

*THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO WRITING HISTORY* by Katherine Pickering Antonova  
(Forthcoming from Oxford University Press, 2018)

*The Essential Guide to Writing History* is a step-by-step guide to the typical assignments of any North American history program at the undergraduate or masters level: response papers, short-answer and analytical exam essays, historiography and book reviews, primary source interpretations, research projects, and imaginative essays. Each section contains prose explanations, exercises, and examples, individually numbered for easy reference. Reading and specialized vocabulary are integrated with writing and revision throughout the book. Sections on research address the evolving nature of digital media while teaching the terms and logic of traditional sources and the reasons for citation as well as the styles. The book is appropriate for students of any skill level, from those who struggle with the basics to those honing advanced skills, such as becoming more versatile and articulate about writing and learning how to be an effective commenter on others' work.

The book is guided by the following principles: that effective writing is a process of discovery, achieved through the continual act of making choices—what to include or exclude, how to order elements, word choice—and that these choices must be made consciously according to the author's goals for each piece and awareness of the intended audience. These principles determine the structure of the book. Each chapter is devoted to one assignment type and begins with the goals that define that assignment, then follows the process of preparing, drafting, revising, and proofreading an essay, but the specific strategies and complexity of each of these steps varies depending on the assignment type. This approach to writing is intended not only to help students produce an effective final product through a step-by-step series of instructions and to build from simple, short essays to full research theses, but also to teach students why and how an essay is effective, thus empowering them to approach new writing challenges with the freedom to find their own voice while grounded in the mastery of a broad range of tools and strategies.

Integration of this book into courses should free faculty from devoting already overburdened class and advising time to writing instruction, while making expectations clearer and more consistent for students. The book will have an accompanying website, with resources for instructors to help incorporate it into any course, from sample assignments and grading rubrics with numbered references to relevant book sections for integrating the book into a content course with little or no direct writing instruction, to skeleton syllabi, scaffolded exercises, and workshop plans that might form the backbone of a writing-focused seminar. The website and book together would also be ideal for use in teaching preparation for doctoral-level graduate students.

*The Essential Guide* responds to several urgent needs in higher education today. Students at every level and institution are less prepared for successful academic writing than ever, while Composition Studies research has seen the positive outcomes from interdisciplinary freshman writing courses drop off as students move on in their programs. Current best practice emphasizes Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC)--that direct writing instruction and substantive writing requirements should continue throughout a student's program in any discipline--and Writing in the Disciplines (WID)--that writing instruction in a student's major should focus on specific disciplinary norms, vocabulary, and methods as well as building on interdisciplinary basics of rhetoric and style. *The Essential Guide* meets these needs for history departments.

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