

History 5102
Questions of Evidence: Historical Research and Writing
Spring 2016, University of Connecticut (Jan. 30 version)

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Office hours: M 4-5, Thurs 10:30-12 and by appointment

In this course, students research and write an article suitable for publication in a history journal. These articles will be based on research in primary sources, show a thorough familiarity with the relevant historiography, and provide a new and significant interpretation of the past. The course design has four intersecting components, which will provide structure and plentiful feedback to what is otherwise independent work.

First, class sessions create a forum in which we learn from other historians' experiences, generate ideas, share work-in-progress, and solve research and writing problems. These class meetings will have a workshop format, meaning that we will often work directly with primary sources and writing-in-progress. Sometimes the analytical discussion will be by the class as a whole. At other times, students will meet in working groups. During the first half of the course, the workshops will emphasize the research process, particularly methods and the gathering and analysis of primary sources. Workshops in the second half of the course will focus more on the writing process and the various formats (journal articles and conference presentations) in which historians present their research findings to larger audiences. Throughout the semester, we will trade tips, bibliography, and ideas on good models.

Second, students will receive periodic feedback from me, the formal instructor of the course. Third, each student will have a faculty advisor knowledgeable in his/her particular research area. This faculty advisor may or may not be the same as the student's regular advisor. (If the 5102 faculty advisor is different from a student's regular advisor, the student should keep her or his regular advisor updated on the progress being made on the 5102 project.) The 5102 faculty advisor's role is to give guidance to the student at various stages of the process, most importantly in recommending primary sources and important secondary works, suggesting avenues for research and analysis, and reading and commenting on the first draft, and evaluating the final version. (Be sure to ask your faculty advisor early in the semester if s/he needs or prefers hard vs. electronic copies of your short and long 5102 submissions, including the First Draft and final paper.)

Fourth, two formal peer reviews are built into the research process. Early in the course, students will assist one another by reading and commenting on grant proposals. In mid-April students will read and comment on one other student's draft research paper.

The course is structured so that students complete their final essays (25-32 pages, see below) by the end of the semester and then over the summer prepare **a conference version** that can be read in twenty minutes (10-11 double-spaced pages in length plus notes) for presentation at the Graduate Research Conference held by the History Department at the start of the Fall semester. Note that any student who because of any circumstance ends up taking an Incomplete must finish their final 5102 paper by August 1 in order to participate in the fall conference. While participation in the fall conference is not a graded component of the course, it is part of the cohort experience and is an important opportunity for you to share your research with the history community. It is also good practice for the future.

Our class sessions are lap-top/device friendly, so go ahead and bring your devices!

Assignments and Grading:

Target Journal Packet + article dissection	5%
Introduction/Outline; First draft (timeliness, level of effort given circumstances of the process to these points)	5%
Grant Proposal	15%
Class participation, weekly log, peer reviews	15%
Final Paper	60%

Electronic submission of your work to me, the formal instructor, is requested (unless I indicate otherwise below), except in the case of the Final paper, where I'd like both electronic and hard copy submission. These documents should be sent as attachments in .rtf, .doc, or docx formats.

Target Journal Packet: Identify three academic journals that would be most suitable for publication of an article like the one you intend to write. DISCUSS likely journals with your 5102 advisor, by email or in person! Once you have decided on the three: Prepare a document to hand in to me; in this, list the three journals, ranked first, second, and third. To determine your rankings, think about which journals are most compatible with your topic, have the largest and most appropriate readerships, and have reputations for quality; it's also fine to factor in how hard it will likely be to get your piece accepted—you can either aim for a “reach” journal or list first a journal where you have relatively good odds. Write a paragraph on each journal explaining why it's a suitable journal for your article; include in this paragraph the titles of a few articles this journal has published (preferably, recently) that demonstrate some sympathy between that journal and your research topic. Print out your first-ranked journal's instructions for submitting manuscript articles for publication (maximum word count, formatting, etc.) and the journal's style sheet (or a few pages of it, if it is very long). Attach these printouts to the packet. I will be keeping these, so be sure to store a copy somewhere in your own files for reference.

