

Increasing Student  
Participation  
and Mastery of Material  
Through  
Collaborative Reading  
Assignments

DIANA MOORE

# GOALS OF THE ASSIGNMENT

- Expose students to interesting concepts and examples from a book
  - Individual chapters provide more detailed examples of important concepts than an introduction or article can
- Make students actually read the homework assignment
- Have students write and feel comfortable writing through low-stakes writing assignments
- Encourage students to learn from each other and to teach each other (become masters of material in their own right)
- Encourage participation in class discussion from a wider range of voices

# ASSIGNMENT STRUCTURE

- Homework Assignment #1:
  - All students read Introduction/Chapter I of a selected book
- Class Day #1:
  - Brief lecture providing background + discussion of introduction
- Homework Assignment #2:
  - Students divided into groups + read individual chapters of book
  - Students also complete a summary/response to chapter
- Class Day #2:
  - Brief recap of chapters + guided discussion of major themes (answered using examples from individual chapters)

# CHAPTER SUMMARY ASSIGNMENT

- Low-stakes writing assignment (1-2 pages, usually worth 5% of overall grade)
  - Submitted to Blackboard the night before class meets
  - Graded using rubric (graded for basic content/effort and not grammar)
- 3 Components to Assignment
  - Chapter summary
  - Response to chapter
  - How does individual chapter connect to the themes/goal of entire book
- Must include quotations from the reading
  - Forces students to be specific and gives them something easy to talk about during the class discussion
  - Also encourages use of evidence and citation

# DISCUSSION OF INTRODUCTION

- Please spend 5 to 10 minutes reading the introduction/beginning to the article (pg. 134-138)
- Discussion Questions:
  - What are the major themes and arguments of this piece?
  - What important questions is the author trying to answer?
  - Do we have any preview of the structure or types of evidence used?

# READ INDIVIDUAL SECTIONS

- Please spend 10 minutes reading your section of the article and writing up a brief response
  - Section 1: pg. 138- 142 (concubinage & mixed-race sexual relations)
  - Section 2: pg. 142-145 (sexual slavery & prostitution)
  - Section 3: pg. 145-148 (medicalization and regulation of birth control & abortion)
  - Section 4: pg. 148-151 (female circumcision & relations w. local leaders)
  - Section 5: pg. 151-154 (same-sex relations & conclusion)
- Each response should include at least 4 bullet points:
  - Main idea/Argument
  - Interesting Example
  - Your Reaction
  - Connection to the Introduction/Overall Article

# GROUP DISCUSSION

- Step 1: Everyone must give a brief recap of their section
  - Keep it to one minute for today
- Step 2: Big Questions
  - What regulations on sexuality/sexual behaviors does Levine describe?
  - How were these regulations on sexuality important to the project of empire? How did they reflect the anxieties of governing an empire?
  - What was the role of race in determining these behaviors and regulations? What about gender? Or class?
  - What were the contradictions or inconsistencies in the discourses surrounding sexuality in empire?
  - Is there anything else in your section that you'd like to discuss?

# FINAL EVALUATION

- What aspects of the assignment and structure did you find effective? What parts would you change for your classes?
- Could this work for the courses you teach? How might you modify it to work with your courses and your students?
- Do you have any questions for me?