

HISTORY 253.02E Reading and Writing History

Fall 2012

TR 9.30 – 10.45 am

SS 143

Instructor: Prof. Kuracina

Office location: Ferguson Social Sciences 104

Office hours: Tuesday & Thursday, 3.30pm to 4.30pm; Wednesday, 12.00pm to 3.00pm; and by appointment

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COURSE INFORMATION

Course Materials:

Books: The following books are required for this course and can be purchased at the bookstore. Please check to make sure you obtain the correct edition as listed here:

- Anthony Brundage. *Going to the Sources: A Guide to Historical Research and Writing*, fourth edition. Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 2008. ISBN 0882952536
- Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, seventh edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007. ISBN 0226823377.

Additional readings have been prepared and will be distributed by email. These are not listed in the course schedule below, but assignments deadlines will be announced well in advance. These readings are a blend of primary and secondary materials that provide the foundations for classroom discussions. Some of them consider the nature of the historical profession, others provide students with opportunities to examine and assess assorted histories.

Note: It is imperative that you complete the assigned readings; the material contained therein will drive classroom discussion, a very crucial course requirement. You are responsible for all the material contained in the readings; if you do not read them, you will have a difficult semester.

Course description:

This course introduces students to the discipline of history as it is taught at the college level. Students will discover how and why historians debate issues of evidence and interpretation. By studying the “history of history,” students will learn to distinguish between various schools or styles of academic history; to improve reading, note-taking, and library skills; and to formulate meaningful thesis statements. Students will apply the lessons of the course in a hands-on research experience which will result in the preparation and presentation of a finished historical essay in approved scholarly form.

Students will develop the skills necessary for properly “doing” history through classroom discussions and activities, homework assignments and independent research work. Additionally, the guided preparation of an approved scholarly research paper is designed to produce work that can be presented at a regional history conference or, in some instances, submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

Student Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the semester, the following student learning outcomes will be measured:

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of historiography, that is, a familiarity with a range of historical methods, theories, and schools of interpretation
- Students will be able to research and write a thesis-drive paper of at least ten pages on an historical topic, using appropriate sources

Course Objectives:

By the end of the semester, student will be able to: (1) discuss the development of the discipline of history; (2) locate, evaluate and analyze historical primary and secondary sources; (3) explain how historiography and sources can be used to frame historical arguments; (4) recognize the contested nature of evidence and the value of scholarly historical debate; (5) demonstrate information retrieval skills required for historical research; and (6) write a college-level research paper that meets general discipline standards.

Students' ability to meet these learning outcomes and course objectives will be assessed through exams, quizzes, discussion, short writing assignments and the completion of a research paper.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS**Instructional, Methods, Activities Assessments:**

Attendance policy: Students are expected to attend every class session; attendance will be taken. Each unexcused absence beyond two (2) instances will result in a 10% reduction in the attendance grade; excessive unexcused absences (more than 6) may be cause for a failing grade in this course, at the instructor's discretion.

Students should inform the instructor if there is a legitimate reason (e.g., illness or emergency) for missing an exam. Students should contact the instructor within 48 hours of the missed exam to schedule a make-up; failure to do so may forfeit the possibility of making up the exam. Non-documented excuses are not generally acceptable, but can be accepted at the instructor's discretion. If you must travel on school business (with an athletic team or for another reason), then let me know ahead of time.

Participation: Students are expected to do the reading as noted in this syllabus and to be prepared to participate in classroom discussions; this means completing the assignment before class and bringing the reading material to class. All students enrolled in this course are expected to participate in class discussions and contribute their thoughts, ideas and impressions to the discussion. Our classroom meetings will be collective learning sessions in which we will explore ideas and issues together. You are encouraged to bring questions with you to class and to interrupt the discussion to ask your questions should some point require further explanation. Students are expected to create and sustain an open intellectual classroom environment which fosters discussion – students should listen to each others' comments and questions with an open mind and to respect viewpoints other than their own. Students must also be open to understanding why people of the past did what they did, and should not dismiss these actors' views because they might be perceived as "wrong." Your participation grade will be based on the following criteria:

- A = Student is always prepared; makes frequent voluntary contributions to classroom discussion
- B = Student is generally prepared; makes occasional voluntary contributions to discussion or participates only when called on
- C = Student is usually prepared but rarely voluntarily speaks
- D = Student is generally unprepared and does not contribute to discussion
- F = Student is unprepared and appears disinterested in contributing to discussion

Occasional in-class writing assignments or short quizzes may be assigned and will contribute towards your participation grade; these may not be made up. Although lectures, readings and discussions will overlap significantly, the readings will also include materials that may not be covered in class; nevertheless, students are responsible for all content covered in reading assignments.

