

**History 200**  
**The Historian's Craft:**  
**Methods and Approaches in the Study of History**  
**11:00 TR, Fall 2007**  
**Buckman 214**

Professor: Gail S. Murray, Ph.D.  
Office: Clough 315  
Telephone: X 3289 ; Home: 726-1813  
Email: murray@rhodes.edu

Office Hours: M-W-F, 1:30-3:00  
T & Th, 1:30-3:30  
and also by appointment

**Course Description and Objectives:**

This course represents the key introduction to the history major. As such, it focuses on the basics of historical analysis, including research skills, examination and evaluation of primary sources, historical argumentation, good writing and proper citation, historical memory and public presentation skills. Throughout the semester, students will be involved in the process of researching, writing, and presenting an original work of historical scholarship.

Each term, History 200 uses primary materials from a different event or era to focus student research and each semester students present their research at a “conference.” This section will use the Memphis Sanitation Workers’ Strike in 1968 as our focal point, but research projects may encompass other aspects of Memphis history. Most of the primary material needed for this course is housed either in the Special Collections department of the McWherter Library, University of Memphis, or the Memphis Room of the main public library on Poplar Ave. Let the instructor know if you do not have transportation so that she can help you focus on materials more readily available.

We learn to write well by reading good writers and analyzing how they make convincing arguments. Thus, this course focuses on both research/writing skills and content analysis. The essays you will read in this course relate to race and class issues in civil rights history or are about the decisions historians make as they conduct their professional work.

This is probably your first seminar course. A seminar means is that everyone shares in the responsibility of making the class vital and lively. This group represents your history family for the next 14 weeks! My assessment of your accomplishments in this course will depend on how you facilitate the learning of others as well as yourself.

**Common Course Readings:**

Richard Marius and Melvin E. Page, A Short Guide to Writing About History, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (2004)  
Joan Beifuss, At the River I Stand (1985)  
Tera Hunter, To Joy My Freedom (1997)

Additional readings are posted on WebCT. **Instructions for logging in to Web CT:**

From the login on the Rhodes Homepage, choose Web CT. You will see instructions on how to log on for the first time and how to choose a new password. Always **print out** these assignments and bring them to class for reference during discussion; save them for review before tests.

### **Assignments and Grading Policies:**

Your final grade in this course will be determined as follows:

Initial exercises	5%
Reading test #1	10%
Reading test #2	15%
Research Paper, final form	25%
Oral Presentation	10%
Class Participation	15%
Final in-class exam	10%
Final Skills assignment	<u>10%</u>
	100%

### **Attendance and Deadlines:**

Attendance is mandatory at all class meetings. More than three absences will adversely affect your grade in this course. You should make all travel and holiday plans in accordance with the schedule below. Airline arrangements, in other words, are no excuse for missing classes, deadlines, or exams. There will be no test make-ups unless prior arrangements have been made. Late papers will be penalized one grade for each calendar day late.

### **Academic Integrity**

All work turned in for this course is to be completed in accordance with Rhodes' Honor Code. Students are expected to be familiar with the requirements of the Code and to conduct themselves accordingly in all classroom matters. Plagiarism is the use of someone else's information or ideas without proper citation. If you have questions about the correct use or citation of materials, consult Marius & Page. If you wonder if something should be cited, it probably should. This applies to materials read even if you do not use them directly in the paper. Plagiarism will result in an F in the course. Ignorance will not be treated as innocence.

(The instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus as needed)

## **Class Assignments**

Read assignments before class and be prepared to discuss the key ideas within. In addition, begin the practice of "arguing" with the author: did s/he make a good argument? Is there sufficient evidence to support the argument? Is the essay or chapter confusing, disorganized, overly wordy, dull?

### **I. How do historians uncover the past? Can they?**

Thur, Aug. 23 –  
Introduction to course

Tues, Aug 28– What Is History?  
Read: Carr, “The Historian and His Facts,” WebCT [note: you may wish to  
reduce the size before you print and print 2 pages per page]  
Marius & Page, Ch 2 “Thinking about History”  
Team Assignments handed out: History Detectives, Memphis Style  
Drop/add period ends

Thurs, Aug 30 - Doing research/Library orientation – **Meet in Barret 128**  
Guest presentation, Bill Short, library staff

## II. Causation and Context -- in History and in the Sanitation Strike

Tues, Sept. 4 – Causality in History  
Read: Furay & Salevouris, “It’s Never that Simple,” in Methods & Skills, WebCT  
**\*\* History Detectives assignment due**(Turn in 1-2 pages;all team members sign)

Thurs, Sept 6 –Context/ Causation in the Sanitation Strike  
Read: Beifuss, 11-111  
Lecture & discussion  
Intro to film “At the River I Stand”  
**Watch all of “At the River I Stand” on your own time, before Sept 13**

Tues, Sept 11 –  
Continue reading in Beifuss. Compare her account to Honey, *Going down Jericho Road*, 7-75, WebCT  
Guest presentation, Wayne Dowdy, Memphis Room, Memphis Public Library

Thur, Sept 13  
Read: Finish Beifuss  
Discuss film  
Brainstorm unresolved questions

Tues, Sept 18  
**\*\*Test I** over Beifuss, Honey, and Film

## III. Finding and Using Sources

Thur, Sept 20 - Using the archives  
Read: M & P, Ch. 4  
**Trip to University of Memphis, Special Collections**  
**11:00-12:30.** Meet in front of the McCoy at 10:50 a.m.

