

Summer Assignment

Modern European History begins with the Renaissance. Yet it is very difficult to fully appreciate the Renaissance without a deep understanding of 14<sup>th</sup> medieval Europe. Indeed Europe as we know it took shape in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, allowing it to excel in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. This summer I would like you to read the first part of a book that details the calamitous 14<sup>th</sup> century. Below is a review.

*In "A Distant Mirror, a historical narrative, Barbara Tuchman writes of the cataclysmic 14th century, when the energies of medieval Europe were devoted to fighting internecine wars and warding off the plague. Some medieval thinkers viewed these disasters as divine punishment for mortal wrongs; others, more practically, viewed them as opportunities to accumulate wealth and power. One of the latter, whose life informs much of Tuchman's book, was the French nobleman Enguerrand de Coucy, who enjoyed the opulence and elegance of the courtly tradition while ruthlessly exploiting the peasants under his thrall. Tuchman looks into such events as the Hundred Years War, the collapse of the medieval church, and the rise of various heresies, pogroms, and other events that caused medieval Europeans to wonder what they had done to deserve such horrors.*

- A. **Read PART ONE of:** A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous 14th Century by Barbara W. Tuchman

ISBN-10: 0345349571

ISBN-13: 978-0345349576

**B. Respond in 1 pages:**

- What was your overall response to part one of the book?
- Of the events and figures the author talked about, what do you see as the most significant to European history? Discuss USING SPECIFICS FROM THE TEXT. Please do not write in generalities.

**C. Choose ONE to respond to in 2-3 pages.**

1. Select a chapter from part two to read and connect to part one. What connection did you make and how is it relevant to European history?
2. How is the title, "A Distant Mirror" appropriate for the content of the book. What other moment in history or a moment your history would you hold up to as a distant mirror? Why is this important?

- D. **BE PREPARED TO PRESENT YOUR FINDINGS.** This assignment is due on Thursday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016. Good luck students!! I look forward to seeing you all!