

## TH228 – Final Project

Dr. Heidi L. Nees

### Group #4 – Deconstructing *Hamilton*

#### Individual Group Expectations & Guidelines

For this project, you will explore and analyze Lin-Manuel Miranda's musical *Hamilton* and the ways in which the narrative layers that form the production create new understandings about national past and present.

#### EXPECTATIONS:

- Listen to the *Hamilton* soundtrack.
- Read the libretto/book included with the soundtrack.
- Conduct individual and group research on the musical.
- Analyze 3 songs within the production.
- Respond to discourse surrounding the musical.
- Present findings/discoveries/thoughts to class.

#### MATERIALS TO BE SUBMITTED FOR ASSESSMENT:

- Research Guide (15 points) – Respond to the prompts provided on the research guide and submit a cohesive and clear response. Response should be broken down by question. This research guide should provide the group with information that allows the students to analyze the musical and to respond with their own reactions.
- Image Packet (5 points) – Find and collect images that relate to *Hamilton*. These may include production images, historical images, and video that thematically or contextually relate to the play. This should be incorporated into your presentation.
- Analysis & Responses (40 points) – Using the Analysis and Response guides below, use your research to deconstruct the historical narratives found in *Hamilton* and to respond to what others are saying about the musical.
- Reflection (15 points) – Use the the prompts provided to reflect upon this project and your process in completing it.
- Presentation (15 points) – Guidelines will be distributed in class. Your group's presentation will take place on Friday, June 10.

#### IMPORTANT DATES/DEADLINES:

- Wednesday, June 1 - Submit Research Guide, Image Packet, Analysis & Responses, and Reflection.
- Friday, June 10 – In-class presentation.

#### RESEARCH GUIDE:

The group will submit one (1) Research Guide. Please format your guide according to the sections below. Each section has a list of inquiries to guide your research. You are not limited to these prompts, however. If you find interesting elements of research that don't seem to "fit" into the categories below, start a new section. You must address each of the listed sections, though.

#### RESEARCH

##### 1) Development & Source Material

- a. When was this play written? What inspired Lin-Manuel Miranda to write this musical? What served as his source material? What was his process like?

- 2) Playwright
  - a. What is some biographical information about the playwright, related to his work on *Hamilton*? Are there particular events, people, etc. from his background that influenced his approach to *Hamilton*?
- 3) Current State of Production
  - a. What is the current state of this show? Where is it being performed? What's next?
- 4) Bibliography
  - a. Compose a bibliography of ALL of the sources you consulted during your research (don't forget your images & video clips!) Please use MLA or Chicago Style formatting.

#### ANALYSIS & RESPONSE:

- 1) Song Responses (15 points): Please listen to and read the lyrics for 3 songs. One song must be the final track, "Who Lives, Who Dies, Who Tells Your Story." The other two are your choice. After listening to the song and reading the lyrics, discuss the ways in which Lin-Manuel Miranda take a historiographic look at the past through his musical. What does this musical, and this song in particular, suggest about historical narratives and how we we construct narratives about the past? What does this musical and song communicate about storytelling, whose stories get told, and who gets to tell stories? What new discoveries about the past might this musical and song provide?
- 2) Discourse (20 points): Read the following writings about *Hamilton*:
 

<http://variety.com/2016/legit/opinion/hamilton-diversity-casting-actors-equity-guest-column-1201745244/>

<http://www.thenation.com/article/how-hamilton-is-revolutionizing-the-broadway-musical/>

<http://howlround.com/why-hamilton-is-not-the-revolution-you-think-it-is>

<https://feministspectator.princeton.edu/2016/02/24/hamilton/>

As a group, discuss the articles. Together, write a response to these articles. With which points do you agree? Disagree? What points raise new questions for you?
- 3) Keeping in mind the concept of historicization or historification (a la Brecht), in what ways does *Hamilton* comment on our own society and historical moment? (5 points)

#### REFLECTION:

Each individual group member will submit his/her own reflection paper. Please respond to the prompts below when writing your reflection.

- 1) What was your favorite part of this process? Explain why.
- 2) What was your least favorite part? Explain why.
- 3) What was the most valuable part of this process? Explain why.
- 4) How did this project get you to think about theatre and history in new ways?
- 5) What new discoveries did you make about yourself? How might the information/knowledge/skills that you gained while working on this project connect to your life outside of this class?