**Talking About History:**

**Final Research Project**

For this project, you will get into the mind of someone living through a significant moment of our rapidly and radically changing history as human beings. As this is a world history course, your individual may live virtually anywhere on Earth between the years of 8000 BCE to the present. You will immerse yourself in primary and secondary sources and write a first-person monologue exploring the moment or event you select from the perspective of a person who witnessed it, experienced it, or instigated it. Your monologue will be four to five pages long.

Your monologue should include ample concrete historical detail and demonstrate a fluency with the appropriate historical terminology for the era and region. However, this should be more than a dry report-- it should also take the reader inside the major conflicts, emotions, confusions, questions, and observations your figure was experiencing in the context of the historical moment. The reader should be able to take away a clear understanding of the subtleties, complexities, and significance of the event or process you are describing. Through exploring an individual perspective, you have the opportunity to consider the significance of social and cultural experiences as well as political and economic, to draw connections between broad historical processes and individual experiences, and to create a sense of historical empathy.

Below, I’ve included a list of potential individuals and experiences you might choose to research. The lists are by no means exhaustive, but they are a good place to start. You might to choose to explore the individual experience of any of the following:

**Units One and Two (ca. 8000 BCE to 600 CE)**

* Hammurabi handing down judgments upon the people of Babylonia (or maybe a person being judged *by* Hammurabi)
* An early Hebrew at the time of Abraham’s revelations
* A goldsmith from Meroe during the time of the Egyptian New Kingdom
* Siddhartha Gautama after escaping his palace
* Someone living in an early agricultural settlement during the Neolithic era (focus on Catal Huyuk, Skara Brae, Jericho, or another early Neolithic site)
* An Egyptian at the time of the Hyksos invasion during the Middle Kingdom
* Architects or workers associated with the construction of major examples of monumental architecture (step-pyramids in Mesoamerica, pyramids and temples in Egypt, ziggurats)
* A Buddhist monk from the Maurya empire sent out by Ashoka as a missionary
* Someone witnessing (or participating in!) the Mesoamerican ballgame
* Hatshepsut preparing to rule as pharaoh
* Confucius during the end of the Zhou dynasty
* King Ezana II of Axum at the time of his conversion to Christianity
* A Roman soldier in Judea during the lifetime of Jesus of Nazareth
* Merchants exchanging goods along transregional trade routes (Silk Roads, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean sea lanes)
* Ashoka after the battle of Kalinga
* A Greek living under the rule of the Persian Achaemenid dynasty
* A woman living under the Han dynasty
* Qin Shi Huangdi consolidating power at the end of the Warring States Period
* A member of a nomadic group like the Hunnic people from the steppe

**Unit Three (600 CE to 1450 CE)**

* Mansa Musa (or one of his attendants) during his hajj
* Harold Godwinson just prior to the invasion of William the Conqueror
* Someone in Italy witnessing the devastation of the Black Death
* The empress Theodora at the time of the Nika riots in Constantinople
* An eastern Christian missionary to the Kievan Rus after the baptism of Vladimir
* A high-status woman living during the Tang dynasty
* A local chief gathering in Mbanza to elect the next king of the Kongo
* A woman in Europe who goes into a convent (or a man who goes into a monastery)
* A peasant living on a shoen in feudal Japan (or a peasant living on a fief in feudal western Europe)
* An architect receiving instructions to build the Hagia Sophia
* A member of Ibn Battuta’s retinue traveling to the kingdom of Mali for the first time
* A tribal elder in Mecca at the time of Muhammad’s revelations
* A Sufi missionary arriving in Indonesia
* A French peasant heading out on the First Crusade
* A merchant in a Swahili city-state being exposed to Islam for the first time
* Henry II of England hearing about the death of Thomas Beckett
* A Mayan merchant living in the Mayan neighborhood of Teotihuacán
* A woman during the Song dynasty about to have her daughter’s feet bound
* A northern Chinese peasant living at the time of Kublai Khan’s invasion
* A man waiting to be sacrificed to Huitzlilopochtli under the rule of the Mexica (Aztecs)
* A priestess of Inti preparing for an important ritual
* The heads of the western and eastern branches of the Christian church meeting in 1054 CE

**Unit Four (1450 CE to 1750 CE)**

* An aboriginal Australian coming in contact with a European explorer for the first time
* Pedro II of the Kingdom of the Kongo going to war against the Portuguese
* A religious minority living in Istanbul under the rule of the Ottoman Empire
* A member of an Afghani or Uzbek tribe under the rule of the Safavids
* Emperor Akbar discussing religion with his court
* The emperor Ming Hongwu following the expulsion of the Mongols from China
* Admiral Zheng He on his expeditions throughout the Indian Ocean
* A Jesuit priest sailing to India, China, or Japan in order to try and gain conversions
* A Japanese peasant under the rule of the Tokugawa shogunate
* A Jewish person living during the reign of Peter or Elizabeth the Great in Russia
* A member of the Medici family commissioning a work of art
* Da Vinci while painting the Last Supper, or Michelangelo while painting the Last Judgement
* Pope Leo X during his papacy
* Martin Luther at the time of the Diet of Worms
* Mary I or Elizabeth I of England, wrestling with the question of religion
* A sailor in Vasco da Gama’s crew during their voyage around the Cape of Good Hope
* A Taino native meeting with a member of Columbus’ crew for the first time.
* A Yoruba person forcibly taken from West Africa and sold into slavery in the Caribbean
* A mestiza woman in the Viceroyalty of Peru during the early colonial period

