

The Historian's Craft: Methods and Approaches to Historical Investigation

This course will introduce you to the methods by which professional historians investigate the past. Throughout the semester we will explore different methods of discovery using a range of primary sources. We will address strategies of analysis, argumentation, and critical thinking. We will hone your writing and presentation skills. Workshops are placed throughout the semester, to provide practice in all of these areas. The end product of this course will be an original work of historical scholarship.

Readings:

Richard Marius and Melvin Paige, *A Short Guide to Writing About History* (New York: Pearson Publishers, 2010) Seventh Edition.

Coursepack: Required readings (firsthand documents and scholarly articles) available online in Rhodes "Academic Departments," History, Garceau, Public Folder, History 300.

Attendance and Deadlines:

Attendance at all class meetings is required. Because we hold in-class discussions/workshops, what unfolds in class cannot be recreated; you cannot "make up" lost class time. More than two absences will lower your average by a full letter grade. The only acceptable reasons for absence are documented illness or family emergency. Late papers will be dropped by a full a letter grade.

Academic Integrity:

All work for this course should be pledged by the Rhodes Honor Code. Plagiarism is grounds for an 'F' in the course. Ignorance will not be treated as innocence. Plagiarism is the use of someone else's information or ideas without attribution. If you wonder whether something should be footnoted, it probably should. We will review how to do footnotes in the Chicago style, in class. If you have questions about the correct use of footnotes/endnotes, consult with me, or with a successful Senior History major, or check Marius, *A Short Guide*, pp.164-70.

Information from the internet is extremely variable. Some sites provide access to online archives that hold primary evidence. Others offer homogenized information that reads like an encyclopedia entry. Wikipedia is not an acceptable source for historical information. All internet sources should be cleared with me before using them in your research paper or workshop assignments. Any internet sources used should be cited by the title of the site, with a brief website address.

Expectations:

This course is labor-intensive. I suggest you make it a priority. This is a seminar, not a lecture course. That means your participation is vital. Assigned readings will be discussed on the day they are listed. Give the workshops and discussions your full participation, and you will do well.

Requirements:

- 1) Consistent attendance and participation. Over two absences will lower your average by a full letter grade because I cannot recreate the workshops we do in class through makeup assignments. Class participation is **25%** of your grade.
- 2) Eight workshop assignments. Some will be take-home, others in-class, and still others, a combination of the two. Averaged together, these workshops comprise **25%** of your grade.
- 3) A research paper based on primary sources, edited, footnoted, and proofread, suitable for presentation at URCAS 2012. Final draft due November 15th. (**25%**)
- 4) A Works-in-Progress report on your primary source research. This will be factored into your research paper grade, since it is an essential part of the process. Oct 20, 25, or 27.
- 5) A formal presentation of your research paper to the class, Nov 17 or 29, Dec 1 or 6. (**25%**)

Begin the practice of questioning your sources: If it is primary evidence, who was the speaker or scribe? What was their agenda? How might their priorities have shaped what they wrote or said? If it is art, such as photographs, music, painting, or film, is there an underlying theme informing the images or story? How does it square with other forms of evidence? If it is secondary material, did the author make a convincing argument? In other words, does the evidence support the author’s conclusions? Is the writing clear?

COURSE OUTLINE

Th Aug 25 Introduction to the Course

Workshop #1, Assignment: History Detectives, Memphis Historic Sites

T Aug 30 Public Spaces and the Construction of Memory

Student Reports on History Detective assignments

Reading: Marius, “Basic Principles for History Essays,” *A Short Guide To Writing About History*, 9-29.

Th Sept 1 Public History: Who Owns the Past?

Reading: Dwight Pitcaithley, “Public Education and the National Park Service: Interpreting the Civil War,” *Perspectives* (Nov 2007): 1-3.

Kate Masur, “Changes in the Offing for Civil War Sites,” *Perspectives* (March 2000): 1-3.

Robert Spude, “On the Plains of Sand Creek, in the Valley of the Washita,” *Perspectives* (May 2008): 1-3.

T Sept 6 Primary Sources: The Raw Material of History

Reading: Marius, *A Short Guide to Writing About History*, 77-86.

Workshop #2: Census manuscripts, Butte, Montana, 1900, 1910, 1920.

