

First Self Assessment

As part of our in-class work, you will be required to hand in three 'self assessments' of your reading and oral participation. The bulk of the feedback you receive in this class, and in college in general, will be on written work. But in 'real life'—including the real life of academic historians—it is often just as important to express yourself aloud, in groups, through cogent points and probing questions.

I can judge your actual participation, but not how it aligns with your preparation, your understanding of the readings, and the dynamics in the class. So I want you to provide a short assessment of your own participation. This is not a self-assessment, with a hyphen: I am most emphatically not asking you to assess **yourself**. Rather, I am asking you to step back to assess your work and its place in a broader conversation.¹

This can be informal, but should attempt to engage with most of the following questions.

1. What have your most valuable contributions to class discussion been? What made them valuable? (Did they steer discussion to a fruitful area; anticipate a major theme; draw in a piece of evidence that everyone was ignoring; etc.)
2. Are there specific contributions or questions inside the classroom that you wish you could have made but did not? Why not?
3. What could **you** personally have done to make stronger contributions? Were there things that you read the wrong way, extenuating circumstances in some session,
4. How has the **classroom dynamic** encouraged or discouraged you from making the sorts of contributions you would like to?

Note that all of these questions are in the past tense. While these questions are obviously related to general goals for course evaluations, focus your assessment?

Grading

Responses will be letter graded.

The criteria used will include:

1. Does it highlight especially strong contributions that you have made? A strong paper will point to contributions that helped in the education of other students.
2. Does it reflect concretely on individual instances, not just the overall dynamic? (Not "I found the Foucault confusing;" more like "I had questions from p. 65 of the Foucault that I never raised because they seemed off topic with our discussion of p. xx.")
3. Does it reflect on shortcomings in a way that can be constructive going forward, or that highlight what would have been strong contributions had you been able to make it?
4. You are assessing your own place. Do you make sensible choices about where to focus?

¹This is a distinction, and way of making it, that I learned from John C. Savagian of Alverno College. "Using Student Self Assessment to Reinforce and Refine Student Learning Outcomes," American Historical Association, January 2020.

In a nutshell	
Length	450-650 words (That's short: This assignment itself is 504 words.)
Due date	Tuesday, February 25
Submission method	TBD: Check the "Assignments" tab on the web page.