**Unit Five (1750 CE to 1900 CE)**

* A New England merchant involved in smuggling prior to the enforcement of the Navigation Acts in the British American colonies
* Thomas Jefferson drafting the Declaration of Independence
* A woman involved in the March of the Fishwives at Versailles in 1789
* Jean-Paul Marat inciting violence leading to the Reign of Terror
* Boukman leading the ceremony at Bois Cayman during the Haitian Revolution
* A newly-freed person in Haiti in the years following the revolution
* A parishioner of Padre Miguel de Hidalgo in Dolores, Mexico
* Simón Bolívar attempting to rally his troops in Venezuela to overthrow the Spanish
* A member of the British Anti-Slavery Society making a public presentation on the subject
* A female worker in a cotton mill in Britain
* A wealthy factory owner arguing in favor of the use of child labor in an industrialized country
* A child working in a coal mine in northern Britain
* An early supporter of labor unions in either Europe or the United States
* A middle-class housewife and mother in the Industrial Age
* An immigrant traveling from one region (southern Europe, South Asia, East Asia) to other regions (southern and eastern Africa, the Americas).
* A Zulu warrior fighting against the British in southern Africa
* A member of the first Indian National Congress, arguing in favor of Home Rule
* A peasant in southern China during the first Opium War
* Dowager Empress Cixi during the Boxer Rebellion
* A samurai at the time of the Meiji restoration
* Otto von Bismark attempting to unify the German states

**Unit Six (1900 CE to Present)**

* A female worker at the Triangle Shirtwaist factory in 1911
* A person in Sarajevo on the day of Archduke Franz Ferdinand’s assignation
* A female nurse at the Somme on the Western Front
* A female supporter of the suffrage movement in Europe or the United States
* An Australian or New Zealander attempting to take the Dardanelles
* An individual or group OTHER than the Big Four at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919
* Tsar Nicholas II abdicating the throne in Russia in 1917
* A Russian peasant living through the first phase of Lenin’s Russian Revolution
* A Ukrainian farmer during the Holodomor (“terror famine”) of 1932-33
* A follower of Mao Zedong during the Long March
* Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie I during the Italian invasion of 1935
* A Russian soldier fighting at the Battle of Stalingrad
* A member of the American military “island hopping” after the Battle of Midway
* An inhabitant of Nagasaki, Japan on August 10, 1945
* An American citizen listening to Edward R. Murrow’s broadcast on the liberation of Buchenwald
* A woman in a factory who loses her job to returning soldiers after World War II
* A member of the Guamingdong Party retreating to Taiwan in 1949
* An American citizen watching newsreel footage on the development of the H-bomb
* An East Berliner trying to cross the wall to West Berlin
* Nikita Kruschev or John F. Kennedy during the Cuban Missile Crisis
* A Vietnamese citizen during the height of the Vietnam War
* An African political leader following decolonization in the 1960s (pick one, there are so many!)
* Anyone anywhere on Earth, watching the moon landing in 1969
* Indira Ghandi during her term as Prime Minister of India
* A pro-democracy protester during the Tiananmen Square movement in 1989
* A university student in West Berlin watching the wall come down in 1989
* An indigenous Mexican farmer from Chiapas in 1994 following the passage of NAFTA

This project will require multiple steps in order to ensure that you develop an appropriate body of reliable primary and secondary sources, and understand the historical context and world in which your individual lived. Thus, BEFORE you write your narrative, you will do the following:

1. **Select your topic**. You will complete a Google form on Ms. Elrick’s blog in order to identify FIVE potential topics you would be interested in researching. You may NOT have the same topic as someone else, and Ms. Elrick will be making sure that there is a broad spread of topics across time periods. Therefore, if you really, really want a specific topic, you’ll need to make sure you sign up for your topic as soon as possible. **The deadline to submit your topic selection is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**
2. **Complete a Sources Scavenger Hunt**. You will receive a handout instructing you to find a series of different types of sources on your particular topic. You will need to identify various types of primary and secondary sources which might be useful in your project, although you need not read them fully at this time. **Your Sources Scavenger Hunt is due on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**
3. **Create an Annotated Bibliography**. Once you have identified potentially useful sources for your topic through the Scavenger Hunt, you need look deeper into each of them to determine which you will actually use in your final paper. You will need to select at LEAST four primary sources and two secondary sources to include in an annotated bibliography. Your annotation should include a summary of the useful material from the source, any questions or potential blind spots in your source, and an indication as to how the source will be useful in your final paper. **Your annotated bibliography is due \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**
4. **Content Paper**. You will write a brief two-page paper describing the historical context of the individual you will write as in your final paper. This will be a formal historical narrative, and you should properly use and cite appropriate historical sources (preferably the ones identified in your annotated bibliography!) in order to develop an acceptable historical narrative. Your content paper should identify the causes, effects, and potential interpretations of the historical event or context your individual experienced. **Your content paper will be due on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**
5. **Final Monologue**. You will write a four- to five-page narrative from the perspective of the individual you selected at the beginning of this process. You will write in the first person as though you are actively a part of the historical context. You should draw on your primary and secondary sources for appropriate details, and should address how your individual feels, reacts, and interprets the historical environment around them. Your monologue should be engaging, narrative, and historically accurate. **Your final monologue will be due on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**