

FYS 525, Fall 2023, Assignment #3

Unlike the first two writing assignments where you made an argument, the goal of this assignment is descriptive. You will write a report on some aspect of the Columbian Exchange, World War II, or the Mongol Empire that we did not, or will not discuss, in detail. Your job is to inform rather than persuade. You may choose among the following:

1. Pick a commodity, possibly an agricultural product, that was part of the Columbian Exchange. Explain the economic, social, or political impacts of this commodity being introduced to either the Old or New World. Dunn and Qian (2010) provide some potential examples.
2. Find a technology that resulted from, or advanced because of, the Columbian Exchange. Explain its long-term social, economic, or political impact.
3. Pick one of the major, non-U.S., combatants in the Second World War. Explain how this country financed their war effort.
4. Explain how World War II led to fundamental changes in a part of the economy (*e.g.* education). Your focus may be on the U.S. or another country.
5. Explain how the Mongols, despite their small population, managed to conquer a part of their empire (*e.g.* China, Persia, Russia, Lewiston, etc.).
6. I am open to other aspects that describe an interesting aspect of one of these three topics. If you have such an idea, please clear it with me.

Tips

1. With this style of writing, finding good sources is even more important than when writing an argument. Before writing, identify several good sources that provide background on your topic. Take care to integrate these into your draft.
2. Assume that the audience is the rest of the class, broadly familiar with the background material, but not with the details of your topic. Your goal is to clearly and concisely communicate the details of your topic to them.
3. Section W-10 of the Little Seagull Guide discusses this style of writing.

4. Writing about World War II or the Mongols may be somewhat more challenging because we will not have completed these topics by the time that the assignment is due. If you pick one of these topics, you may want to read ahead (see the syllabus for readings)

5. Pay attention to the level of your writing. Avoid stating the obvious. But also avoid assuming that the reader has extensive knowledge of your topic. Try not to use jargon or terms of art without defining them.

Submission

The maximum word count is 1200, excluding sources. Please submit a pdf via email by Monday, October 16.