**AP United States History**

Summer Reading Assignment

2015

**Lies My Teacher Told Me: *Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong***

Hello and welcome to AP U.S. History! This course is intended to be academically challenging, but also rewarding for those who truly engage because it will serve as preparation for college. This course will be unlike any Social Studies class you have taken in the past. We will be exploring the events of America’s past through a variety of sources and learning how to “question everything.” The purpose of this assignment is to open your mind and show you how to think like a historian.

To start things off, we would like you to complete the following reading assignment this summer.

* James W. Loewen. Lies My Teacher Told Me: *Everything Your American History Textbook*

*Got Wrong* (New York: Touchstone, 2008)

* The book should be available to purchase online or at most retail bookstores. If you cannot purchase the book, you are encouraged to make use of the Tulsa County Library system.

**Directions:**

1**. Annotate**: As you read the book, highlight and make notes in the margins about any major ideas or themes you detect, or any questions that you have. If you do not own the book, use carefully placed post-it notes to accomplish the task of annotating.

2. Respond to the **reading questions** listed on the next page. Your responses can be typed or handwritten, but you should make sure they are legible, in complete sentences, and well-organized so that you can refer back to them and study them at a later time.

3. Write **a 2 page essay** discussing your experiences in Social Studies class from the 5th grade to present. Focus on instances where you think you have been “lied to,” given misinformation, and/or bored to tears. BE SPECIFIC! Give several examples. DO NOT MENTION THE NAMES OF TEACHERS, JUST DETAILS OF CERTAIN EXPERIENCES. This should be typed in size 12 font, Times New Roman or Arial, 1-inch margins, double-spaced.

4**. Prepare** all of these items for the **first day of class**. You will be assessed on your work through an in-class assignment that may include discussion, quiz/test, or other extended project.

(CUT PAPER HERE)-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

I have read and understood the directions and expectations for this summer assignment.

PLEASE BRING BACK BY FRIDAY MAY 22nd, 2015 to COACH GRAY ROOM 333

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Your parent’s / guardian’s signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Contact information and the course website link are listed below if you have any questions or concerns. You are responsible for keeping track of this packet. If you need to you will be able to print extra copies from the course website. Please check the course website for announcements over the summer!

Please keep in mind that if you want to drop the class, you must do so before the beginning of the school year. Otherwise, you will not be allowed to drop the course. You are expected to be on your A-game for this course, and be confident that you can do so. Enjoy the summer and this assignment. We look forward to seeing you in the fall!

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AP UNITED STATES HISTORY 2015-2016 class website link:

Don’t forget to check for announcements over the summer!

(Extra copies of this assignment will be here if needed. Save this URL in your bookmarks!)

<http://msdurbinushistory.weebly.com/>

Lies My Teacher Told Me Reading Questions:

**DIRECTIONS**: Answer on your own paper. Your answers may *be handwritten or typed*. Please answer in complete sentences. You do not need to rewrite the question. You do need to make sure your answers are in order. Please use a dictionary or online dictionary to define unfamiliar terms if necessary.

1. Loewen identifies herofication as a key practice of textbook scholarship. What does he mean by herofication? What are the key elements of the herofication process?

Herofication is a degenerative process (much like calcification) that makes people over into heroes. Through this process, our educational media turn flesh-and-blood individuals into pious, perfect creatures without conflicts, pain, credibility, or human interest." The key elements of the herofication process are

2. What are the aims and purposes of herofication? Do you agree? Why or why not?

3. What is a social archetype? How are they constructed? How are social archetypes related to the herofication process? Can one exist without the other? Why or why not?

4. How does Loewen redress Wilson's and Keller's herofication? What do you believe is gained or lost in his redress?

5. Identify the five significant developments that Loewen credits with paving the way for Europeans to dominate the world in the beginning of the 15th century.

6. What is cognitive dissonance? What part does it play in the US's evolving conceptions of Indians?

7. What are the social archetypes present in most history textbooks' retelling of the Christopher Columbus story? What purpose do these archetypes serve?