Grant Proposal: This should be no more 1500 words plus a one-page, single-spaced bibliography (12-point font, regular margins). See the instructions posted on HuskyCt (under Assignments: Grant Proposal folder). Grant and fellowship proposals expect applicants to explain the project's purpose, significance, sources, methods, and outcome/final product. In your case, the final product is an article to be submitted to a particular history journal. To write a successful proposal, you need to have done some research into your topic so you can speak knowledgeably about your intent and the project's feasibility. Sample grant proposals are posted on HuskyCT, and more (written by UConn history faculty and grads) may be available in a folder in the top drawer of the Graduate Lounge file cabinet. Post your grant proposal to our HuskyCT site as an attachment—to Discussions (see the dedicated thread); you are **required** also to send a copy to your 5102 advisor. (Note that you will be handing in a 1-page **schema** of key elements of the Grant proposal to me prior to the Proposal due date.)

Class Participation & Peer Reviews: This grade is based on the quantity and quality of contributions to class discussion, including discussions that take place in the smaller working groups, plus peer reviews and keeping up with the weekly Research Log. Since one of the goals of the course is to model the scholarly community, your evaluation in this part of the course will take into account your collegiality, gifts at brainstorming, tact, and ability to deliver constructive criticism during peer review exercises. It includes the efforts you put into the sessions in which you may be providing written notes or postings to aid our collective enterprise (e.g., article dissection, primary source workshops). There will also be peer review sessions, for which your responses will count towards class participation. In the case of peer review of the Grant Proposals, we will go over my expectations and guidelines for these before the due date. For peer review of the first drafts of your research papers, I will act as a journal editor, receiving submitted manuscripts by email and assigning each paper to one reviewer/class member (these will be paired according to synergy between projects, and will not be anonymous reviews). Your job as a peer reviewer on a classmate's **Draft** is to compose 1-2 single-spaced pages of feedback on the draft's success at clear organization, articulation of central research questions, thesis development, use of evidence, clarity of writing, etc. (Models of manuscript reviews will be provided). Your task is also to make comments and edits on the draft by hand or electronically (using Track Changes), for return to the author and me.

Research log and update: During Weeks 3-10 (Feb. 1 - March 28; an email log during Spring break week is optional!), you are required to submit to me and your faculty advisor a weekly update. Please send these to us by email either on each Sunday, or at the latest, Monday morning before 10 a.m.; don't forget to cc your advisor! (If you choose, you can also exchange these with a peer 5102 buddy upon mutual pre-agreement.) These updates need not be super-long: be straightforward and informative! At a minimum, write a log of what you've done in the past week and state what you intend to do in the next seven days. Alert us to any research obstacles or questions that you have and record other pertinent

thoughts. An update should consist of at least one paragraph long or a bulleted list that includes your reflections. Other things you could include in these logs as the semester progresses: experiment with articulating your central research questions or arguments; present methodological puzzles or other writing problems you've encountered. Writing out a tentative outline of your paper, trotting out a thesis or argument, or even drafting a fragment (i.e., "if I had to write today, I would write...") are always helpful exercises.

Introduction plus Outline (due Mon. March 28), and First Draft (due Fri. April 15): The Introduction should state your research question and the topic's significance, articulate the thesis (even if tentative), offer historiographical context, give necessary background, intrigue readers enough to make them want to keep reading, and briefly outline a road map to the essay. It should also be properly footnoted. The **outline** should be as detailed as possible (down to the paragraph level, where possible; single-spaced; include a breakdown of your introductory section; 2-2.5 pages is a desirable length—longer is okay). **The First Draft** is one of the most crucial documents you will turn in before the end of the semester. Aim for it to represent all parts of the projected paper: introduction, body, and conclusion. Only by doing so can an author receive extensive feedback from faculty and peers and preclude the possibility of going seriously off-track in parts of the paper. If these 3 paper parts are handed in **on-time** and reflect a full effort by the author (judged by the circumstances of their research progress to this juncture), students will receive an A on this 5% of this part of the course grade; if the draft is somewhat incomplete and/or a day late, the grade will be in the B range; etc.

Final Paper: These should be 25-32 double-spaced pages plus endnotes or footnotes. Do *not* exceed this page limit. You should write with the first journal on your list of journals as your target audience. Citation style: either use the Chicago Manual of Style OR (if different) the style used by your target journal (consult with me if in doubt). I do not require a bibliography as part of your final paper if your end- or foot-notes include full citations for each source.

