

HIST 5102
QUESTIONS OF EVIDENCE: HISTORICAL RESEARCH AND WRITING
Spring 2015

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Drop-In Office Hours:
M 11-noon, T 1-2, and by appt.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

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 meetings will help students complete quality articles by creating a forum in which students 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. During the first half of the course, the workshops will emphasize the research process, particularly 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.

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 student's regular advisor. (If the 5102 faculty advisor is different from a student's regular advisor, I recommend the student still keep their regular advisor updated on the progress they are making on their 5102 paper.) This 5102 faculty advisor's role is to give guidance to the student at various stages of the process, most importantly to recommend primary sources and important historiographic works, to suggest avenues for research and analysis, and to read and comment on the first and final drafts.

Fourth, two written peer reviews are built into the research process. Early in the course, students will assist each other by reading and commenting on all grant proposals. Towards the end of the course, students will read and comment on one other student's draft research paper.

Students should complete their final essays (25-32 pages of text, doubled-spaced, plus footnotes or endnotes) by the end of the semester and then over the summer prepare a conference version that can be read in twenty minutes (10-12 double-spaced pages in length plus notes) for presentation at a History Department conference to be held at the start of fall semester, 2015.

Any student who by necessity ends up taking an incomplete in spring, 2015, should finish their final 5102 paper by August 1, 2015, to participate in the fall conference. Participation in the fall conference is not a required, graded component of the course. It simply is an opportunity for you to share your research with the history community, and it is good practice for the future.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Journal Review Packet	5%
Grant Proposal	20%
Class Participation & Peer Reviews	25%
Final Paper	<u>50%</u>
	100%

Journal Review Packet. Identify three history journals that would consider publishing an article like the one you intend to write. On a separate sheet (typed), 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. 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 recently which demonstrate some sympathy between that journal and your research topic. Print out your first-ranked journal's instructions for submitting manuscript articles for publication and the instructions for (or first page of) the journal's style sheet. Attach these printouts to the packet. I will be keeping these and so be sure to store a copy of it somewhere else for your own reference.

Grant Proposal. This should be no more than four single-spaced pages plus a one-page bibliography. Grant and fellowship proposals expect applicants to explain the project's purpose, significance, sources of information, methods, and outcome/final product. In your case, the final product is to be an article to be submitted to a particular history journal. To write a successful proposal, you already need to have done some research into your topic so you can speak knowledgeably about your intent and the project's feasibility. Instructions from a real grant application form will be provided as a separate handout. Students should post their grant proposal to our class website on huskyc2 and send a copy to their 5102 advisor to keep them informed about your research in progress.

Class Participation & Peer Reviews: This grade is based on the quantity and quality of oral contributions to class discussion. There will also be two peer review sessions, for which written peer review responses will count towards class participation. I would expect proposal peer reviews to be about a page in length and the reviews of the draft paper to be 2-3 pages of commentary and advice. You will need to make two copies of these written peer reviews: one copy to give to the author and one copy to give to me. Put your name on both copies.

Final Paper: The page requirement of 25-32 double-spaced pages of text (not counting the end/footnotes) is what most journals will expect and accept. Do NOT exceed this page limit. You are required to produce a first draft, which will not be graded but which should be as complete and polished as possible. (That is why I call this a "first draft"; it is NOT a "rough

draft.”) You should write the paper with the first journal on your list of journals as your target audience. These papers should cite sources using the style consistent with that employed by your target journal unless you have a reason for using an alternative system. If you use footnotes for citing sources, you do NOT need an additional bibliography at the end of the paper.

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

- **Research:** Was it original, 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 historiographic 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 grade on the final paper is a collaboration between the instructor and the 5102 faculty advisor. All other grades for the course are determined by me, the formal instructor of the course.

READINGS (will be made available as .pdf files on huskyct):

We will be constructing the reading list as we move through the course, but common readings are minimal. One set of readings will be two research articles from a recent issue of *The American Historical Review*, which you will be expected to read closely and schematize. The other packet of readings will be about 50 pages long and will consist of excerpts from books and articles that we think are especially creative in their analysis of primary sources. I will contribute some examples to this packet and will ask each of you to contribute one or more examples of an analysis by a historian, from a book or article, which has impressed and inspired you.

You will also be reading other students' work as part of the course requirements.

CLASS SCHEDULE

WK 1: JAN 26 THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Bring: If you have a laptop that can wifi you into the UConn Library, please bring it to class.

WK 2: FEB 2 DOG AND PONY SHOW

Due: Journal Review AND at least one example (less than five pages) of a historian's exemplary creative analysis of primary sources

- WK 3: FEB 9 NO CLASS
Required: Individual Meeting with Me
Bring: 1-page schematic draft of grant proposal and any of your primary and secondary sources that you can easily carry. The schematic draft should consist of
- (1) Main research question,
 - (2) Explanation of why this is a significant research question,
 - (3) Citations for two-three important secondary sources, and
 - (4) List of two-three primary source collections with a short description of what each collection consists of and its accessibility.
- WK 4: FEB 16 CREATIVE PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS
Read and Bring: Creative Analysis Packet
- WK 5: FEB 23 PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS
1. **Bring** photocopies of a primary source relevant to your 5102 research (no more than three pages of text) to share.
 2. **Bring** a graphic representation of primary-source data that you have constructed (e.g., a map, table, chart).
- #1 & #2 can be based on the same primary source or different materials
- Due:** noon, Wed., Feb. 25, final grant proposals (post on huskyct as discussion attachments); also send a copy to your faculty advisor & schedule a meeting with him/her to discuss your project.
- WK 6: MAR 2 GRANT PROPOSAL REVIEW
Due: Written reviews of grant proposals, two copies
- WK 7: MAR 9 ARTICLE DISSECTION & BRAINSTORMING ORGANIZATIONS
Read and Dissect: Two articles from the AHR (TBA)
- MAR 16: NO CLASS - SPRING BREAK
- WK 8: MAR 23 NO CLASS – INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS WITH ME
- WK 9: MAR 30 INTRODUCTIONS
Due: Introduction of 5102 paper (no more than five double-spaced pages), which should include the thesis statement, historiographic context, and full source citations in footnotes or endnotes. (Bring enough copies for working groups, to be assigned, including a copy for yourself; also bring a copy for me and send a copy to your faculty advisor.)
- WK 10: APR 6 NO CLASS – Arrange to meet with your faculty advisor this week (optional: include me in this meeting)

WK 11: APR 13 NO CLASS

Due: noon, Wed., Apr. 15 First Draft Research Paper (hardcopy to me, check with your designated reader and with your faculty advisor for their preferred format for receiving the paper)

WK 12: APR 20 NO CLASS

Due: by noon, written peer review (by email or hardcopy, to me and to author of paper you read)

Required: individual meeting w/me

Recommended: individual meeting w/faculty advisor

WK 13: APR 27 EDITING

PLANNING THE FALL CONFERENCE

Bring: Most recent draft research paper (one copy for you to work on in class)

Due: Fri., May 1st, Final Draft Research Paper (by email to me, and by hardcopy or email to faculty advisor, whichever he/she requests)

FINALS WK: PARTY (TBA)