The Essential Historiography Reader
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I dedicate this book to my Mike and to all my friends at Wingate University.
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Historiography is an essential component of undergraduate history programs at most American universities, yet few resources are explicitly devoted to supporting historiography education at this level. Having taught the subject to undergraduate history majors for eight years, I have struggled to find appropriate readings every year. While many general historiography texts exist, all are either written for graduate students and are thus too in-depth and complex for most undergraduates, or are too brief and simplistic to help students to thoroughly comprehend the many approaches used by historians over time. Most importantly, historical theories and approaches are often difficult to grasp without actually reading the histories themselves. Some historiography teachers solve this problem by having their students read multiple history books and articles throughout the course of the semester, which may entail the purchase of many books and copyright permissions for many different articles each year. This approach to teaching historiography requires more time and money than many teachers and students desire. I set out to solve these problems by writing and compiling a textbook/reader which not only details the history of historical practice and explains historical theories and philosophies in understandable language, but also provides excerpts to illustrate these historical approaches and help students to identify them in their own writing and in the writings of contemporary historians.

This reader is organized into two main parts. The first part traces contemporary American historical traditions to their roots in ancient Greece and explains how the profession of history emerged and developed in Europe and America through the nineteenth century. The second part focuses more specifically on historiographical developments in the United States since the nineteenth century.

Each chapter is then divided into two sections. In the first section, historical theories, methods, and developments are introduced and explained. Key concepts and historians are noted in the margins, where space is provided for note-taking. The second section contains excerpts from important historians described in the first section. The last excerpt of each chapter, except for Chapter 1, illustrates how one prominent historian applied the approaches mentioned in the first section to the topic of the American Revolution. These excerpts are included so that students can see how historiography and historical context shape the written history of a topic familiar to most American students. All excerpts are taken exactly as they were originally written (or translated as the case may be), including any reference notes they may have originally included. This is done so that the reader can better see the types of sources and methodology used in the excerpts. Questions for consideration are included for each excerpt to help guide student reading and thinking. The Critical Analysis Worksheet provided in Appendix A may additionally help students to take notes on the excerpts and dissect them. By critically analyzing these excerpts, students may gain a deeper understanding of various theoretical frameworks and methodologies, and decide for themselves which of these approaches are the most promising or flawed.

The epilogue discusses trends in American historiography since the 1990s, trends which continue to influence current historians and shape the environment in which history students...
now live and work. A sample historiographical review essay of the American Revolution is provided in Appendix B to illustrate how one might use the American Revolution excerpts in an actual historiographical essay. An additional bibliography is provided at the end of the book for those who wish to do further research on the topics discussed in each chapter.

The *Essential Historiography Reader* is by no means an exhaustive discussion of all of the historiographical issues of concern to professional historians, but it aims to help students to understand the theories, philosophies, and methods which have shaped the historical profession in the United States and to think critically about the histories they read as they begin their careers in history.

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