Assignment # 1: Abstracts and citations

Purpose of this exercise: To practice two basic skills. First, to read and summarize two sources in your own words. This is similar to how you will use parts of sources in later papers. Second, to properly cite sources, format a paper in Chicago style, and correctly submit the work by email. The emphasis in this assignment is on form, not content. The sources are selected to be straightforward and not too long, rather than because their subjects are particularly important.

What you do: First, get the two sources you will be working with. These are shown on the assigned reading list for Assignment #1. This list is posted on the class website together with these instructions, and is also posted under "Handouts". Click to the list, find your student ID number, and click the on each of the two links assigned to you to see your two online sources. Be sure to use the sources assigned to you; you will get credit only for a paper on those sources.

Next, read the sources and write an abstract (summary) of each, between a half and one double-spaced page long. The abstract should explain what the source is (like "This letter from Cicero, in Rome, to Atticus, in Athens, dated 65 BCE…", or "In this article in *History Review*, Smith argues that…"), and what it says. Describe not only what the subject is, but also what it actually says about the subject. If it describes events or things, summarize the description; if it comes to a conclusion, say what the conclusion is, and so on. Do this entirely in your own words. Do not quote or copy from the source or the background material that may accompany it.

If you cannot tell what the source is, or you need more background information on it, try using Google to search for the author or a distinctive phrase in the text. If you use information from another source, you must cite it properly, with its own endnote and bibliographic reference. Cite only reliable sources. Wikipedia is often a good start to help you find an answer, but it is not reliable enough to cite. Use it to find a better source of the information, and cite that.

Summarize only the historical text. Some sources come with background information or other material in addition to the historical text. You do not need to summarize that additional material, although you may use it provide enough background to make your abstract understandable.

Cite the sources properly in the text. Unless you looked up additional background information, that will probably require only one endnote number at the end of each paragraph. Include the appropriate endnotes (probably only two), and bibliography (again, probably only two).

Follow the Chicago style for citations, endnotes, and bibliography. See the handout "Chicago style for History 201", posted on the class website. Mastering this style is an important part of this assignment. This paper does not require a title page.

What you turn in: A short paper with no more than two pages of text, plus an additional page of endnotes and bibliography. It should be double-spaced, in 12-point type, with reasonable margins. I will not read more than two pages of text.

Do it yourself: The point of this exercise is for *you* to practice these skills. So you must do this exercise yourself, not in collaboration with classmates.

Turning it in: Submit the paper by email, as an attachment. No paper copy is involved. A good way to email it to me is to go to the class website and click on "email me!" Being able to email files as attachments is a useful skill.

File format: Save the paper in Word 95 (.doc), Word 2000 (.doc), or Rich Text (.rtf) format. These are nearly universal formats that any word processor should be able to make and open. The command to save in these formats is often under a "Save As" menu item. Being able to share files in these formats is another useful skill.

File name: Name the file in this format:

> h201-09f-Assignment1-LastnameFirstname

Replace "LastnameFirstname" with your name, last name first, capitalizing the first letter of each name. Your word processor will usually add a 3-letter file extension like ".doc" or ".rtf".

Drafts: You are welcome to discuss your assignment with me or give me a draft to review before the assignment is due. My comments and suggestions may help you write a better essay and get a better grade. If you email a draft, please name the file as above, but add "-draft", like

> h201-09f-Assignment1-SmithJohn-draft.doc

Grading: This assignment is worth 100 points, out of 1000 for the course. The grading rubric is attached.

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Points	Possible	Item
	10	Indicates what the sources are and any needed basic background info
	30	Abstracts are reasonably accurate and complete, in own words
	10	Source(s) are correctly cited in the text
	20	Endnotes are in correct Chicago style
	20	Bibliography is in correct Chicago style
	10	File is in correct file format (.doc or .rtf) and is correctly named
		Late (-10%) or Rewrite (-20%)
	100	Total