

## HIST252

### Guide to Responding to Review Essay

Some of the most pressing issues in contemporary sub-Saharan Africa include the debt crisis, political instability, environmental degradation, armed conflict, and health concerns. Select two such issues,<sup>1</sup> briefly describe the key elements of both issues, and explore the nexus between the issues and colonialism. In essence, what is the relationship between such contemporary problems and Africa's colonial past?

Because this is an essay assignment, there are multiple valid approaches to it. As indicated in the instructions, there are no right or wrong answers to the essay question. Rather, your essay is evaluated on the strength of its argument and its factual accuracy. Such content assessment is complemented by style considerations (grammar, spelling, correct use of vocabulary, etc.).

The following checklist allows you to critically review your essay. Please reread your essay with the following pointers in mind and attempt to determine how well your essay meets these objectives.

Then, compare the factual information included in your essay with the content information provided below the checklist. These are some points that should be included in your essay depending on your selection of issues. Yet this is not an exhaustive list; your essay is expected to cover information not listed here. Use this list as an example of the kind of information relevant to the essay question.

#### Checklist:

- Overall
  - Does the essay contain typos, grammar errors, etc.?
  - Have you proofread the essay? Do not rely on spell-check.
  - Have you addressed all aspects of the assignment?
  - Do you discern any contradictions in your argument?
- Introduction
  - Does it reflect the topic?
  - Is it vague?
  - Does it include a thesis statement?
    - Is the thesis statement clearly articulated?
    - Does the thesis statement reflect the topic?
- Body
  - Does it reflect the topic?
  - Does it include repetitive content?
  - Is it well-organized?

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<sup>1</sup> Your selected issues should be among the topics explored in Unit 8.

- Does it include irrelevant content?
- Is there a clear line of reasoning/argument included?
  - Does the argument support the thesis?
  - Are key elements missing?
  - Is the argument confusing?
  - Is the argument contradictory?
  - Are there ample examples to support the argument?
  - Is the argument rigorous?
- Conclusion
  - Is it a conclusion and not a summary of the essay?
  - Is it vague?
- Quotes
  - Are they well integrated?
  - Are they correctly cited?
  - Do they support the argument?
- Bibliography
  - Is it complete?
  - Is it in the correct format?

### **Content List:**

Regardless of the issues you selected and the argument you make pertaining to the colonialism-contemporary issues nexus, the following key elements should be included in your analysis.

- Colonial economic policies
  - Infrastructure development
  - Industrial capacity building
  - Agriculture
  - Taxation
- Colonial education policies
  - Exclusionary educational systems
  - Resource commitment to education
  - School curricula content
- Colonial governance structures
  - Degree of democratic practices
  - Parameters of decision-making mechanisms
  - Emphasis on law and order
  - Politicization of ethnicity
- Artificiality of state boundaries
- General decision-making disenfranchisement
- Overall devaluation of African norms, practices, customs, values, and beliefs

Your analysis of the nexus between the contemporary issues and colonialism should reflect the particular details and dynamics of the key elements listed earlier as they apply to your selected issues.