Introduction to the History of Science and Technology

Assignment Goals: The purpose of this lower-stakes assignment is to help you practice *reading and critical analysis of scientific literature*. Scientific literature includes many kinds of writing, from essays for general readers to highly sophisticated research reports and articles by and for experts in certain specialized areas. In particular, this assignment will help you to practice two skills that part of our larger course goals:

- Evaluating arguments or claims in scientific literature, for example by questioning research methods, conclusions, or reasoning from various assumptions;

- Writing insightful critiques of this literature.

Assignment: To help us realize the learning goals above, this assignment asks you to examine an Internet article, "Chocolate in Nobel Prizes Linked in Study," which focuses on a statistical relationship. Your task is to write a brief (1-page) critique of the study—not the Internet report but the study itself, *based on information in the report,* which is accurate). Use the evaluation guide productively to help you write your paper.

***Evaluation Guide*:**

The *strong* response demonstrates that you have understood and reflected critically on the reading. The response will explore the implications of certain conclusions, assumptions, or methodology, raising questions or doubts when appropriate. Specific claims or examples may be used to support the critique.

The *average* response will demonstrate a basic understanding of the reading and some reflection on its conclusions, assumptions, or methodology, but the critique might be tentative or unreasoned. The critique might lack support from specific claims or examples.

The *weak* response will not provide an adequate critique of the article. There may be an attempt to call into question a specific conclusion, assumption, or method, but it may not be relevant to the article's main points. But instead of analysis and critique, you might paraphrase the article, relate it to your own life, or provide a purely personal response (e.g., whether the article was enjoyable to read).