Grades for the final papers will be based on the following criteria:

- **Research:** Was it extensive, thorough, careful, creative, and based on a variety of primary sources? How easy (or difficult) was this research?
- **Historiography:** Does the paper provide a historiographical context for the argument or research findings? In other words, how does what you have to say fit with what other historians have written about this issue?
- **Thesis/Interpretation/Argument/Main Point:** Is it clear, original, and significant?
- **Use of Evidence:** Is the argument supported with specific examples and solid evidence? Is it logical? Persuasive? Is evidence used carefully and transparently? Was the evidence analyzed deeply and creatively to produce interesting insights? Are all sources of information documented in the footnotes or endnotes?

- **Writing:** Is it easy to understand and follow? Well-organized? Error-free? Stylistically engaging? Do the footnotes conform to the style requirements of your target journal?

The grades on the final paper and the grant proposal are determined by conference between the instructor and the 5102 faculty advisor. All other grades for the course are determined by me, the formal instructor of the course.

Writing Style Sheet, or Tips to Self: I highly recommend that you keep, and add to as the semester progresses, a bulleted list of ‘tips to self,’ which records bad habits to avoid, synonyms to use so that you can vary your vocab, etc.

Readings: On the limited occasions when we have common or required readings, these will be available on the HuskyCt site (under Readings & Resources). At times I may ask you to contribute brief materials relevant to your project, such as sample primary documents, to the class; and at times I may ask you to post some comments prior to a class session. Of course, you will also be reading other students' work as part of the course requirements.

Recommended book: If you would like a text as a guide to the research and writing topic, I highly recommend the following (note that it is geared not just to historians but to social scientists generally; it's available used for about \$14; or ask to borrow my copy!):

Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, *The Craft of Research*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2008; orig. publ. 1993)

Be aware that minor elements of this syllabus may change during the course of the semester. When needed, I will post updates of the syllabus on HuskyCt, with the date of the new version noted and any changes in **red font**.

Schedule of Meetings

Week 3 Mon Feb 1 Demystifying the Research Process

We'll get short updates on class members' projects and research to date; we will discuss: the research process, including going to the archives; identifying and accessing primary sources; note-taking and –organizing; your favorite search techniques and editing/data management tools; new features of the Babbidge Library website, etc.

Read: Shoemaker and Dayton's Research Tips (HuskyCt—the revised version dated Jan. 30); please bring it to class!

DUE: by Sunday Jan 31 at noon, via email to me: List your 5102 faculty advisor and your current working title (or topic description in one line); write three+ paragraphs describing 1) your research progress since early December (how has your project changed? what have you accomplished?); 2) your project's main research questions; and 3) where you are now (and hope to be in the next 2 weeks) in identifying and getting access to the primary sources you need; 4) (optional) any worries or dilemmas you currently have

Week 4 Mon Feb 8

Guest: Jennifer Snow, Librarian and History liaison, will be with us starting at 1 pm. By the way, you can always contact her at 486-6027, Jennifer.Snow@uconn.edu

2-3:15: Oral interviewing & oral history workshop, Wood Hall basement lounge: experts' advice on how to conduct interviews and engage in oral history

3:15-4:00: we will continue to converse with panelists who can stay, especially with Prof. Bruce Stave

Read: Devra Weber, "Mexican Women on Strike: Memory, history, and Oral Narratives" (1990 essay); **and** excerpts TBA from Donald Ritchie, *Doing Oral History* (both are on HuskyCt)

DUE: Your Target Journal Packet. Bring a hard copy to class to hand in to me: thanks! Send

Week 5 Mon Feb 15

DUE: Research Log Update—don't forget!

DUE: Schema: bring it to your appointment with me (see below), and send it to your 5102 faculty advisor!

1:00-1:50 [tentative time]: 5102 veterans will meet in confidential session with you and share tips on the research & writing process, etc. Short break follows

2:00-4:00: our class discussion of target journals, journal submission guidelines, note-taking software, organizing research notes, and research design. We will finalize our planning for our Week 8 class.

