Cause and Consequence  *Why do events happen, and what are their impacts?*

**Guidepost 1**  Change is driven by *multiple causes*, and results in *multiple consequences*. These create a complex web of interrelated short-term and long-term causes and consequences.

**Guidepost 2**  The *causes* that lead to a particular historical event *vary in their influence*, with some being more important than others.

**Guidepost 3**  Events result from the interplay of two types of factors: (1) *historical actors*, who are people (individuals or groups) who take actions that cause historical events, and (2) the social, political, economic, and cultural *conditions* within which the actors operate.

**Guidepost 4**  Historical actors cannot always predict the effect of conditions, opposing actions, and unforeseen reactions. These have the effect of generating *unintended consequences*.

**Guidepost 5**  The events of history were not inevitable, any more than those of the future are. Alter a single action or condition, and an event might have turned out differently.

---

**Historical Perspectives  *How can we better understand the people of the past?***

**Guidepost 1**  An ocean of *difference* can lie between current *worldviews* (beliefs, values, and motivations) and those of earlier periods of history.

**Guidepost 2**  It is important to avoid *presentism*—the imposition of present ideas on actors in the past. Nonetheless, cautious reference to universal human experience can help us relate to the experiences of historical actors.

**Guidepost 3**  The perspectives of historical actors are best understood by considering their *historical context*.

**Guidepost 4**  Taking the perspective of historical actors means inferring how people felt and thought in the past. It *does not mean identifying with* those actors. Valid *inferences* are those based on *evidence*.

**Guidepost 5**  Different historical actors have *diverse perspectives* on the events in which they are involved. Exploring these is key to understanding historical events.

---

**The Ethical Dimension  *How can history help us to live in the present?***

**Guidepost 1**  Authors make *implicit or explicit* ethical judgments in writing historical narratives.

**Guidepost 2**  Reasoned ethical judgments of past actions are made by taking into account the *historical context* of the actors in question.

**Guidepost 3**  When making ethical judgments, it is important to be *cautious about imposing contemporary standards* of right and wrong on the past.

**Guidepost 4**  A fair assessment of the ethical implications of history can inform us of our *responsibilities to remember and respond* to contributions, sacrifices, and injustices of the past.

**Guidepost 5**  Our understanding of history can help us make *informed judgments* about contemporary issues, but only when we *recognize the limitations* of any direct "lessons" from the past.