



# STUART HALL SCHOOL

## Mr. Layne, AP World History 2019-2020: Summer Reading Assignment

AP World History Students.

Your required summer reading assignment is the following book:

Stephen R. Platt, *Autumn in the Heavenly Kingdom: China, the West, and the Epic Story of the Taiping Civil War*

**ISBN-10:** 0307472213

**ISBN-13:** 978-0307472212

In addition to reading this book, you are to write a scholarly book review of it. For those of you who took Ancient World History or Modern World History with me this past year, this assignment is just like the first marking period project. In order to refresh your memory (and for those of you who were not in one of my classes last year) the criteria for the book review follows:

### **Elements of a Book Review:**

A critical book review does the following:

- it identifies and discusses the historian's thesis (the question the book is answering or the argument that it is making)
- it **briefly** summarizes the main points of the book
- it examines and evaluates the evidence (sources) used by the historian to prove the thesis (what kinds of sources does the historian rely on? Does the historian cite their sources? Did they include a bibliography?)
- it examines the conclusions made by the historian to see if they are relevant to the thesis and supported by the evidence
- it points out any shortcomings the book has regarding all of the above (problems with the thesis, lack of evidence, problems with interpretations of evidence, problems with the conclusion, etc.)

Your book review should do **all** of the above.

### **Length, Formatting, Grading, Due Date, etc:**

Your book review should be between 500-750 words (approximately 2-3 pages). The paper should be double-spaced, stapled, have standard margins all around and be written in a font no larger than 12 pt. You should use Times New Roman font.

The review itself is essentially written like an essay. As with a research paper, you will need a thesis (your view of the book—what it is about, what it does well, and

what it is lacking). You will need to back up your thesis with evidence—material from the book that you use to back up your thesis. You therefore need to cite the book as you review it. To do so, simply use parenthetical documentation, like this (Bernstein, 261). Finally, you must draw conclusions about the book.

The review is due on the first day of class, and will count as a quiz grade for the 1<sup>st</sup> marking period.

If you have any questions at any point during this process, email me at [tlayne@stuart-hall.org](mailto:tlayne@stuart-hall.org)