Also this week, Mon-Wed, Individual Meetings with me, Wood 328:

- **DUE: Schema.** Bring to our appointment (or send to me in advance) a 1-2 page schematic draft of grant proposal (you will be handing this in), **plus** any of your primary and key secondary sources that you can easily carry. [Ideally, send the schema prior to our meeting by email attachment to me!] The schematic draft should consist of:
- (1) Main research question
 - (2) Explanation of why this is a significant research question
 - (3) Paragraph explaining why/how this project is doable in 1 semester
 - (4) List the 3 most important secondary sources for your project (use properly formatted, bibliographic citations) and be prepared to tell me about these in detail
 - (5) List as many as possible of the major primary sources (and their location, if not published) you plan to use and be prepared to discuss these

SCHEDULE a MEETING with your faculty advisor to discuss your progress and upcoming GRANT PROPOSAL!

Week 6 Mon Feb 22 No class meeting! Time to work your grant proposal and your research

DUE: Saturday Feb. 27 by 11 a.m., via email: Your Grant Proposal, along with a 1-page Bibliography. Make the latter: single-spaced, properly formatted; have two sections—one for primary source collections and examples; the other for secondary sources. Send the Proposal with Bibliography (in 1 file) electronically to me and your faculty advisor, **and** post it as an attachment to our HuskyCt Discussion thread, “Grant Proposals.” Thanks!

Week 7 Mon Feb 29 Peer review of Grant Proposals

Homework: your work over the weekend will be to read ALL class members’ Grant Proposals and to read most carefully (at least twice!) the Proposals assigned to you (you will be on a review Panel) and fill out an Evaluation Form for each. These forms will be used as the launching point for discussion.

SCHEDULE a MEETING with your faculty advisor to discuss your GRANT PROPOSAL and the feedback you received, please

Week 8 Mon March 7 Genres of Evidence/Primary Source Workshops

We will help one another contextualize and analyze specific types of primary sources that class members are using, and individual examples.

Homework and the structure of our class session will be worked out in advance, collaboratively.

Due by Sunday at 9 p.m.: a posting (details TBA)

Spring break, Week of March 14th

Week 9 Mon March 21 Article Dissection

READ and dissect your assigned article. Bring to class your detailed outline of the article plus answers to Part 2 (see Instructions on HuskyCt); at the end of class, you will hand these in.

BRING to class a journal article or published essay/anthology chapter that you admire and assess as very high-quality. (This can be related to your paper topic, or not.) Re-read it before our session and be prepared to describe its structure and why you are enthusiastic and inspired by it!

READ the list of 5102 papers that became published articles (HuskyCT). We will discuss these in class, along with information the authors have provided about their journeys to publication.

Be prepared to present a quick research update and tell us about any current dilemmas.

Week 10 Mon March 28 Framing

Due/bring to class: 1) **Introduction** to your paper (min. 5 double-spaced pages, include notes), which should include thesis statement, historiographical context, and full source citations in foot- or endnotes; 2) **Outline** of your whole paper. Bring **FOUR copies** of 1 & 2 to class and be sure to send them by email to me and your Faculty advisor. We will do on-the-spot peer review and peer swaps!

***Last research log is due this week! After today, these weekly logs are optional.**

Week 11 Mon April 4 No class meeting

Required for this week: meet with faculty advisors. Optional: include me in this meeting or make an appointment with me

Week 12 Mon April 11 No class meeting

****Due: Friday April 15 by 5 p.m. First Draft** of your research paper (email copy to me, your designated peer reader, and your faculty advisor)

Week 13 Mon April 18 No class meeting

****Due: by noon Wed April 23:** submit your feedback commentary, plus editorial comments on the electronic copy of the draft (to the author of the paper you read, ccin'g me on both files)

Required: individual meetings with me (if possible, we will make these 3-way meetings with your faculty advisor)

Week 14 Mon April 25 Editing, Revising, Presenting

Read: Kerber's Conference rules (HuskyCT)

In class: we will discuss the revising process, how to cut your paper for conference presentation, and we will start planning the fall Research Conference

****Final Papers** (don't call them final drafts!) **are due Wednesday May 4 by 4:00 p.m.** Hard copy (double-sided, please); under my door or in my mailbox) **and** electronically to me; and to your faculty advisor in whatever format s/he has requested