

Department of History, University of Sheffield

Essay Prize 2019-20

Essays must be received by 5pm Wednesday 29 April 2020, and must be accompanied by a coversheet which can be downloaded from our website. Essays should be no more than 1500 words in length, including footnotes but excluding any bibliography.

Assessment

The assessors will be looking for essays that:

- provide a broad historical context
- show awareness of the changes in historiography
- use a range of sources (primary and/or secondary)
- are analytical, not descriptive
- are written in clear, continuous prose, correctly spelled and punctuated
- demonstrate an understanding of differing interpretations of history and reach a substantiated conclusion.

Questions

1. How 'Roman' was the Roman Empire?
2. Was Alfred the Great great?
3. How complete was the Norman Conquest?
4. How religious was politics in the Middle Ages?
5. How central were religious imperatives in the Spanish Conquest?
6. How important is it to reframe the English Civil War as a war of three kingdoms?
7. Was the French Revolution a world historical event?
8. What was the impact of the British Empire on British society?
9. Was the Industrial Revolution a turning point in world history?
10. 'Lions led by donkeys'. Why has this interpretation of the First World War been so popular?
11. How significant was the First World War?
12. Did women have a political voice in Britain before 1918?
13. Has German history followed a 'special path' (*sonderweg*)?
14. Is it fair to call Stalin a 'new tsar'?
15. Should historians extend the chronological boundaries of the American Civil Rights Movement beyond the 1950s and the 60s?
16. Did Mao Zedong lay the foundation for China's rapid development?
17. What changed in Britain in the 1960s?
18. 'South African apartheid was ended not by the decisions of a few great men, but by the actions of ordinary people.' Do you agree with this interpretation?
19. 'All revolutions are in some respects civil wars'. Discuss with reference to at least three revolutions.
20. Why are the centenaries of historical events of interest to the historian?