- Th Sept 8 Library Research Orientation with Bill Short; meet in entryway, Barret Library.
Reading: Marius, *A Short Guide*, "Writing & Revising Drafts," 110-18.
- T Sept 13 Framing Questions and Presenting Evidence
Workshop # 3, Assignment: Census Manuscripts, Memphis Room
Reading: Marius, *A Short Guide*, "Narration, Description, and Exposition," 119-29.
- Th Sept 15 Group Reports on Census Manuscripts, Memphis Public Library
Workshop #4: Assignment: Interpreting the Census
Reading: Marius, *A Short Guide*, "Simple and Direct Writing," 131-49.
- T Sept 20 Clear Arguments and Clear Citations
Workshop #5: Crafting a Thesis Statement & Using the Chicago Style
Reading: Marius, *A Short Guide*, "Persuasion," 129-31; & "Documenting Sources," 150-63.
- Th Sept 22 Historiography: Challenging the Master Narrative in American Frontier History
Reading: Rosemary and Joseph Agonito, "Resurrecting History's Forgotten Women: A Case Study from Cheyenne Indians," 8-15.

Richard Bartlett, "Men, Women, and Families," 344-63.

Dan Flores, "Bison Ecology and Bison Diplomacy: The Southern Plains from 1800 to 1850," 465-85.
- T Sept 27 Reading Photographs: Edward S. Curtis and the American Indian
Reading: Brian Dippie, "Photograph Allegories & Indian Destiny," 41-57.
E.S. Curtis, "A Plea for Haste in Making Documentary Records of The American Indian," 163-65.

Th Sept 29 Researching Photographs: The Rest of the Story

Reading: Sally Jenkins, "The Team That Invented Football," 60-74.

Linda Peavy & Ursula Smith, "Unlikely Champion: Emma Rose Sansaver, 1884-1925," 179-207.

Peter Iverson, "When Indians Became Cowboys," 16-31.

Benjamin Rader, "The Greatest Drama in Indian Life: Experiments In Indian Identity and Resistance at the Haskell Institute Homecoming of 1926," 429-50.

Workshop #6, Assignment: Critiquing Curtis Photographs

T Oct 4 Reading Firsthand Narratives: Letters, Diaries, Autobiographies & Memoirs

Reading: Letters from the California Gold Rush, 1-21.

Diary of Henry Bigler, 172-80; & George Cannon, 218-40.

Memoir of Bethenia Owens Adair, 173-87.

Letters of Pauline Williamson, 114-21.

Linda Hogan, "An Autobiographical Essay," 435-39.

Workshop #7, Assignment: Interpreting Firsthand Narratives

Th Oct 6 Newspaper Reports: "Just the Facts"?

Reading: *Idaho Tri-Weekly Statesman*, "Indian Butchery" (1876): 1-2.

Helena Daily Herald, "Custer's Disaster on the Little Bighorn," by James Bradley (July 15, 1876): 1-2.

New York Herald, "Interview with Sitting Bull" (Nov. 16, 1877): 1-2.

Wooden Leg, "Account of the Battle at Little Bighorn" (1931): 35-38.

Kate Bighead, "She Watched Custer's Last Battle," 363-78.

Workshop #8, Assignment: Read accounts from several different newspapers about one event, and analyze for bias. [Memphis archives]

T Oct 11 Group Presentations on Evidence and Bias in Newspaper Reports

- Th Oct 13 Professor Garceau at Western History Association Conference, Oakland, CA.
- T Oct 18 **Fall Break**
- Th Oct 20 Works-in-Progress reports
- T Oct 25 Works-in-Progress reports
- Th Oct 27 Works-in-Progress reports
- T Nov 1 Workshop on Plagiarism
 Reading: Peter Hoffer, "Plagiarism: The Cases of Stephen Ambrose and Doris Kearns Goodwin," 172-207.
 Letter, Dee Garceau to *Great Plains Quarterly* regarding review of Jacqueline Moore's book, *Cowboys and Cattlemen* (July 2011).
- Th Nov 3 Using Secondary Sources Like a Professional: How to Situate Your Primary Source Research within the Scholarly Conversation
 Reading: Samples from your research topic [see hand-out]
- T Nov 8 Guest Lecture: "Effective Use of Power Point in a Research Presentation"
 Guest Speaker: Professor Tim Huebner
 Reading: Marius, "Writer's Checklist for Short Essays," p.208.
- Th Nov 10 Guest Presentation: "What Can You Do With a History Degree?"
 Amy Oakes, Office of Career Services, In-Class Workshop
- T Nov 15 Student Presentations of Original Research [**Research Paper Due**]
- Th Nov 17 Student Presentations of Original Research
- Thanksgiving Break, November 23-27***
- T Nov 29 Student Presentations of Original Research
- Th Dec 1 Student Presentations of Original Research
- T Dec 6 Student Presentations of Original Research