

## **HIS 354 Presentation Assignment: Belgian Decolonization of Congo**

### **Rationale**

The purpose of the presentation assignment is to:

- *Vary assessment methods.* This presentation assignment offers an opportunity for alternative assessment, which allows students to demonstrate proficiency beyond essay-writing and multiple-choice testing.
- *Develop ability to analyze historiographical debates in depth.* This presentation assignment requires students to analyze a historiographical debate in depth, using a range of resources including textbooks, monographs, articles, and visual media.
- *Develop transferable skills.* The ability to plan and deliver a case orally, using supporting technology, are not only key skills in the context of history classes but also useful (if not essential) for many jobs.

### **Presentation Skills**

Students should consider how they can maximize the impact of their presentation:

- *Know the task.* The question is clearly defined, so the presentation must address the salient issues.
- *Produce supporting documentation.* The presentation may be quickly forgotten unless the audience has something to take away that will remind them of the main points that have been covered. [A discussion exercise is required.]
- *Be confident.* Students should not feel intimidated by the experience of giving a paper; everyone else will have to take their turn, so students should not feel that peers will be unduly critical.
- *Be imaginative.* Students should not simply aim to write an essay and then read this out to the rest of the group. In order to make presentations more interesting students could:
  - (a) introduce handouts for the rest of the group to read (your discussion exercise should contain extracts from books and articles that indicate aspects of the historiographical debate);
  - (b) ask questions of your audience and invite them to ask you questions;
  - (c) use Powerpoint to show images as well as text;
  - (d) use a film or documentary clip.

Use your study skills guide section 4 “Using the Internet for academic purposes” and section 5 “Preparing and delivering a presentation”.

### **Assessment Criteria**

The quality of presentations will be assessed in relation to five categories: (a) structure; (b) argument; (c) delivery; (d) visual resources; and (e) written resources. There are 40 points available in each category and a total of 200 points is therefore available for this presentation task, which is weighted at 20%.

## Presentation Topic

Analyze Belgian decolonization of Congo with reference to the three major historiographical interpretations of the causes of European decolonization:

- (a) *Metropolitan*. This perspective is concerned with the 'official mind' and conditions in the European imperial powers. It addresses a number of sub-themes e.g.:
- Psychological – did European ruling elites withdraw from empire because they lost their will to govern?
  - Economic – how profitable were colonies in the post-war period and did this have any effect on metropolitan decision-making?
  - Military – how capable were the armed forces of dealing with insurgency?
  - Political – to what extent did domestic political pressure compel European governments to withdraw from empire?
- (b) *Colonial*. This perspective examines the role of nationalists in forcing Europeans out of their colonies – did they cause the end of empire or merely accelerate a process to which Europeans were already committed?
- (c) *International*. This perspective addresses the extent to which European decolonization was affected by pressure from the United States and the United Nations – to what extent were European states able to resist such pressure and why?

## Suggested Reading

(a) General

Betts, Raymond F. (2004) *Decolonization* (New York: Routledge)

Birmingham, David (1995) *The Decolonization of Africa* (London: UCL Press)

Chamberlain, Muriel E. (1999) *Decolonization: The Fall of the European Empires* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell)

Cooper, Frederick (2002) *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present* (New York: Cambridge University Press)

Duara, Prasenjit (2004) *Decolonization: perspectives from now and then* (New York: Routledge)

El-Ayouty, Yassin (1971) *The United Nations and decolonization: the role of Afro-Asia* (The Hague: Nijhoff)

Hargreaves, John D. (1996) *Decolonization in Africa* (New York: Routledge, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)

Holland, Robert F. (1985) *European Decolonization 1918-1981: An Introductory Survey* (Basingstoke: Macmillan)

Luard, Evan (1982) *History of the United Nations* (New York: St. Martin's)

HIS 354 Presentation Assignment: Roberts and Westad (2013), Book VIII, Ch.2, Q.14 (a) & (b)

McMahon, Robert J. (2013) *The Cold War in the Third World* (New York: Oxford University Press)

Meredith, Martin. *The Fate of Africa: A History of the Continent Since Independence* (New York: Public Affairs, 2005)

Newsom, David D. (2001) *The imperial mantle: the United States, decolonization, and the Third World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press)

Roberts, John M. and O. Arne Westad (2013) *The History of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 6<sup>th</sup> ed.)

Shipway, Martin (2008) *Decolonization and its Impact: A Comparative Approach to the End of the Colonial Empires* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell)

Springhall, John (2001) *Decolonization since 1945: the collapse of European overseas empires* (New York: Palgrave)

United Nations Office of Public Information (1977) *The United Nations and decolonization: highlights of thirty years of United Nations efforts on behalf of colonial countries and peoples* (New York: UNOPI)

(b) Specialist

Collins, Carole J. L. (1993) 'The Cold War comes to Africa: Cordier and the 1960 Congo Crisis', *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 47, No. 1, pp. 243-269.

Gibbs, David N. (1993) 'Dag Hammarskjöld, the United Nations, and the Congo Crisis of 1960-1: A Reinterpretation', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 1, pp. 163-174.

Helmreich, Jonathan E. (1996) 'U.S. foreign policy and the Belgian Congo in the 1950s', *The Historian*, Vol. 58, No. 2, pp. 315-328.

Hoffmann, Stanley (1962) 'In Search of a Thread: The UN in the Congo Labyrinth' *International Organization*, Vol. 16, No. 2, pp. 331-361.

Kent, John (2010) *America, the UN and Decolonisation: Cold War Conflict in the Congo* (New York: Routledge)

Mazov, Sergey (2010) *A Distant Front in the Cold War: The USSR in West Africa and the Congo, 1956-1964* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press)

Lise Namikas (2013) *Battleground Africa: Cold War in the Congo, 1960-1965* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press)

Nwaubani, Ebere (2001) 'Eisenhower, Nkrumah and the Congo Crisis', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 36, No. 4, pp. 599-622.

Peemans, Jean-Philippe (1980) 'Imperial Hangovers: Belgium – The Economics of Decolonization' *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 15, No. 2, pp. 257-286.

HIS 354 Presentation Assignment: Roberts and Westad (2013), Book VIII, Ch.2, Q.14 (a) & (b)

Vanthemse, Guy (2006) "The Historiography of Belgian Colonialism in the Congo", in Csaba Levai (ed.) *Europe and the world in European historiography* (Pisa: Pisa University Press), pp. 89-119, available at: <http://www.cliohres.net/books/6/Vanthemse.pdf>

Weiss, Herbert (2012) "The Congo's Independence Struggle Viewed Fifty Years Later", *African Studies Review*, Vol. 55, No. 1, pp. 109-15.

Young, Crawford (1965) *Politics in the Congo: decolonization and independence* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press)

Students will probably need to conduct internet-based research for this assignment, for illustrations as well as bibliographic material. Please refer to the History Study Skills guide section 4, "Using the internet for academic purposes." If students find an electronic source that they wish to use and have any questions about the reliability of the material found online, they should consult their instructor.