Peer Critique Worksheet: Final Research Paper

Author: ________________________________

Peer reader: ________________________________

1. Can you identify the main argument? If not, suggest possible directions the author might take toward a claim. If so, cite the main claim and comment on its placement in the paper (intro? conclusion?) and whether it’s clearly articulated.

2. How does the main argument relate to a definition of revolution?

3. Is the main argument genuinely “difficult” and “arguable?” Could a reasonable reader look at the same evidence and come to a different conclusion? Explain.

4. Does the author appropriately frame the argument as a disruption of an established scholarly context/conversation? Explain.

5. Comment on scope.

6. Building an argument: Does the paper fall into “laundry list mode” (listing examples as evidence of one claim that gets repeated) or does the author appropriately “build” (advance/thicken/complicate) the argument as the paper proceeds. If you are having trouble with this concept, be sure to talk to teachers, fellows, and your peer partner.

7. Discuss the “so what?” Is it conceptual or practical? Should the author make the practical conceptual or vice versa? Why? Does it convince you that there is a cost to not understanding the main claim? Any other advice on improving the “so what.”
8. Does the author clearly “signal” where secondary sources/background end and his or her own analysis begins? Give one example where this is done well and one where it might be improved.


10. Consider use and integration of quotations: Look for what Graff calls a “quotation sandwich” and mark possible “orphan” or “drive-by” quotations (They Say/I Say, ch. 3 [this book is at the reference desk in the library]). Identify the section of the paper that relies most heavily on quotations. Does the author offer a pastiche of quotations or does the author “unpack” them with appropriate analysis? Explain.


12. Does the author follow proper CMS formatting in endnotes and works cited? If not, provide advice.

13. Review the bibliography. If you get the feeling that the author has opted for “most easily available” rather than “best” sources, please comment. Any other observations about the content of the bibliography?

14. Does the author follow proper formatting guidelines for cover page, margins, font, page #s, etc.? If not, explain.

15. Identify and mark passages that could benefit from paramedic method.

16. What additional advice would you offer the author towards revision?