

### **I-GIFT 2021 Application**

With the Ignatian pedagogy paradigm in mind, I designed the final project for my “Europe since 1945” course at SHC, offered in Spring 2021 in a face-to-face format. In this course, my students conducted oral interviews over Zoom with historians and scholars about how their work connects to recent events in Europe. To carry out this project, we followed roughly five steps. First, since the course covers themes in Europe since 1945, I asked students to select topics from a curated list of ongoing controversies. These subjects ranged from the refugee crisis that recently took place in Europe following the Syrian civil war to the prosecution of war criminals after the Holocaust. Second, I met with students to discuss their topics and then matched them with a historian whose work corresponded to their interests. In most cases, I was personally connected to the historians, who had already enthusiastically volunteered to participate. In a few cases, I facilitated email introductions between students and scholars I did not know. Third, students were tasked with coming up with a set of ten questions to ask their historian, which I vetted and edited for clarity. These questions were supposed to cover three areas: the history of the event, the event itself, and the historian’s observations on contemporary relevance of his/her/their work. Once approved, students set up times to conduct recorded Zoom interviews with their historians. Finally, students were expected to incorporate some element of the interview into their final research papers on the topics.

This project fits several overlapping goals of Ignatian pedagogy: context, experience, reflection, action, and evaluation. As an instructor, I considered the context of Covid-19, as well as the experiences of our students at SHC. I provided a list of topics to the students (allowing for exceptions if they proposed a new topic) because I recognized that many of them may not have much background in the subjects. I encouraged students to read newspaper articles about the ongoing controversies before they met with me individually to discuss their chosen topics. The next stage of the project—submitting the questions—became an important point of reflection for many students. In some cases, students proposed vague or off-the-wall questions. Receiving feedback and reframing their questions pushed them to think more critically about what kind of information they hoped to gain from their historian, or what was an appropriate level of professionalism and engagement. I also encouraged the students to ask questions about how the historian came to the topic, or what got them interested in their field, in hopes that students would then reflect on how personal experiences often lead to scholarly and professional commitments. It was then incumbent on the students to take action by setting up a time with their historian and conducting the recorded interview in a professional manner. Finally, the research paper gave students the chance to evaluate what type of information they received and how to incorporate it into the paper.

As an instructor, I immensely enjoyed helping my students carry out this project. Ultimately, my goal is to work in tandem with my students to help them become independent thinkers who will apply these skills and reflections to contexts far beyond our classroom. It was gratifying to watch students link these developments to their daily lives and their future goals. Perhaps the most rewarding outcome was listening to my students gush about their historians. One student interviewed an Army officer and West Point professor who works in intelligence, a field in which the student hopes to use his History degree in the future. Another student cited her interview with a historian of the Armenian genocide in her Fulbright application as evidence of her preparation to take on a research project on the Yazidi genocide. Such personal and intellectual connections left lasting impacts on several students, demonstrating that Ignatian pedagogy was at work. In turn, both scholars relayed to me that they were impressed with our students’ deep understanding of their research. An I-GIFT award would acknowledge my deep commitment to Ignatian pedagogy and the mission of Spring Hill College.

## **HIS 322: Europe since 1945 (W/O)**

### **ASSIGNMENT: FINAL PROJECT (worth 45%)**

This course has a final research project. Given that this course is Europe since 1945, the paper topic will examine the history of a contemporary issue in Europe. Topics may range from examining, for example, the history of economic integration and problems with the economic integration of Europe today, to the complex history of the veil and Muslim womanhood in France, to dealing with the colonial past in modern day Germany. As part of this assignment, your goal is to connect recent events and contemporary history to the scholarly observations made by a professional historian. Rather than just observing the past, historians are critical commentators on the links between past and present. I will provide more extensive guidelines, a list of topics, and examples on Schoology.

The project will be broken up into four parts:

- 1) Topic consultation (5%)
  - a. In Weeks 2 and 3, we will hold topic consultations over Zoom. Please examine the list of potential topics on Schoology and come prepared to discuss which topic(s) you would be interested in exploring. Please identify a major topic and a back-up topic in case multiple people in the class want to work on a similar topic. I will then match you with a historian to interview. You will then be tasked with emailing the historian to introduce yourself, request an interview with them, and schedule an interview (ideally in March or early April, so you both have some time to prepare; I advise no later than early April so you have time to incorporate the information into your papers).
- 2) Interview questions (5%)
  - a. In Week 4, a list of ten interview questions will be due to me. You should review your historian's work and publications and do some preliminary research on the contemporary issue in preparation for formulating your questions. You may want to write it as a script for yourself, including the niceties for your historian, so you remember the etiquette of the interview process. You may also want to follow up with your historian and send them your questions, once they are approved, so they can prepare ahead of time.
- 3) Author interview (15%)
  - a. Each student will conduct a recorded interview with a historian (preferably on Zoom) for a minimum of 15 minutes. The goal of this assignment is to draw connections between historians' research and expertise and the current or recent events that you are studying. Students will submit their video of the interview, worth 15%, via Schoology. Students will be assessed on their professional conduct, ease with speaking and discussing with their historian, and knowledge of their topic.
- 4) Final paper (20%)
  - a. This course has a final research paper. Your paper should contain a strong thesis statement that sets up an argument that is then supported throughout the paper with evidence from your sources. Your paper should incorporate quotes and/or information from your interview as a source.

Dr. Alexandria Ruble  
Department of History  
[aruble@shc.edu](mailto:aruble@shc.edu)

Papers should be 10-12 pages (not including the title page), double-spaced, with 1-inch margins, 12 pt, Times New Roman font, page numbers, a title page, and correct Chicago Manual of Style footnotes and bibliography.

Papers will be evaluated based on their organization, use of evidence/sources, strength of argument, and writing style.

Three extra points on the final grade of the paper will be awarded to students who elect to present their research at the Undergraduate Research Symposium.