**Historical Fiction Research Essay – Anchor Assignment**

This semester you will be reading a historical fiction novel of your choice. Throughout the reading of your novel you will be expected to annotate and take notes on historical events, time periods, characters, locations, etc.  Once notes have been compiled, you will conduct research to determine the accuracy or inaccuracy of the author’s portrayal of these events. After the research has been completed you will compose an essay to argue a significant point involving the historical elements of the novel.

**Some sample topics**:

1.   Identify and explain the similarities between what actually happened historically and

what happened in the novel.

2.   Identify and explain the differences between what actually happened historically and

what happened in the novel.

3.   Identify a major event the author missed and what effect that event may have had were

it to be included in the novel.

4.   Identify how the character(s) were affected by the time period or historical events

within the novel.

5.  Explore the relationships between characters in the novel and whether or not they are

portrayed accurately.  This works best only if your characters are/were real

people.  Ex.  Thomas Jefferson and his bi-racial children in *Jefferson’s Sons*

6.  Look at aspects of setting like clothing, vehicles, possessions, technology, etc.  Feel free

to focus on just one aspect if that seems appropriate, or choose more it that works

better with your book.

7.  Research the use of time in the novel.  Are the events of the plot accurate to how they

occurred in real life?

8.  If your book involves a specialty topic, focus on specialty to see if the novel portrays it

properly.  Examples include Negro League baseball, horse-racing, beekeeping, fly-

fishing,  Navajo code talkers, John James Audobon’s *Birds of America,* etc.

This essay will be 5 paragraphs in length (minimum) and must include:

Introduction

· An opening sentence that is engaging and relevant

· The book title (italicized) and author’s name

· A *very brief* summary of the book and historical time period

· A clearly stated thesis statement that introduces the purpose of the essay

Body

· Topic sentences/claim that support the main idea(s) introduced in the thesis

· Textual evidence in the form of paraphrasing, summarizing or direct quotes – there must

be a minimum of one piece of textual evidence per body paragraph

· Explanations and commentary – each quote should be thoroughly introduced and

explained

· Parenthetical citations – references in proper MLA format should coincide with references

on the works cited page

Conclusion

· The thesis/claim is restated in different words from in the introduction and the author

name and novel title are mentioned

· The “so what” – how does this claim fit into the bigger picture? What is important about

this information to readers today? What can readers learn about life, human nature, or

values by reading this book?