This course teaches how historians think about historical research and create historical scholarship. Students will spend the semester designing and completing a research project. This will involve identifying a research topic (a question that can be answered using historical evidence), conducting primary historical research to gather that evidence, and placing this research in a historiographic context.

Students in the class will also complete weekly reading assignments to enhance understanding of the research and writing methods of historians. They will participate in class discussions and develop written composition skills. This class will be conducted in a workshop format in which students share their evolving research plans, discuss challenges and successes, and interact collaboratively in class. Attendance and participation in this class is required. All readings must be completed in advance of the class to which they are assigned.

Students will choose one of the following options, in consultation with the professor:

Option 1: Students writing complete research paper. Must be 25-35 pages in length.
- Class participation 20%
- Book review 20%
- Project proposal (not graded)
- Final paper (including preliminary assignments) 60%

Option 2: Students writing thesis proposal and chapter draft
- Class participation 20%
- Book review 20%
- Thesis proposal (7-10 pages) 30%
- Final paper (chapter draft 15-25 pages) 30%

Learning Objectives
- Conduct original research on a topic of historical significance using primary sources
- Locate and analyze relevant secondary sources
- Articulate a thesis statement that is supported by historical evidence in a research paper
- Assess the scholarly contribution of this research project by placing it in a historiographic context
- Demonstrate familiarity with standard scholarly writing and citation style in accord with the *Chicago Manual of Style*

Required Text

Grading Standards for Final Papers

A: Excellent paper
An excellent paper states a clear thesis that is original, persuasive, and makes a contribution to historical knowledge. It proves the argument set out in the introduction by using primary and secondary sources. It demonstrates systematic research. It is clearly organized, has strong analytic writing (with active verbs), uses vivid language, and tells a story while also making a historical argument. Points are supported by more than one example or piece of evidence. Excellent papers are polished pieces of writing, free from grammar,
punctuation, and spelling errors. All evidence is correctly cited according to the *Chicago Manual of Style*

**B: Good paper**
A good paper has weaknesses in one or more of the following areas: It states a thesis but it is unclear clear and/or may not be particularly insightful or original. It has competent writing, but writing is not strong or impressive. It may have passive verbs, poor word choice, or vague sentences. There may be errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Research may be scattered and unsystematic. A good paper may be more descriptive than analytical. It may lack sufficient evidence to support the argument or lack a conclusion. Primary and secondary sources are discussed but not analyzed. Good papers may rely too much on quotations and/or do not explicate them well. There may be problems connecting the research to a larger historiographic context, so the paper lacks significance. There are mistakes in citations.

**C: Unacceptable work for a graduate student**
Any one of these issues may be grounds for a C: Unclear thesis that is not backed by evidence. Either the evidence is not present, or it is not analyzed and connected to the larger argument. "Cherry picked" evidence with no primary source research. Poorly organized with no clear introduction, argument, or conclusion. Writing has far too many problems with clarity, syntax, grammar, and spelling; it does not meet the minimum standard for graduate work. There are many missing or inaccurate citations.

D or F. Failure. No discernible thesis and/or serious misunderstanding of the topic. Work is incomplete, too short, lacks primary sources, or plagiarized

**Accommodation for Students With Disabilities**
If you have a disability that may require assistance or accommodation, or you have questions related to any accommodations for testing, note takers, readers, etc., please speak with me as soon as possible. Students may also contact the Office of Disabled Students Services (898-2783) with questions about such services.

**Weekly Schedule**

**Week 1: January 18**
**Introduction to class**

**Read**

- Lynn Hunt, "How Writing Leads to Thinking (And not the other way around)," *Perspectives on History*
- Deborah E. Harkness, "Finding the Story," *Perspectives on History*
- Laura Edwards, "Writing Between the Past and the Present," *Perspectives on History*
- Thomas Andrews and Flannery Burke, "What Does It Mean to Think Historically?" *Perspectives on History*

**Prepare**

- In addition to reading the articles above, see what you can find out about the scholars who wrote them. What have they written, where do they work, etc. **Do this with the readings every week.**
• Be prepared to give a brief description of your general research interest for the semester. You must select a topic that (1) is connected to your academic interests (2) for which you can locate and access primary sources (3) you can connect to historiography (4) is concise enough to complete in one semester.

Week 2: January 25
Asking research questions

Read
• Turabian, chapters 1 & 2
• Po-Yi Hung and Abigail Popp, "How to Frame a Researchable Question," http://www.williamccronon.net/researching/questions.htm
• Sarah Keyes, “'Like a Roaring Lion': The Overland Trail as a Sonic Conquest,” *Journal of American History*, 96:1 (June 2009): 19-43. **Pelzer prize winner**
• READINGS FROM CHAIR CANDIDATES TBA

Prepare
• For the Keyes and Florio readings: These (and other articles marked in the syllabus) are winners of the Louis Peltzer Memorial Award from the Organization of American Historians. This prize is given to the best graduate student essay written in US history each year. In short, these are models of successful graduate level research and writing. Questions to consider: Why did the author chose this topic? What is the main research question? Why is this a significant research question? What primary sources did the author use? What was the relationship between the sources and the research question? Do you think the sources helped guide the research question or did the question guide the sources? Be able to identify points in the article in which the author paraphrased sources and analyzed sources.

