

HISTORICAL METHODS (HIS 6059)
Florida State University, Spring 2006
Mondays 6:00-9:00 p.m.
Room: Bellamy 404

Prof. Jen Koslow
Email: jkoslow@mailers.fsu.edu
Office Hours: Wednesday 1-3 and by appointment

Office: 453
Phone: 644-4086

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:

This course introduces graduate students to the ways of thinking, writing, and researching that make up the discipline of History. We will examine what sorts of questions historians address and what types of knowledge they claim about the past. We will investigate a number of major debates that have preoccupied historians throughout the twentieth century and discuss the current state and possible future of the historical profession. We will also become familiar with the various types of sources historians use and what problems and possibilities accompany different historical documents. In addition to discussing the discipline and profession of History, students will practice their craft by writing a book review, constructing a conference proposal, engaging in critical commentary, and creating an original piece of scholarship based on primary source research.

REQUIRED READINGS:

Books:

- Melanie Gustafson, *Becoming A Historian* (AHA, 2003)
- Peter Charles Hoffer, *Past Imperfect* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004)
- Martha Howell and Walter Prevenier, *From Reliable Sources* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001)
- Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream* (Cambridge University Press, 1988)
- Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past* (Columbia University Press, 2000)
- Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife's Tale* (Vintage Books, 1990)
- Sam Wineburg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts* (Temple University Press, 2001)

Articles: Throughout the semester we will be discussing articles that can be accessed via JSTOR and the Web. The links are listed throughout the syllabus.

Recommended (Optional):

- Joan Bolker, *Writing Your Dissertation in Fifteen Minutes a Day*
- *Chicago Manual of Style*

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Students must complete all requirements to receive a passing grade in this course

1) Class Participation

Missing class and showing up late will hurt your class participation grade because if you are not in class, you cannot participate. **Attendance is mandatory** because this class meets only once per week. If there is an unavoidable circumstance that prevents you from attending class you will need to contact me *in advance*. (See contact information above).

Please be mindful of classroom dynamics. If you are a courageous soul who is never afraid to speak, remember not to dominate discussion and to give your fellow students the opportunity to express their opinion. If you are a shy soul who is tentative about sharing your opinion, now is the time to summon

your courage. I expect everyone to be alert, to ask questions, and to share their thoughts about the material with the class.

As a class, this should be a place where we can share ideas without fear of having our points summarily dismissed. Disagreement is different than personal attacks. In order to achieve this atmosphere, I expect everyone to treat each other with respect.

2) **Research Paper**

Students will write a 20-page research paper based on primary sources. Students will choose their topics in consultation with the instructor. As part of this assignment students are required to turn in:

- a) **A one-page discussion of possible research project** that includes a discussion of what possible primary sources will be used (due the end of week 2 via email, **January 20**)
- b) **An annotated bibliography of secondary sources.** What secondary sources are you consulting in order to complete your research paper? Your annotated bibliography should answer the questions listed under “When Analyzing a Secondary Source” in this syllabus. Your bibliography should be between 3-5 pages in length. (due week 7, **February 13**)
- c) **A rough draft of the research paper.** These drafts will be *workshopped in class* during *weeks 11 through 14*. Rough drafts of papers must be sent electronically to the entire class by an email list no later than 9:00 AM on the Thursday before the class meets. If a student prefers, they may provide a hard copy to the class one week before the class meets. It is essential that rough drafts be submitted on time to provide adequate time to read the paper in detail before the seminar meets. One hard copy will be placed in the instructor’s history department mailbox in case of formatting problems.
- d) **final paper** (due **April 24** by **4pm**)

Each of these assignments will be graded individually and all assignments must be turned in to receive a passing grade in this course. Each day an assignment is late it will lose 1/3 of a grade.

3) **Conference Paper Abstract** (due one week after your in-class presentation, see course schedule)

Students will write a conference paper abstract of between 250-500 words for their research paper. Students will attempt to identify an actual conference they could send their abstract to by the end of the semester. If that is not possible, students will identify a conference that has already past to which they might have applied. Abstracts that are either less or exceed the word-count limit will not be accepted and you will receive an F for the assignment.

4) **Book Review (due February 27)**

In developing your research paper, please select one book from your annotated bibliography to write a formal book review of between 500-750 words. Reviews that are either less or exceed the word-count limit will not be accepted and you will receive an F for the assignment.

