ASSIGNMENT 8: PRELIMINARY DRAFT OF RESEARCH ESSAY

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS
1. The preliminary draft of your research essay (which will be graded) is due in class on April 3. Aim to hand in as complete an essay as you can at this point and then, in an appendix, explain what you expect to add or change in the final draft. [You can also put questions, explanations of what is missing, or other special explanations in brackets at any point in the essay.]
2. Bring to class eight copies of a document (or part of a document) that is especially challenging to interpret and use in your essay or that you just found to be especially intriguing and useful. Each of you will have some time to give an update about your paper and its thesis and then to ask the class for suggestions in dealing with the document excerpt and any other aspects of your essay that you wish to discuss. Be sure to include the bibliographical information on the copy of the document. If you wish, the document excerpt can be from the transcript of an oral history interview.
3. Let me know if you want to make an appointment to discuss your essay (in person or by phone) during the coming week. I’ll be in and out of my office (678-839-6037) on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoon, in Carrollton (770-834-9786) in the evenings through Thursday. From Friday evening to early Sunday afternoon, I’ll be in Atlanta (404-876-0470). Do not hesitate to call between 9AM and 10PM. If you get a tape message, leave your phone number and tell me when I can call back. If you don’t answer within a reasonable time, you may want to try again in case I had trouble understanding your phone number. Remember that I see email only when I’m in my office.

PRELIMINARY DRAFT
1. The final essay should be 20-30 pages typed or printed, double-spaced, on one side of the page only, with page numbers (with no page number on a title page if you use one), and with one-inch margins on all sides. Do not use a font that is unusually small or large and do not use bold print for the main text. Historians do not normally use subtitles in a paper of this length, but you may include them (in the preliminary draft only) if they help you organize your material. The length of the preliminary draft is more flexible than the final version, but try to come as close as possible to a complete essay. Please do not use a folder for the rough draft. If you plan to include any maps, pictures, charts, etc. that you do not yet have, indicate what and where they will be.
2. Be as detailed as you can be at this point, always understanding that you will probably change a lot later. Include specific evidence for any generalizations you make and notes for all specific information [in brackets in the text for this draft only, if you wish, or as footnotes or endnotes]. Do not combine notes for each paragraph for this draft. Use the format for footnotes or endnotes required in the latest edition of Turabian, including the proper order of information, punctuation, etc. You can also use my handouts and/or the notes in any relatively recent book by a professional historian published by a university press as additional guidelines. [If you are uncertain about how to do a particular reference, you can explain your question in brackets.] Avoid direct quotes of historians or other recent scholars unless the exact words are helpful in
explaining a historiographic issue.
3. Be careful to avoid plagiarism of any kind. Any clear evidence of the use of someone else’s words or ideas without a proper note will mean an automatic “F” (after a chance to explain the lapse). If you are uncertain about anything connected with this issue, please talk to me about it.
4. After making any basic revisions to your outline/prospectus, try turning each point into a topic sentence for a paragraph or section of your paper.
5. Introduce in the first or second paragraph the primary question and time period you are addressing in the essay and general aspects of your thesis (main conclusion), as well as the most central community/ies, family/ies, people, and/or other especially relevant specifics. It is not a good idea to write the introduction segment first because it can then become too lengthy and/or because you may not realize exactly what precise question you are covering until you have written most of a draft of the essay.
6. After you have written a relatively rough draft, decide what explanatory information you need to give readers about the broader history that is a context for what you are analyzing. This can be interwoven with other material and/or discussed separately. Do not expect to go into extreme detail about subjects or periods that you are not including in your special focus.
7. Most of the essay will involve the special question that you are addressing. See if any of the monographic essays you have read can be helpful as a model for how to organize your discussion of your hypotheses and the evidence for them.
8. Summarize any conclusions you can make and any questions that remain about your special topic and what it suggests about the people you cover, as well as about any broader groups.
9. Use a combination of Spell-Check, the Skrunk and White book, and any other references to correct the technical aspects of your writing (spelling, grammar, punctuation, general syntax, etc.) Pay attention to the style of the professional historians you appreciate the most. A “rough” draft is not supposed to be “rough” in terms of writing mechanics and I do not want to waste my time or yours suggesting corrections that you could make without my help. Don’t forget the Writing Center as another source of help for the mechanics of writing.
10. In an appendix, indicate what research you expect to do during the next few weeks and any questions and/or problems you have about either the content or the process of writing your paper.

REVISED ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY (including only the materials you have already used for your essay and any you expect to use this semester)
1. Use the format required in the latest edition of Turabian, including the proper order of information, punctuation, etc. You can also use my handouts and/or a bibliography in any relatively recent book by a professional historian published by a university press as additional guidelines.
2. Divide the references into primary and secondary sources. You can decide whether or not to include separate categories for primary sources (such as newspapers, oral histories, letters, census reports, etc.). You do not need to do separate sections for books and essays in the secondary source category.
3. For each source, include a casual annotation with any information that might be useful for either you or me. Indicate briefly what the source includes that is relevant to your topic and whether you still need to read it carefully. If you do not have a personal copy of it, you should probably indicate where you can find it, including any relevant card catalog or file numbers, etc. Remember that you might want to refer back to this bibliography in future years.