

HISTORY 2600 UNITED STATES HISTORY SURVEY

Second Written Assignment

PURPOSE

Your essay will assess who makes the better case: the writers who criticize Marc Egnal's *Clash of Extremes*, or those who defend this work.

METHOD

Read at least one critical review of *Clash of Extremes* and one positive commentary. All these reviews are collected on the Web site www.clashofextremes.com.

The most negative review is the one by John Ashworth in *H-CivWar*. Historians Jason Phillips and Edwin Perkins in *Reviews in American History* also find many flaws in the work. Both these reviews are good to work with because they contain Egnal's responses.

Among other reviewers who were not entirely convinced are Peter Onuf in *Civil War History*, Paul Paskoff in *Journal of American History*, and John Majewski in the *American Historical Review*.

For more positive accounts, consult Chris Kingston in the *Harvard Crimson*, Jonathan Levy in *Journal of American Studies*, A. James Fuller in *Civil War Book Review*, or Sean Patrick Adams in *Journal of Southern History*.

You should also read the assigned chapters in *Clash of Extremes* so you can better analyze the conflicting views of the critics.

The best essays will show an awareness of the arguments for and against this work, and make clear which side is most persuasive. Even though Professor Egnal is course director, there is no reason to defend this book if you feel the critics make the best case.

FORMAT

Your essay must have a single sentence thesis, which should be placed at the end of the first paragraph. The material on writing featured in the course web site will help you formulate your argument. The best submissions will also have clear structural statements.

Your essay should be no more than **four** pages of text with standard margins and standard fonts. Use endnotes or footnotes for all citations.

Your essay is due in tutorial the week of December 7. Unexcused late submissions will be penalized a full grade. That is, for any essay handed in a day late a B will become a C. Papers submitted a week late or more will be reduced another full grade.