Grade Breakdown

| | |
|--|-----|
| Class Participation | 20% |
| One-page discussion of possible research project | 5% |
| Annotated bibliography of secondary sources | 5% |
| Rough Draft of Research Paper | 5% |
| Final Research Paper | 35% |
| Conference Paper Abstract | 15% |
| Book Review | 15% |

RESEARCH PAPERS:

What is a Research Paper?

The point of a research paper is to develop an individual interest by conducting your own investigation into the past.

You should begin your search for a topic by asking yourself, what am I interested in? Am I interested in issues of the work place? Am I interested in public policy? I am interested in international relations? Am I interested in popular culture? Think back over the various history courses you have taken and ask yourself what topic did you want to know more about?

Ask yourself, why are you interested in a particular topic? What questions did it raise that you think you might want to answer? For instance, if you are interested in issues of the work place and intrigued by the Pullman Strike of 1894 you might be curious as to why workers at Pullman walked-out of the workplace in 1894. If you are interested in popular culture, you might ask why did American Indians participate as actors in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Shows at the 1894 Columbian World's Exposition?

The general process of a research paper is this: pick a topic, ask many questions, choose one or two central questions that you want to answer, identify a set of primary sources to research, read secondary sources to see what other scholars have said about your specific or related topic, and then based on your evaluation of the primary sources produce the most credible or "true" answer to your question.

In writing your paper, you should discuss how your interpretation either builds on or disagrees with other scholars' interpretations.

Mechanics

- Your papers need to evidence primary sources and secondary sources. There is no strict number for each; however, only using one primary source and one secondary source would make for a very poor research paper.
- Use the *Chicago Manual of Style* as your guide for footnotes or endnotes. (You can choose which format you like but you must choose one or the other.)
- Papers need to be typed in 12pt font, preferably Times New Roman
- Papers need to have 1 inch right and left margins

Analyzing Sources

Ask Yourself the Following Questions When Analyzing a Primary Source:

- What is the nature of the source (diary, photo, etc.)? Who created it? When and where was the source created? Why was it created?
- What is the subject matter of the source? What are the keywords, focal points, or key phrases of the source?
- How does the source address your thesis? How do you assess the significance of the source?
- What other sources (primary and secondary) can you use to evaluate this source? How does the source compare or contrast with other sources?

Ask Yourself the Following Questions When Analyzing a Secondary Source:

- Who created it (a historian, a journalist, a sociologist, a political scientist, etc.)? When and where was the source created?
- What is the author's argument? (Think about focal points and key phrases)
- What kinds of primary sources did the author use? How do you think this impacts their argument?
- How does the source address your thesis? How does the source compare or contrast with other secondary sources?

COURSE SCHEDULE:

| Date | Topic | Readings | Assignments |
|--|---|--|--|
| Jan. 9 | Introductions | -- | library tour |
| Jan. 16: Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday; no class | | | |
| Email 1 page summary of paper topic by January 20 | | | |
| Jan. 23 | Historical Thinking & Sources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wineburg, pages 3-28, 63-112, and 217-231 • Howell, pages 1-68 | Be prepared to discuss your paper topic in class |
| Jan. 30 | Historical Sources Part II: revisited, contradictory, and new discoveries | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Howell, pages 69-87 • Ulrich, <i>A Midwife's Tale</i>, pages 3-71 • William Cronon "A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative" <i>The Journal of American History</i>, Vol. 78, No. 4. (Mar., 1997), pp. 1347-1376 (JSTOR) • Engel Sluiter "New Light on the "20. and Odd Negroes" Arriving in Virginia, August 1619," <i>The William and Mary Quarterly</i>, 3rd Ser., Vol. 54, No. 2. (Apr., 1997), pp. 395-398 (JSTOR) • John Thornton, "The African American Experience of the '20. and Odd Negroes' Arriving in Virginia in 1691," <i>The William and Mary Quarterly</i>, 3rd Ser., Vol. 5, No. 3. (July 1998), pp. 421-434 (JSTOR) | <p>(1) Search on the internet and in textbooks for information regarding the arrival of ~20 African Americans at Jamestown in 1691; please bring what you find to class</p> <p>(2) Martha Ballard's diary is online at http://www.dohistory.org/ Choose one page from the diary and attempt to do a transcription. Bring your transcription to class.</p> |
| Feb. 6 | History of the Profession & Defining Historiography | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Howell, pages 88-148 • Novick, pages 1-85 as a group + 1 other chapter to be assigned | For your particular Novick chapter you will look up reviews for the books mentioned in the chapter; please copy and bring to class |
| Feb.13 | Entering the Historical Profession in the 21 st century | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gustafson, entire | Annotated bibliography due |
| Feb. 20 | History, Historians, and the Web | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vannevar Bush, "As We May Think," <i>The Atlantic</i> (originally published July 1945) http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/print/194507/bush • Roy Rosenzweig, "The Road to Xanadu: Public and Private Pathways on the History Web," <i>The Journal of American History</i> Vol. 88, Issue 2 (JSTOR) • William G. Thomas III and Edward Ayers, "The Differences Slavery Made: A Close Analysis of Two American Communities," http://www.vcdh.virginia.edu/AHR/ | <p>(1) Please examine at least one of the following websites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.landow.com/ • http://valley.vcdh.virginia.edu/ • http://www.chicagohistory.org/fire/index.html <p>(2) Bring rough draft of book review to engage in an in-class peer review</p> |
| Feb.27 | Historians and Their Publics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rosenzweig, pages 1-36, 147-176, and 177-207 • Hoffer, pages 98-121 | Book Review Due |

