

Thought Essay Assignment #1

***Your assignment is due in class on Friday, February 13**

(See ☺: <http://bit.ly/1zUFRP1> and <http://bit.ly/18T7ZaS>).

Sources for Your Thought Essay

For this assignment use at least two and as many as four of the required/optional class readings.

Thought Essay Content

In this class we have already read a broad range of articles and chapter selections pertaining to Jewish, Christian, and Muslim life in the medieval Mediterranean world. Your essay task is to assume the role of brilliant and well-respected historian of the Middle Ages. You've been invited by Harvard University to present a brief 15-minute paper to leading scholars of the medieval Christian European, Jewish, and Islamic worlds. Unfortunately, these pointy-hat academics have lived most of their lives within the small confines of their respective sub-fields—they've never thought to explore the continuities and discontinuities that bring their scholarly pursuits together. For your essay, you will want to educate your audience on three significant themes that characterize the Mediterranean during this era. As you scratch your head before preparing your address, you realize that you can touch on economics and trade, political beliefs and governance, religious values, social relations and status, tolerance and intolerance, or any number of other topics. However, you decide that you want to speak on just three major themes that connect Jews, Christians, and Muslims together and that you will want to present some insightful historical examples from the many resources you have available at fingertips. You know that some of your examples will only compare and contrast two of these faith groups' experiences to one another, however, your audience will find that acceptable as long as you discuss all three faith groups at some point during your essay. Good luck and Godspeed with your preparations.

Preparing and Formatting of Your Essay

- You need to argue a position – this means you should use a thesis statement. See: <http://bit.ly/1KIJ2IK>.
- Your essay should be 3-4 pages in length. You may use up to five pages for this assignment if you think you need the additional space. However, 5 pages are not required to earn an "A".
- Use 11 or 12 point font, 1 inch margins, double-spacing, and page numbering.
- Use a proper introduction, body (several paragraphs), and a brief conclusion in your essay. Indent the start of each paragraph.
- Ideally, use a topic sentence to start each paragraph so that your reader knows what you intend to argue in it.
- You should use and/or quote specific examples from the readings to support your thoughts. (You do not need to include a bibliography.) Lastly, always cite your sources and give authors their due credit.
- If you quote material from the article, then you must properly use quotation marks and parenthetical citations. For example:
 - S.D. Goitein states, "Another impressive illustration of the unity of the Mediterranean world...is the frequency of intermarriage between persons from different countries." (Goitein 1960, 33).
- You can find more writing advice on my website page, "Writing Resources For Students." See here: <http://bit.ly/16tj9SV>.
- Ms. Emmons is offering to review draft essays. You may email them to her at nemmons@uccs.edu. Be sure to send your draft no later than Tuesday, Feb. 10, to receive comments by Thursday afternoon.