

**EXTRA CREDIT: Book Review Assignment Instructions for *The Familial State*  
SUBMIT VIA UCCS BLACKBOARD BY TUESDAY, MAY 12<sup>TH</sup>, 5PM**

Overview

For the book, *The Familial State*, you will write a traditional scholarly book review. For this text, you will explore how historians evaluate each other's work—by writing a traditional book review that evaluates the author's argument, themes, organization, sources, analytical methods, and writing style. Book reviews simultaneously summarize and intensely pick apart “what works” and “what doesn't” in the book.

Specific Instructions on How to Prepare Your Book Reviews

Your review should consist of two parts:

- Part 1. First, your review should briefly summarize the book. (What is the book about? Who wrote it, when, why, and/or what does it tell us?) Limit this portion of your review to no more than 1 page. Be sure that your book review is not a summary of the text.
- Part 2. The second part of review (about 2 pages) should be arranged into several sections, or should discuss the following aspects of the book. You are not required to spend equal parts of time on each section, but you should discuss each item as well as cite select terms and sentences from the book.
  - *Author's Arguments and Themes* – This section answers the questions such as: What is author's argument or thesis? What is the central point he/she is trying to prove? What, if any, supporting arguments are proposed? What types of issues (themes) is he/she discussing (political, economic, cultural, religious, environmental, etc)? For example, does the book pertain to economic development or political values or religious views or some other major issue? What can be learned about the people and culture, the values and beliefs, and/or historical changes or outcomes that occurred at this time period. Does the author make unsubstantiated claims? Does the author convince you of their positions, why or why not?
  - *Author's Book Organization* – At a summary level, how is the book organized (time period, topics, themes, etc)? Is there a proper introduction and conclusion and do they set-up and concluded the text successfully? Does the author use methodical topic sentences for each paragraph or some other organization?
  - *Author's Analytical Methods and Sources* – What methods or tools does the author use to prove his/her positions? What types of examples are used? How does the author periodize his topic, that is, what are the temporal and/or geographic boundaries that frame the topic? Does the author use primary sources (actual letters, administrative records, or any documentation from the period studied) or secondary

sources (other scholarly works about the topic)? How does the author use this evidence? Is the evidence relevant, applicable, or misused?

- *Author's Writing Style and Biases* – Does the author write in a clear manner, or is he/she confusing, disorganized, or difficult to follow? Where can we find the author and his/her personal views in this text? Do the author's opinions interfere with their argument or detract from the argument?

### Preparing and Formatting of Your Book Reviews

- Your paper should be 3 pages in length (double-spaced). In order to do well on this assignment, you must write very efficiently, which means you will need to edit and revise it so that you can compress as much information into the page limit.
- Use 11 or 12 point font, 1 inch margins, double line spacing, and page numbering.
- Use a topic sentence to start each paragraph so that your reader knows what you intend to argue in it.
- Use must use and/or quote specific examples from the text to support your thoughts. Use the citation method discussed in *Document Sources with the Chicago Manual of Style* -- <http://www.rogerlouismartinez.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Chicago-Citation-and-Documentation.pdf>

### Once Last Piece of Advice: What “A” grade-level work “looks like”.

“A” work has:

- No grammatical errors, writing errors, awkward phrases, run-on sentences, or fragments.
- No spelling mistakes or uses of the wrong word.
- No slang or overly “conversational” text.
- Definitely uses topic sentences to start each paragraph.
- Definitely uses examples and cites where those examples appear in the text.
- Definitely quotes some text and paraphrases other portions of the text.
- Definitely gives credit to other authors when it uses their ideas.
- Definitely completes all aspects of the assignment.