

History 300
The Historian's Craft: Methods and Approaches in the Study of History
8:00 a.m. TR, Fall 2009
Buckman 214

Professor: Gail S. Murray, Ph.D.
Office: Clough 305
Telephone: X 3289 ; Cell: 359-1813
Email: murray@rhodes.edu

Office Hours: M-W, 3:00-4:00
T & Th, 10:30-12:00
and also by appointment



Course Description and Objectives:

This course represents your official 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, use of 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 300 uses primary materials from a different event or era to focus student research and each semester students present their research at a “conference.” Our section will focus on 20th C Memphis history. Primary material needed for research is housed either in the Special Collections department of the McWherter Library, University of Memphis, or in the

Memphis Room of the Memphis 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 conducted their research and made convincing arguments. Thus while the final goal in this course is an original research paper, you also will do considerable reading on other topics.

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 class represents your history “family” for the next 15 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, 5th ed., 2004 **(M&P)**
 Beverly G. Bond and Janann Sherman Memphis in Black and White, 2003 **(Memphis)**
 Victoria Bissell Brown & Timothy J. Shannon, Going to the Source: Bedford Reader in American History, Vol 2: Since 1865, 2004 **(Brown & Shannon)**
 Tera Hunter, To Joy My Freedom, 1997 **(Hunter)**

Additional readings will be found in the Academic Volume →History →Murray →Public →History 300. 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:

Writing exercises, total	15%
Midterm Project	10%
Research Paper	25%
Paper Revisions	10%
Oral Presentation	10%
Class Participation	20%
Final exam	<u>10%</u>
	100%

Attendance and Deadlines:

Attendance is mandatory at all class meetings....and YES, I KNOW THAT WE MEET AT 8:00 a.m. 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. This applies to materials read even when you do not quote them directly in the paper. If you have questions about the correct use or citation of materials, consult Marius & Page and your instructor. Ignorance will not be treated as innocence.

Other Classroom Policies

- The instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus (with ample warning).
- Students must complete ALL the required components of the course in order to pass.
- Students who fail History 300 will not be eligible for other upper level history classes.
- Consecutive tardiness will be counted as an absence.
- Students are free to bring food and drink to class as long as it does not disturb others. All annoying behaviors will bring the ire of your instructor. I trust you know what those are.



Daily 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. Can we uncover the past? What are the obstacles?

Thur, Aug. 27 –

Introduction to course.

Read: DBDavis, “Intellectual Trajectories” (previously distributed)

Tues, Sept 1– What Is History?

Read: Acad. Vol, Carr, “The Historian and His Facts,” [note: you may wish to reduce the print size and print 2 pages per page]

M & P, Ch 2

Drop/add period ends Wed.

Thurs, Sept 3- Good History Writing

Read: M&P, Ch 1

Acad. Vol, Carney, “The Contested Image of Nathan Bedford Forrest”

II. Finding & Using Sources Effectively

Tues, Sept 8 – Gov’t Documents/ Congressional Debates

Read: Brown & Shannon, Ch 11

Write (1): two paragraphs on the most successful arguments in favor of the bill, and two arguments explaining the most effective arguments against

Thurs, Sept 10 – Advertisements

Read: Brown & Shannon, Ch. 5

Tues, Sept 15 – Autobiography & Oral History

Read: Acad. Vol, Typescript of oral interview

Explore: 2 video interviews from Crossroadstofreedom.org and

Write (2): questions to be provided

Thurs, Sept 17 – Newspaper

Explore: *The Memphis World* at Crossroadstofreedom.org Look especially at stories from Feb-April, 1968 (the Sanitation Strike)

III. Context & Background for your Research – Memphis in the 20th Century

****Watch all of “At the River I Stand” (on reserve in the Media Center)on your own time, but before Sept 29.**

Tues., Sept 22 – Memphis in the early 20th C

Read: *Memphis in Black & White*, Ch 7-9

Thurs, Sept 24 – Memphis from the Twenties through WW II

Read: *Memphis in Black & White*, Ch 10-12

M&P, Ch 3

Tues, Sept. 29 – Memphis in the Civil Rights Era

Read: *Memphis in Black & White*, Ch 13

Acad. Vol, Honey, *Jericho Road*

Thurs, Oct 1 –Repositories of Memphis history

Explore the Rhodes archives

IV. Writing YOUR essay

Tues, Oct 6–

Read: M & P, Ch 4

Write (3): Based on your reading for this unit, viewing the film, and learning about the archives, create 2 research questions on some topic in 20th C. Memphis history. Pose your topic as a Research Question. Do not try to state a thesis (argument, opinion, conclusion) at this point. You will do the research in order to draw conclusions.

Write one paragraph about each of your two questions, explaining how they are narrowly focused and why you find the question intriguing. Drop these in Prof. Murray's Academic Folder, Inbox, identified as last name, research q. by **Monday, Oct 5, 5 p.m.**

We will share and evaluate these proposals in class.



Thur, Oct 8- Individual Meetings

Class will not meet. Sign up for individual consultations with Prof M. Then investigate archival resources for your topic

Tues, Oct 13- Annotating historical research

Read: M&P, Ch 8

In class exercises

Thur., Oct 15 – **Midterm project**

Write: a full description of your research topic. The sections of this Research Proposal will include 1) topic to be investigated, questions to be addressed; 2) historical context surrounding your question of at least two pages/ 3) description of the archival sources you intend to use (this means you have seen them and know their value), 4) a secondary bibliography. Your total submission should be no less than five pages.

Tues, Oct. 20 – **FALL BREAK – Class does not meet**

Thurs, Oct 22 - Selecting information, assessing it, taking notes

Read: M&P, Ch 4 & 5
 Discussion: Researcher pitfalls

Tues, Oct 27 - What constitutes good writing?
 Read: M&P, Ch 7

****Before Thurs: Prepare 2 polished pages of your research (NOT the introduction)
 Send electronically to the instructor and to each of your team members by noon Wed.**

Thurs, Oct 29 –Peer review
 In class, critiques of submitted work based on hand-out provided
(Last day to withdraw from a class, Oct 30)

Tues, Nov 3– Falsification of Data/ Plagiarism
 Read: Acad. Vol, Hoffer, “Ch. 5, Falsification,” and “Ch. 6, Plagiarism: The Cases of
 Stephen Ambrose and Doris Kearns Goodwin” [note: These rdgs. are scanned as
 one document; again you may want to reduce the size before you print.]

Thurs, Nov 5 – Independent work. Professor M available for consultation

Tues, Nov 10 – Independent work. Professor M available for consultation.

Thurs, Nov 12 – What makes a good presentation? (according to Prof M)
Research Papers Due by 5:00.



V. Student Conference, Memphis History

Tues, Nov. 17 – **Student Presentations 1-3**
 Begin work on revisions and additions as soon as
 your research paper is returned to you.

Thurs, Nov. 19 -- **Student Presentations 4-6**

Tues, Nov 24– **Student Presentations concluded**

Thurs, Nov 26 – **Thanksgiving Vacation**

VI. Kinds of History, Kinds of Arguments

Tues, Dec 1 –Cultural History
 Read: Hunter, Prologue, Ch 2 & 8

Thurs, Dec 3– Social History
 Read: Hunter, Ch 4 & 5

Tues, Dec 10– Review, Exam Prep, Evaluation

Thurs, Dec 12 – Reading Day --**Revised papers due at 5:00**
Final Exam Monday, Dec 14, 8:30 a.m.