REVIEW OF A BOOK BY A NONPROFESSIONAL HISTORIAN

Due: February 20
1. This assignment involves writing a review of 4-6 pages (double-spaced, typed or printed) about a book by a professional historian that is relevant to your research. Check with me to be sure that the book you have chosen is appropriate. Be certain that you have either an extra hard copy of the final review or access to a computer version just in case something happens to the copy you give me.

2. Give page numbers in parentheses as references for all specific information and direct quotes. If you refer to any works other than the one you are writing about, use footnotes or endnotes for those references. Put the author, title, and publication information at the top of the first page in the manner done for reviews in scholarly journals.

3. After reading the book, check the sheet on questions for secondary sources to see which questions would be most helpful in evaluating the kind of book you have read. You do not have to answer the questions directly, but you might want to use them as a preparation for writing by summarizing in a list the answers to any questions you considered relevant.

4. Summarize as concisely as possible the basic focus and main points of the book, including its primary thesis. Be sure to include a version of all of this in your essay at some point for the benefit of a reader who has not read the book. Think about what such a reader would need to know to understand what you are saying about the book.

5. At some point in your review, list the kinds of sources used by the author and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of both the choice and use of these sources.

6. What are your general conclusions about this book? Who (if anyone) might find it most helpful? What questions does it stimulate for future research? Is there anything else you think a potential reader would want to know about the book?

7. Keep the review’s focus on the strengths and weaknesses of the book, but include enough of a summation of what the book covers and enough specifics as evidence for your points to allow a reader to learn some of what you learned from it.

8. You may give personal reactions to the book or any aspects of it as long as you do so in the voice of yourself as a professional historian.

9. Email or call me if you have any questions or problems concerning this assignment.