**\*\*Assignment due by 6:00 p.m. on MONDAY night.** Based on your reading of Beifuss, Honey, viewing the film, and hearing about the archives, create 2 research questions on the Sanitation Strike or related civil rights or labor rights issues. Write one paragraph about each of

your 2 questions, explaining how they are narrowly focused and why you find the question intriguing. Drop these in Prof. Murray's Academic Folder, Inbox.

Tues, Sept 25 – Assessing good research topics

Read: M & P, Ch 1

Sharing and assessing of questions submitted

Thur., Sept 27 – Selecting information, assessing it, taking notes

Read: M&P 5 & 6

Discussion: Researcher pitfalls

**Submit final research topic** (preceded by individual meetings with instructor if necessary)

Tues, Oct. 2 – Falsification of Data/ Plagiarism

Read: Hoffer, “Ch. 5, Falsification,” and “Ch. 6, Plagiarism: The Cases of Stephen Ambrose and Doris Kearns Goodwin” on WebCT

[note: chapters 5 & 6 are scanned as one document; again you may want to reduce the size before you print.]

**Evening Lecture:** Dr. Virginia Bernhard, “What Fiction Can Teach Us from History – and Vice-Versa,” Blount Auditorium, 7:00 p.m.

#### IV. Kinds of History, Kinds of Argument

(While the course continues to introduce new material and new ideas about writing history, you will simultaneously be researching your topic on a regular basis)

Thurs, Oct 4 – Social/Cultural History

Read: Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom*, Prologue, & Ch 2

Harding, “History: White, Negro, and Black” on WebCT

Tues, Oct 9 – Historians and African American history

Read: Hunter, Ch 5 & 8

Thurs, Oct 11 – Political History

Read: Feldman, *The Disfranchisement Myth* Ch. 1, WebCT

Tues, Oct 16 **FALL BREAK**

Thurs, Oct 18 – **\*\* Test 2** on Hoffer, Hunter, and Feldman

#### V. Writing YOUR essay

Tues, Oct 23 – What constitutes good writing?

Read: M & P, Ch 7 & 8

Class discussion

**\*\*Before Thursday: Prepare 2 polished pages of your paper. Send electronically to the instructor and to each of your team members by 10:00 pm Wed. night**

Thurs, Oct 25– Style, Grammar and Writing Conventions  
Writing team Workshops. Bring copies of the selections submitted to  
 your team and be ready to critique them. (Last day to withdraw from a class, Oct 26)  
 Presentation dates assigned

Tues, Oct 30 – Analyzing a convincing essay  
 Read: Nasstrom, “Down to Now” WebCT  
 Discussion; more writing workshop if needed

Thurs, Nov 1 – Independent work  
**Class will not meet**

Tues, Nov 6 -- What makes for a good public presentation?  
 Guest: Professor Murray

**\*\*\*Research Papers Due at 11:00 a.m.**

## **VI. Historian’s Craft Conference**

Thurs, Nov. 8 – **Student Presentations**  
 (Your questions to other participants are just as important as your own presentation.)  
 Begin work on revisions and additions as soon as your paper is returned to you.

Tues, Nov. 13 – **Student Presentations**

Thurs, Nov. 15 -- **Student Presentations**

Tues, Nov 20 – **Student Presentations**

Thurs, Nov 22 – **Thanksgiving Vacation**

## **VII. Controversies over History and what it means**

Tues, Nov 27 – Public Monuments  
 Read: Carney, “The Contested Image of Nathan Bedford Forrest” on WebCT

Thurs, Nov 29– Public Museums and Exhibits  
 Read: Boyer, “Whose History Is It, Anyway?” in History Wars on WebCT

Tues, Dec 4- What you can do with a history degree?  
 Special guest: Amy Oakes, Career Services  
**\*\*Revised Research Papers Due**  
 Distribution of take-home exam\*

Thurs, Dec 6 – Reading Day – Class does not meet

Wed., Dec 12 **8:30 a.m. - Final Examination**

**\*take home portion due** (skills)

**In-class exam** over Nasstrom, Carney, and Boyer readings