**6HUM1060 Thinking With History**

**Assignments 1 & 2: Case Study Commentaries**

**1000 words each on 2 case studies.**

**Due 5 March and 2 April**

Write two 1000 commentaries on two case studies, engaging with the 4 central questions of the module:

1. **TO WHAT EXTENT DOES CURRENT DEBATE TRY TO USE LESSONS FROM THE PAST?**

**Establish the extent to which ‘lessons from the past’ are sought or refused in contemporary debate** on this topic (and suggest some reasons why); explore how the past is used or invoked in this context.

2. **WHY?**

**Investigate the relevance of historical precedents and contexts** – which ones might be relevant and why. Can history be a guide? What sort of guide?

3. **HOW?**

**Articulate the exact processes of applying historical insight in this case study**. What sort of historical insight is it? Is it the historian's skill of analysis for example, is it about finding similarities/differences in situations, is it about perspective (taking the 'long view') or does it relate to context....? Can non-historians (e.g. politicians, policy makers) offer different insights using history? How?

4. **USEFUL?**

Assess the validity of taking a historical view in this case, and precisely what it contributes (or not).

While you will draw on your observations of the topic, this commentary will NOT be concerned with your personal responses to the issue. What you are doing is showing an awareness of how history is invoked in present-day debates and policies, and the uses to which history is put.

A good case study commentary will demonstrate ability to link analysis of a specific case study to wider issues of methodology raised by MacMillan, Tosh and Neustadt and May.

You do not need to repeat the historical narrative of the case study. What the commentary addresses is the methods and ways in which history in the case study is used and applied.

See the lecture notes for week 1, and your notes for weeks 2 and 3 to help you.