| March 6: Spring Break; no class | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| Mar. 13 | Issues of Professionalism & Editorial Advice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter Charles Hoffer, 141-230 • Jon Wiener, "Fire at Will," <u>The Nation</u> November 4, 2002 http://www.thenation.com/doc/20021104/wiener • Joanne Meyerowitz, "History's Ethical Crisis: An Introduction," <u>The Journal of American History</u> March 2004 (JSTOR) • Elliott J. Gorn, "The Historians' Dilemma," <u>The Journal of American History</u> March 2004 (JSTOR) • Michael Grossberg, "Plagiarism and Professional Ethics--A Journal Editor's View," <u>The Journal of American History</u> March 2004 (JSTOR) • Richard Wightman Fox, "A Heartbreaking Problem of Staggering Proportions," <u>The Journal of American History</u> March 2004 (JSTOR) • Joyce Seltzer, "Honest History," <u>The Journal of American History</u> March 2004 (JSTOR) • Emma J. Lapsansky, "An Honor System for Historians?," <u>The Journal of American History</u> March 2004 (JSTOR) • AHA Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct http://www.historians.org • Peter Hoffer, "Reflections on Plagiarism Part I – A Guide for the Perplexed" Perspectives February 2004 http://www.historians.org/Perspectives/Issues/2004/0402/0402vie1.cfm • Read Draft of 1 Peer Paper & Conference Abstract* | Rough draft due in class Monday February 27 or via email by 9am Thursday March 9 |
| Mar. 20 | Editorial Advice | Read Drafts of 3 Peer Papers & Conference Abstracts* | Rough drafts due in class Monday March 13 or via email by 9am Thursday March 16 |
| Mar. 27 | Editorial Advice | Read Drafts of 3 Peer Papers & Conference Abstracts* | Rough drafts due in class Monday March 20 or via email by 9am Thursday March 23 |
| April 3 | Editorial Advice | Read Drafts of 3 Peer Papers & Conference Abstracts* | Rough drafts due in class Monday March 27 or via email by 9am Thursday March 30 |
| April 10 | Editorial Advice | Read Drafts of 3 Peer Papers & Conference Abstracts* | Rough drafts due in class Monday April 3 or via email by 9am Thursday April 6 |
| *Final conference abstracts are due one week after your presentation | | | |
| April 17 | No Class: Work on Papers | | |
| April 24 | Papers Due by 4pm either in-box or via email | | |

MISCELLANEOUS:

Students with Disabilities:

Students with disabilities covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act should follow these steps:

- Provide documentation of your disability to the Student Disability Resource Center 108 Student Services Building, Telephone: 644-9566.
- Bring a statement from the Student Disability Resource Center to your instructor the first week of class, indicating that you have registered with them. The statement should indicate the special accommodations you require.

Academic Honesty and Statement on Plagiarism:

Students are expected to uphold the Academic Honor Code published in *The Florida State University Bulletin* and the *Student Handbook* wherein it states that “The academic honor system of the Florida State University is based on the premise that each student has the responsibility: 1. to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity in the student’s own work; 2. To refuse to tolerate violations of academic integrity in the University community; and 3. To foster a high sense of integrity and social responsibility on the part of the University community.” Failure to uphold this code will result in an “F” for this course.

Religious Holidays: