NSC TILT Initiative Sample Assignment and Reflection

Sample Assignment HIST 147-US History between 1800-1900 (Less Transparent Assignment):

# Research Paper Assignment (40%)

Overview:

You will be required to write one 4-6 page research paper (double-spaced, 12-font) where you examine the historical significance of an image or artifact from the Special Collections of the Seattle Public Library that dates from 1800 to 1910. You will choose one or two images/artifacts from the SPL collections (https://www.spl.org/programs-and-services/arts-and-culture/seattle-history/special-collections) to explore the historical story relating to it/them. Here is a direct link to the Seattle Room's Digital Collection: http://cdm16118.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ .

As a research paper, you will need to generate the main question you will pursue and develop a clear argument for the reader. You will then need to support your central claim with evidence drawn from primary sources of the time being studied and scholarly secondary sources relating to the topic being examined.

To fulfill this assignment you will need to generate quality research questions, explore multiple perspectives for your artifact(s), and use scholarly sources to interpret the historical significance of the item. You will need to use at least two primary sources beyond your chosen item, and at least three scholarly secondary sources (peer reviewed journals and/or books). You will also have to include a bibliography and use Chicago Manual of Style to cite quotes and paraphrasing. You will turn in the assignment via Canvas.

Purpose:

The purpose of this assignment is to challenge students to produce a written product where they explore the history of the Pacific Northwest region through the analysis of an image/artifact. Additionally, the assignment anchors the research to our local space (Seattle) to help students make connections between the broader historical context of the region and that of our city.

Skills that will be practiced:

To fulfill this assignment, students will need to acquire and implement the following skills:

* Problem solving—Students will need to use historical thinking and critical thinking skills to unravel the significance and historical context of the artifact they choose.
* Information literacy—As part of their research, students will learn the difference between primary and secondary sources, popular and scholarly sources, credible and untrustworthy sources. Moreover, they will need to use information resources like the internet, library services, etc.
* Analytical skills—Students will learn and practice how to examine an artifact and how to uncover its levels of meanings.
* Complex writing—Students will practice brainstorming, organizing, outlining, editing, and finalizing a complex, research-based written product.
* In-depth understanding of a historical moment in Pacific Northwest history—To untangle the historical context of the artifact they select, students will need to acquire multiple perspectives and understandings of the historical moment pertaining to their artifact.

Assignment Expectations:

Your paper must:

* Be written clearly and with minimal grammatical, spelling, and typo errors.
* Use at least three primary sources and three secondary sources.
* Use proper Chicago Manual of Style format to cite quotes and paraphrasing.
* The assignment will be turned in via Canvas on.

There are two additional requirements that you must complete for this paper worth 20 points each. The requirements are:

* List of Quality Research Questions pertaining to your chosen artifact (Due Feb. 3rd )
  + For this assignment, you will use the process presented in class in “Generating Good Research Questions” to develop a list of between 5 and 10 strong, quality research questions you could explore for your artifact.
* an Outline and Sources List (Due Feb. 24th )
  + For this assignment, you will create an outline of the key points you expect to explore and present in your paper. Your outline must include a working thesis. You will also create a sources list formatted in Chicago Manual of Style format of the sources you plan to use for your paper.

Sample Assignment HIST 148-US History since 1900 (More Transparent):

# Research Paper Assignment (40%) Due March 22, 2020 at 11:59pm

Overview:

You will be required to write one 5-7 page research paper (double-spaced, 12-font) where you examine the historical significance of a primary source about the area we now call the United States of America dating up to 1815 from the “Post-1900 Primary Sources” and “Web Resources” archive links available in our library guide (https://libguides.northseattle.edu/history148). You will choose one source to explore and use to tell a historical story (see Final Research Project Primary Source Selection).

For this research paper, you will need to present a central claim with evidence drawn from primary sources of the time being studied and scholarly secondary sources relating to the topic being examined.

To fulfill the assignment you will need to generate quality research questions (see Final Research Paper Quality Questions List), explore multiple perspectives for your primary source, and use scholarly sources to interpret the historical significance of your chosen source. You will need to use at least two primary sources beyond your chosen source, and at least four scholarly secondary sources (peer reviewed journals and/or books). You will also have to include a bibliography and use Chicago Manual of Style to cite quotes and paraphrasing. You will turn in the assignment via Canvas by December 8th at 11:59pm

Purpose:

The purpose of this assignment is to challenge students to produce a written product where they explore the history of a primary source and unpack the context necessary to understand its historical space and time.

Skills you will practice:

To fulfill this assignment, students will need to acquire and implement the following skills:

* Problem solving—Students will need to use historical thinking and critical thinking skills to be able to unravel the significance and historical context of the source they chose.
* Information literacy—As part of their research, students will learn the difference between primary and secondary sources, popular and scholarly sources, credible and untrustworthy sources. Moreover, they will need to use information resources like the internet, library services, scholarly journals, government websites, museum sites, etc.
* Source analysis skills—Students will learn and practice how to read sources and how to uncover their levels of meanings.
* Complex writing—Students will practice brainstorming, organizing, outlining, editing, and finalizing a complex, research-based written product.
* In-depth understanding of a historical moment in U.S. history—To untangle the historical context of the primary source they selected, students will need to acquire multiple perspectives and understandings of the historical moment pertaining to their source.

Tasks:

1. Complete Final Research Project Primary Source Selection by Jan. 26, 2020.
2. Complete Final Research Paper Quality Questions List by Feb. 9, 2020.
3. Complete Final Research Paper Outline and Source List by Feb. 23, 2020.

Between Feb. 23rd and March 1st:

1. Look over all the feedback provided by the professor relating to the assignments listed above.
2. Start developing further one of your points listed in the body of your outline. These points should be the supporting claims for your central argument, which is your thesis for the paper. Developing these further help to construct the structure of your paper.

Between March 2nd and March 8th:

1. Work to include a mix of summary and quotation into the points you have developed further. This mix should include historical context, source explanations, evidence, etc. to help explain your point to the reader.
2. Do any further small research necessary to complete the claim you are making in this point.
3. Repeat steps 5-7 for all the points you want to make in your paper.

Between March 9th and 15th:

1. Work on refining your thesis to best include all the points you have developed in your paper. Make sure to further the specificity and clarity of your thesis. It should be the central argument of your paper and the reader should know exactly what your paper presents after reading it.
2. Edit your points to ensure the all support your central argument (thesis). At this point you can eliminate or refine any points that do not work with your thesis. Also, make sure you have enough evidence from primary and secondary sources to support your claims in each of your points. If you do not have enough evidence conduct further research as needed or consider eliminating your point/claim.
3. Work on writing your introduction and conclusion. These two should help set-up the reader for your paper and provide a certain closure to your paper respectively.

Between March 16th and March 22nd:

1. After completing the introduction and conclusion, edit your paper for clarity, flow, grammar, typos, consistency in argument, etc. Make any corrections needed.
2. Proofread your paper after taking some time away from it (usually a day is good). Make any corrections needed.
3. Take your paper to the Page One Writing Center with a copy of the assignment and have a tutor proofread your paper. If you can not make it to the writing center, have your paper proofread by someone. Getting other eyes on your work is the best way to ensure you are arguing what you want to in the paper.
4. Proofread your paper one more time before submitting. Make any corrections needed.
5. Submit your paper in a Word or PDF file via Canvas by the due date of March 22nd.

Minimum Criteria for Successful Work:

To meet the minimum requirements for successful work in this assignment, students must submit their 5-7 page paper written using double-spaced, 12-point, Times New Roman font via Canvas in Word or PDF format by 11:59pm on Dec. 8th. The research paper must:

* Be written clearly and with minimal grammatical, spelling, and typo errors.
* Present a clear thesis that articulates the central argument for the research paper.
* Provide evidence that supports the thesis.
* Use at least three primary sources and four secondary sources.
* Use proper Chicago Manual of Style (either Notes & Bibliography or Author/Date) format to cites sources, quotes and paraphrasing.
* Meet page, font, and spacing requirements.
* Be turned in by the deadline.

To achieve Good or Exceptional level work students must show higher levels of mastery than minimum in the way you apply and use the skills and knowledge required for this assignment. The greater attention you pay to details the higher your grade will be.

Reflection on the TILT Process:

In the process of TILTing my initial assignment further, I gained three new understandings about implementing Transparency in Learning and Teaching:

* First, the process of TILTing assignments is ongoing and ever changing. The initial assignment I tilted was one that I had already put through this process once. In doing a second tilting, I discovered numerous changes I could make that would allow the assignment to be much more transparent and accessible for students in my course. One major change was to include a list of tasks that was much more specific and chronological. That change allows students to have much more clarity in the expected workload for the project.
* The second point that was made clear for me was the need to get many eyes on my assignment. It is integral to TILT that a person unrelated to your class (and possibly field) look over your assignment. The perspective of someone without your context or training is crucial to pinpointing the language, expectations, and processes you are taking for granted as known knowledge. Once you have the help of another pair of eyes to identify these areas, you can then move to change those parts to be much more transparent for students and subject matter novices.
* Finally, the TILT process itself seems rather simple in what it asks an instructor to do, but it is in that simplicity that the benefit of the process comes through. I often tell my students to have someone outside our course read their work and help in the editing of their writing, but I seldom actually take the time to do that myself! Using the TILT process allows me to carve out time with colleagues to actually do what I know is a best practice. It was that simplicity that I found very appealing and simple to implement.

Overall, my experience in this TILT process has been extremely positive. I have gained invaluable insight on my assignments and approach from colleagues whose only goal was to help me. That was magnificent and something I will continue to seek out and use throughout my career.