

## Appendix 8

### Article Synthesis, Rubric, Assessment (6b)

Your article synthesis should be around 750 words. The heading of the synthesis should be the bibliographic citation, done in the Chicago Manual format (this is the format used by historians), for all three articles or sources. Sources should be listed in alphabetical order by author (this is standard bibliographic presentation, no matter what citation style you use). I have created a link to the on-line Chicago Manual from our web site. **This time, if your citation is done incorrectly, you will automatically lose two points from your paper.** You can get them back if you redo the synthesis, but why?

The three articles you should use for your synthesis should be three articles that relate to the subject of your research paper. Your research paper should ask a question (you've gotten feedback on your questions). The three articles you synthesize ideally would be articles you reviewed, but they do not need to be. If you are choosing a new article and would like me to look at a review of it (or to substitute a review of that article for an earlier one you've done), that's fine. Please **limit direct quotations to no more than two lines of your review** (about 30 words). Quoting excessively is a bad habit many students have and it interferes with their learning.

Please make sure your synthesis covers the following points:

1. **What is the question you are researching?** This will be the question for your paper. You may change the question you are researching only if you make an appointment to discuss it with me (that is for major changes of topic; smaller changes of focus are normal and expected and don't need to be cleared with me).
2. **How do these articles contribute toward your research?** What contents of the articles are you finding useful? What contents of the articles aren't directly useful to you? Do the articles cover the same ground or somewhat different ground?
3. **What is the argument of each article?** (You may, if you wish, cut and paste your earlier statements, but you may also be more succinct). How are the arguments in the articles connected? Are they on unrelated topics or do the authors argue against each other or agree with each other?
4. **How do the modes of argument in each article compare to each other?** Do the articles use different sources or the same ones interpreted differently? Are they reading the same secondary sources or different ones?
5. **Evaluation: which of these articles do you find *most* convincing overall?** You must choose one; explain why you find it the *most* convincing, using the contents of the article (in other words, it wouldn't be sufficient to say as a response to Van Engen's article, "Well, I've always thought that the Catholic church was corrupt, so I think there was a crisis of monasticism." You would want to look at the evidence provided by Cohn (for instance) and use it to critique Van Engen's article. To say that you find one of the articles most convincing does not require that you be entirely convinced by the argument, and you may qualify your enthusiasm here.
5. **What holes do these articles leave in your research question?** What do you want to know that isn't covered in the research question? How do you intend to fill that hole? (Are there additional things you need to read? If so, what?)

## Rubric

### **Question (1)**

Goal: You have a clearly stated appropriate historical question that you can readily research.

Problems:

The question is too vague.

The question is not clear.

The question makes assumptions that require demonstration.

The question is not researchable or is not researchable given your skills.

The question is not historical or is insufficiently historical or is metahistorical.

You didn't do this part.

### **Contribution to Research (2)**

Goal: You explain clearly what the three articles contribute to the question you are researching and what is not useful. You give a good sense of what each of the articles covers in relation to the others.

Problems:

You don't assess what is useful in each article or what is not useful.

You don't compare the contents of the articles to each other.

You don't provide a clear sense of what the articles contain.

You don't do this part.

### **Argument (2)**

Goal: You explain the argument of each of the articles and also how they are connected to each other (if they are). If the authors are arguing against each other, you make this clear.

Problems:

You don't explain the argument of one or more of the articles.

You don't explain how these arguments are related to each other.

Your explanation is not sufficiently clear.

You don't do this part.

### **Modes of argument (2)**

Goal: You compare how each of the articles goes about arguing its case, noting whether the articles use the same sources or different ones, or rely on primary or secondary sources.

Problems:

You don't explain how each of the articles argues.

You don't explain which sources each article uses.

You don't compare the articles.

You don't do this part.

### **Evaluation and taking a position (2)**

Goal: You evaluate which of the articles you find most convincing, and critique the articles that don't convince you, using evidence from primary and/or secondary sources.

You may qualify your approval of the article.

Problems:

You don't make a choice between the articles.

You don't offer evidence in support of your choice.  
You don't critique the sources you are not choosing.  
Your reasoning is not clear.  
You don't do this part.

### Research Holes (1)

Goal: You are aware of any gaps in the evidence in relation to your research question and have some ideas about how to fill these gaps. If you don't feel that there are gaps, you provide a convincing argument that you have all the information you need.

Problems:

You incorrectly argue that there are no gaps in your information.  
You know there is a gap, but you aren't sure what you might do to fill it.  
You don't do this part.

### Penalties

Incorrect format for citation (2 points off)

Excessive direct quotation (1 point off)

Score:

### Assessment Data

