

HIST 2800
Women in America
Weekly Learning Journals
Spring 2008

Students will be required to keep a Weekly Learning Journal. Because learning is a process, keeping a journal helps us to see how our knowledge grows over time and gives us a place to record each discovery or insight, however small. When we look back over a journal all those bits begin to add up to a greater understanding of the subject. A learning journal is a place to draw connections—something you learned two weeks ago may suddenly have a new or greater meaning when you link it to something from this week's lesson. A learning journal is also a great place for questions. Learning forces us out onto the thin ice of our knowledge and the questions we ask are the mooring posts that help guide us back onto firm ground. Journals are a good place to express confusion, to begin asking the questions that bring understanding, and to celebrate the insights we have gained.

Our journals will be multidimensional—literally. We will use scrapbooking techniques to record, reflect, and re-evaluate. In addition to writing reflections, students may use visual and dimensional collage materials in their journals. The instructor will distribute a journal to students at the beginning of the semester and periodically will provide collage and scrapbooking materials for students to put into their journals. Students may find and add materials of their own as well. The challenge is to be creative and to have fun—that is what learning is all about!

Everyone's journal will be their own personal creation but here are some suggestions and tips for weekly entries:

TIP #1: Give it a title. Like a newspaper headline, a title for your weekly journal entry can summarize in a few words what the most important issue or subject or idea that impressed you from that week's lesson. So give each week's entry a title and print it in big colorful letters.

TIP #2: Historical illustrations. Search the internet for images that are historically accurate and illustrate lessons you have learned, knowledge you have gained, or questions open for further exploration. Print the images and put them in your journal.

TIP #3: Mental maps. Try reorganizing what you have learned visually. It could be something as simple as a list with stars and arrows. Or try drawing the main subject and then envisioning all the subjects that relate to it—illustrate the connections with colors and lines and circles and arrows. Take an idea and turn it into a visual image.

TIP #5: There is always more to learn. Jump on the internet and see if you can

find good sources of additional information or information related to the week's topic. Jot what you find down in your journal. It could be a list of books or of websites.

TIP #6: Quotations. Did you read something that was particularly striking? Did someone say something that really stayed with you? Write it down, put it in quotations marks, and cite the source. Search the internet for quotations, saying, or poems that help illustrate important observations or insights about the history of American women you have gained during the week.

TIP #7: Past and Present. Historians often say that the past is like a foreign country. Imagine yourself visiting the past. Like a good tourist, you look around, make observations, and compare the place you are visiting to your hometown. How is the past different from the present? Record your observations in your journal. Hey, you could even send yourself a postcard from the past and paste it into your journal.

TIP #8 Our lives. How is your own experience reflected in or enlightened by what you have learned about the past?

Twice during the semester students will turn in their Learning Journals for preliminary assessment. Completed Learning Journals will be turned in for final grading at the end of the semester.

LEARNING JOURNAL ASSESSMENT #1 DUE: Thursday, January 31
LEARNING JOURNAL ASSESSMENT #2 DUE: Thursday, March 27
LEARNING JOURNAL FINAL ASSESSMENT DUE: Friday, April 25

The Weekly Learning Journal is worth 30% of the final course grade.