or provoke) a lively discussion. I know it is hard to lead a discussion, so I will take that into account!

Your grade will be assigned for the entire group, so work together. Exceptions will be made only if one or more group members are absent; absent members will get no credit for the presentation and leadership component.

If you believe that some members of the group did not make a good-faith effort to contribute, I will investigate. If there are *egregious* differences in the degree of contribution, I will adjust individual grades accordingly.