Week 3: February 1
Finding and Interpreting Sources

Read
• Turabian, chapter 3
• Jacquelyn Gill and Stephen Laubach, "Arguments and Narrative" http://www.williamccronon.net/researching/arguing.htm
• READINGS FROM CHAIR CANDIDATES TBA

Prepare
• Be able to identify the following elements of the McGuire article: Hook/Introduction, Thesis Statement Historiography/Literature review, Evidence, Narrative Arc, Protagonists/Antagonists, Signposts. What
historical fields does this work connect to? Are the claims of the author are justified by the evidence provided? What are the most important documents the author uses to prove this argument? Evaluate the conclusion by locating the conclusion of the argument and considering the narrative style of conclusion. What alternative arguments could be made using the same documents that the author did? What new questions could be asked to build upon the work this author began?

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Week 4: February 8
Sources and Agency

Read

Prepare
• Draft Project/Thesis Proposal. Bring TWO printed copies to class. Project proposals should be 3-5 pages and will include (1) General description of the project (2) Preliminary statement of the thesis or (3) A discussion of key texts on the subject and issues raised in this literature. (4) A description of how your research will contribute to the existing scholarship on this topic. (5) A bibliography of primary and secondary sources. For students doing a thesis proposal, please consult the graduate handbook for more information about this; your proposal should be 7-8 pages in length. We will spend part of class reviewing each others proposals in pairs.

Week 5: February 15
Thinking creatively about historical sources (and their absence): Part 1

Read
• "American Pandemic: An Interview with Nancy K. Bristow," Historically Speaking 13:3 (June 2012), 27-29
• Jacob Baum, "From Incense to Idolatry: The Reformation of Olfaction in Late Medieval German Ritual," Sixteenth Century Journal, 44/2 (2013), 323-44.

Prepare
• Find one relevant primary source for your topic. Analyze this source in approximately one paragraph. Describe and/or paraphrase the source. What is the meaning of this source in relationship to your argument/story? What historical questions can you answer using this source? What historical questions can you NOT answer? Be prepared to answer these questions in class and turn in your written paragraph in class. In addition write out the citation for this source. Email that citation to me by noon on the day of class.

Week 6: February 22
Thinking creatively about historical sources (and their absence): Part 2

Read

Prepare
- Final project proposal due for students doing research paper. (Note thesis proposal is due next week.)

Week 7: March 1
Stories and Narrative

Read

Prepare
- Find and read a literature review essay relevant to your topic in a broad way. This can be a review of several relevant books or a "state of the field" type article. You may have to think creatively about literature relevant to your project. Be prepared to briefly discuss its relevance to your research. *Reviews in American History* is a good place to start. You can email me about this in advance or talk to me if you needed to discuss this.
- Thesis proposals due (if applicable)

Week 8: March 8
Spring Break!

Week 9: March 15
Biography and Individual Stories
And in-class citation assignment.

Read
- Marisa J. Fuentes, "Power and Historical Figuring: Rachael Pringle Polgreen’s Troubled Archive," *Gender and History*, 22:3 (November 2010), 564–584
Prepare

- Write one or two paragraphs in which you describe a historical actor who figures prominently in your final paper. Try to describe this person visually, giving details that are relevant to your story and argument. What does your reader need to know about this character to understand their actions? Write vividly, with energy and excitement about this individual.

Week 10: March 22

Engaging contemporary issues through historical research: Part 1


Prepare

- Scholarly book review of one of the key texts that you engage in your paper. 4-6 pages.

Week 11: March 29

Engaging contemporary issues through historical research: Part 2

Read


Prepare

- Bring three copies of the working introduction and outline for your research project to class.

Week 12: April 5

NO CLASS. Work on papers and schedule individual meetings w/ Dr. Holloway as necessary.

Week 13: April 12

How we remember the past

Read

Prepare
  • Bring a portion of your research paper draft and issues you are encountering with writing, sources, or citations for class discussion. Bring three copies.
  • Schedule individual meetings as necessary

Week 14: April 19
Writing workshop day

Prepare
  • Bring a portion of your research paper draft and issues you are encountering with writing, sources, or citations for class discussion. Bring three copies.
  • Schedule individual meetings as necessary

Week 15: April 26
NO CLASS

Wednesday May 3 papers due at noon

Wednesday May 3, 6 pm
Meet at Boulevard to celebrate the end of class.