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:  

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. Wickipedia 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


Th Sept 1 Public History: Who Owns the Past?


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.

T Sept 13  Framing Questions and Presenting Evidence

**Workshop #3, Assignment:** Census Manuscripts, Memphis Room


Th Sept 15  Group Reports on Census Manuscripts, Memphis Public Library

**Workshop #4: Assignment:** Interpreting the Census


T Sept 20  Clear Arguments and Clear Citations

**Workshop #5:** Crafting a Thesis Statement & Using the Chicago Style


Th Sept 22  Historiography: Challenging the Master Narrative in American Frontier History


T Sept 27  Reading Photographs: Edward S. Curtis and the American Indian

Reading: Brian Dippie, “Photograph Allegories & Indian Destiny,” 41-57.

Th Sept 29  Researching Photographs: The Rest of the Story
  Reading: Sally Jenkins, “The Team That Invented Football,” 60-74.

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.

Workshop #7, Assignment: Interpreting Firsthand Narratives

Th Oct 6  Newspaper Reports: “Just the Facts”? 


   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.


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

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