8. What do anthropologists mean by the term syncretism? What does syncretism reveal about the nature of cultures? How does it impact our understanding of the developments that made Columbus's first voyage possible?

9. Identify the elements of Columbus's discovery narratives that are being challenged by historians and scholars. What are the actual facts of Christopher Columbus's first voyage?

10. Loewen suggests that portions of Columbus's narrative were added to make a better myth for textbook readers. What does Loewen's use of the term myth do to your conception of the story? Is it a useful designation? Why or why not?

11. Loewen credits Columbus with two phenomena. What are they and how do they continue to inform US relations with foreign nations today?

12. What does Loewen's analysis of the word "settlers" reveal about the predispositions of language? Can you identify other words that are similarly loaded with meaning? What are these words and how can you shift their meaning as Loewen does?

13. Explain the role that climate and diseases play in the European "settling" of New England. How does the inclusion of these two elements in Loewen's analysis challenge popular history? What can you conclude Native Americans' way of life prior to their European encounter?

14. What are the social archetypes that appear in this chapter of Lies? How do they serve the Thanksgiving story?

15. Through his demonstration of the ritualized nature of the celebration, Loewen proposes that Thanksgiving has been raised to the status of religious practice in the U.S. Do you agree with his analysis? Why or why not?

16. How do Native Americans' interactions with Europeans shift the balance of power within and among tribes? What elements of Native American and European cultures were enhanced and/or sacrificed?

17. How does the "primitive to civilized continuum" continue to resonate in the stories textbooks tell about Native Americans? Why does it persist?

18. What does the term cultural imperialism mean? How do the dynamics of the Native American slave trade give rise to it in the Americas?

19. Identify the impact of Native American traditions on the values and institutions held in high esteem in the US.

20. What were the long term repercussions of the end of the War of 1812 on conflicts between Native Americans and the United States? Why has the full effect of this war remained unexplored in history textbooks?

21. What is the "magnolia myth"? How was it used in the debate about slavery?

22. How does Loewen define racism? What does he identify as its cause? Does his definition alter your conception of racism? How?

23. What is the relationship between slavery and racism? How does each inform the other? Is there a distinction in each without the presence of the other? What are these distinctions?

24. How does Loewen suggest that textbooks can better redress and deconstruct racism as a process?

25. What is the Confederate Myth of Reconstruction? How do textbooks foster and support this myth? What social archetypes do textbooks employ in the service of this myth?

26. How does Loewen reframe the problem of Reconstruction? How does his reframing impact our understanding of the period known as the "nadir of American race relations"?

27. What were the major legislative measures that marked the "nadir of American race relations" period? What was their resultant impact on the lives of African Americans? How did these measures challenge or reinforce the problem of Reconstruction?

28. What does Loewen reveal about the challenge of upward mobility for African Americans? How was this challenge similar and different for Native Americans?

29. How have textbooks' portraits of John Brown changed through time? What do these shifts communicate about the relationship of time and ideas?

30. What is the legacy of John Brown? How should he be judged?

31. What were the contradictions and inconsistencies in Confederate arguments and behaviors as they sought to preserve and rationalize slavery?

32. How might textbook representations of Brown and Lincoln increase readers' awareness of the nuanced and complex nature of ideas, people, and behavior?

33. How do textbooks shortchange American idealism in the Reconstruction era? What is the lasting impact on American ideologies, particularly their relationships with institutions?

34. How does social class define and constrain individual and group experiences of opportunities in America?

35. What are the "hidden injuries of class"? What are their long term effects?

36. What are some of the reasons why teachers avoid discussions of social class? Why is this avoidance ultimately a disservice to students?

37. What arguments does Loewen use to support his contention that opportunity is not equal in America? How do immigrants support or challenge his views?

38. How do American textbooks perpetuate the myth of upward mobility? What is the relationship between upward mobility and presumptions of merit? Do you agree with the myth label? Why or why not?