

Attendance & Participation in HIST 431

This course places a **premium on engagement**. To succeed, you have to **show up and be involved**. In a large class, casual discussion is not easy. Nevertheless, this is an upper-division course in History, and so discourse in a variety of forms—writing, speaking, dialog—has to be a part of it. It begins with showing up, both physically and virtually. This page, then, presents expectations as to attendance and participation.

Class Attendance

Show up. Every time you do, you get 3 points, up to a maximum of 75. Just for showing up. You are expected to keep record of your own attendance in your gradesheet, the Excel file. In addition, for documentation, many days we either collect some written exercise or pass around a sign-in sheet.

Participation in Class

Every time you make a substantial contribution to classroom proceedings, give yourself 3 points. Record this in your gradesheet. No more than two entries per class session. Now, just what constitutes "a substantial contribution"? Here are possibilities.

1. Asking a question, germane to the material being covered, that is a matter of concept, definition, or significance. Just asking about a factual detail doesn't count. This should be a question that invites thought or discussion.
2. Making a comment, germane to be material being covered, that is a matter of concept, definition, or significance, or in some way elaborates on the material constructively. This might be as simple as a good story illustrating a point in the material.
3. Serving as spokesperson for your focus group in a cooperative learning situation, reporting back to the class.

Participation Online

Online participation takes place on the wall and forums of the HIST 431 Facebook page. Every time you make a substantial contribution to online proceedings, give yourself 3 points. Record this in your gradesheet. No more than one entry in a day. Again, what constitutes a "substantial contribution"? In the first place, it is not one of your routine, graded assignments. It is discussion that exhibits interaction with your colleagues in the course. Here are possibilities.

1. Asking a question, pertaining to course material or to regional life in general, that invites response from others. Make it reasonably interesting and somehow significant. In other words, get the ball rolling on discussion.
2. Posting a comment or response based on the assignments and postings of others. Show that you are reading their stuff and are interested in what they are saying. Make it thoughtful and germane.
3. Drawing attention (perhaps by posting a link) to material outside the proceedings of the class that relates to the class. For instance, posting details of an upcoming event.

Keeping It Honest

Are we going to check up on all this? Of course not. As with everything recorded in the gradesheets, however, we will do spotchecks, and you don't want to get caught recording participation that didn't happen. This whole package of attendance and participation features is an experiment in culture-building. It operates on the assumption that we are a good university with good students who will respond well to incentives to build a strong academic culture. We are not in competition with one another; rather **we engage with one another and help one another along**. In other words, **be Bison**.