History 200
The Historian’s Craft:
Methods and Approaches in the Study of History – Spring 2006
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:30 p.m.

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Course Description and Objectives:
This course introduces to students the ways in which historians perform their craft. We will focus on the basics of historical analysis, including research skills, examination of primary sources, approaches and methods of historians, historical argumentation and writing, and presentation skills. Throughout the semester, students will be involved in the process of researching, writing, and presenting an original work of historical scholarship.

Because this course is a seminar, it is vital that students attend class, read the assignments, think about the material, and participate in discussions.

Common Readings:
Kate Turabian, Student’s Guide for Writing College Papers, 3rd ed.
Robert Darnton, The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History.
Gary B. Nash, Charlotte Crabtree, and Ross E. Dunn, History on Trial: Culture Wars and the Teaching of the Past.

Supplementary readings available in my Academic Volume folder and in handout form.

Assignments and Grading Policies:
Your final grade in this course will be determined as follows:
• Encyclopedia of Memphis essay – 5%
• Book reviews – 20%
• Research Paper – 25%
• Research Presentation – 10%
• Class participation/quizzes – 25%
• Take-home Final Exam – 15%
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 make-ups of the quizzes. Late essays will be accepted one day after the due date (not one class period), with a one letter-grade penalty. Essays will not be accepted more than one day after the due date. All work, unless otherwise indicated, is pledged under the Rhodes College Honor Code.

Class Assignments

1. Research – How do historians uncover the past?
Jan. 12 – Introduction to course and to Memphis Urban History Project (MUHP)  
(Special guest: Prof. Jeffrey Jackson)
Jan. 17 – Doing research/Library orientation – Meet in Barret 128  
(Read: Marius and Page, 1-28, 75-98; Special guest: Bill Short, Coordinator of Public Services, Barret Library)
Jan. 19 – Discussion of research exercise – Encyclopedia of Memphis Essay Due

2. Sources – What are the raw materials that historians use?
Jan. 24 – Reading sources, I  
(Read: Marius and Page, 29-51; Boorstin, “A Wrestler with the Angel”)
Jan. 26 – Reading sources, II  
(Handouts: inventory, letters, interviews, advertisements, personal ads)

3. Methods/Approaches – What do historians do with their sources?
Jan. 31 – MUHP: The Interstate 40/Overton Park Controversy  
(Read: Doupé, “Challenging the Urban Lifestyle: Overton Park and the Interstate 40 Controversy”; Special guest: Adam Doupé)
Feb. 2 – Historians and Sources  
(Read: Carr, “The Historian and His Facts”; Potter, “Explicit Data and Implicit Assumptions in Historical Study”)
Feb. 7 – Social History  
(Read: Lebsock, Free Women of Petersburg, all)
Feb. 9 – Cultural History  
(Read: Darnton, Great Cat Massacre, 3-7, 75-104, 107-143) - **Book Review Due**

4. **Arguments – How do historians make claims about the past?**

Feb. 14 – Arguing from the Sources  
(Read: Marius and Page, 52-74; Huebner, “The Roots of Fairness: State v. Caesar and Slave Justice in Antebellum North Carolina”)

Feb. 16 – Arguing with Historians  
(Read: Finkelman, “Treason Against the Hopes of the World: Thomas Jefferson and Slavery”)

5. **Writing – What constitutes good historical writing?**

Feb. 21 – MUHP: Memphis since World War II

Feb. 23 – How to Write History  
(Marius and Page, 99-167)

*Feb. 24 - First page of Research Paper Due – send Word document via email*

Feb. 28 – Writing workshop, I – **Meet in Barret 128**

March 2 – Writing workshop, II – **Meet in Barret 128**

6. **Citation – Why are footnotes important?**

March 7 – Falsification and Plagiarism  
(Read: Hoffer, “Falsification: The Case of Michael Bellesiles,” “Plagiarism: The Cases of Stephen Ambrose and Doris Kearns Goodwin”)

March 9 – Proper footnoting  
(Read: Marius and Page, 169-182)

*March 10 – Research Papers Due* - turn in hard copy

(March 13-17: Spring Break)

7. **Presentation – How do historians present their research?**

March 21 – MUHP: Student presentations/discussion
March 23 – MUHP: Student presentations/discussion

March 28 – MUHP: Student presentations/discussion

March 30 – MUHP: Student presentations/discussion

8. Implications – Why does history matter?

Apr. 4 – History Wars
(Read: Nash, Crabtree, and Dunn, History on Trial, xiii-148)

Apr. 6 – The National History Standards
(Read: Nash, Crabtree, and Dunn, History on Trial, 149-277)

Apr. 11 – The History Wars: A Case Study – Book Review Due
(Read: Carney, “The Contested Image of Nathan Bedford Forrest” and newspaper articles)

Apr. 13 – No class (Easter Recess)

9. History and the Public – How should historians relate to the public?

Apr. 18 – No class.

Apr. 20 – Academic History versus Popular History
(Read: Michael Nelson, “History, Meet Politics”)

Apr. 25 – What you can do with a history degree – Research Papers Due at 5 p.m.
(Special guest: Amy Oakes)

Apr. 27 – Summary and conclusions/Distribution of Exams

*Take-Home Final Examination Due – Wednesday, May 3, 5 p.m.*