Assignments: There are four general types of assignments for this course. All written assignments are to be submitted at the start of the class period in which they are due and the final paper will also be submitted electronically to Turnitin (see below for details).

History department assessment exam: Students are required to take the history department assessment exam, which will be administered during a regularly-scheduled class session. There will be only one scheduled make-up time.

Document analysis: Students will complete two short writing assignments that are designed to assess various types of sources. Each assignment is worth 5% of the final grade. This analysis is designed to integrate a specific historical document into a broader historical context by posing a series of questions about the document:

1. The author's background and why he/she might have written the document
2. The document's thesis (assuming it frames one)
3. The intended audience
4. What the document says about its historical context

Each document analysis is due per the Course Outline and Calendar below. The length of the analysis should approximate 3–4 pages of text. The paper must use footnotes as applicable. The text must be double-spaced, the pages must be numbered, all margins will be set at 1 inch and the paper should be written in Times New Roman 12pt font or its equivalent. This paper may not be submitted in more than one class.

Historiography exam: History is much more than merely telling stories about the past. When historians frame an argument, they do so in relation to other interpretations and it is imperative that historians demonstrate an awareness of the kinds of histories that have been done about assorted topics. Moreover, these differing approaches to the events of the past collectively help explain why events unfolded as they did. By understanding diverse historiographical interpretations, students will be better prepared to write their own histories and will better understand the complex process of studying history.

The distributed reading assignments and *Going to the Sources* form the basis for completing this assignment. On exam day, students will take a short exam that asks them to: distinguish different fields of history (e.g., political, social, cultural, economic, etc.); identify different methods historians use to critically analyze sources and ask questions of those sources; provide specific examples or descriptions of historical interpretations; and identify and describe differing theoretical frameworks for studying history.

Research paper: The core of this course is designed to prepare students to write an original historical research paper. This class will provide students with the skills necessary to accomplish this goal and students will progress toward completion of the final paper under the instructor's supervision. The topic of this paper is open-ended, must it must be an analysis of historical events that occurred in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The topic must be approved by the instructor and once approved may not be changed; however the specific focus of the topic may be refined in consultation with the instructor.

The final paper will be approximately 15 pages in length (including text and notes but excluding the bibliography and title page). The paper must use footnotes according to Turabian style and will also include a properly-formatted bibliography and a title page that (at least) includes the student's name and the title of the paper. The text must be double-spaced, the pages must be numbered, all margins will be set at 1 inch and the paper should be written in Times New Roman 12pt or its equivalent. This paper may not be submitted in more than one class. The goal here is to help students produce an original research paper that is of sufficient quality to be presented at the Phi Alpha Theta (National History Honor Society) regional conference in the spring semester or to submit it to a peer-reviewed scholarly journal for publication. Those students producing papers of sufficient quality will be invited to submit their work to the conference or a journal and will receive 5% extra credit to their final grade.

The paper will be graded according to the following criteria:

- Compliance with the assignment
- The presence, strength and originality of a thesis
- The proper use of evidence to support that thesis

- The degree to which the paper is analytical and evaluative rather than narrative
- Evidence that the sources used and listed in the bibliography were read and understood
- Organization of the paper and logical progression of the argument
- Mechanics (spelling, grammar, syntax and punctuation)

The research paper must analyze an event or a sequence of events and must present a cohesive and logical argument supported by the primary and secondary sources listed in the bibliography. Approximately two pages of the paper should be devoted to an historiographical survey of the topic, with the balance of the paper analyzing the topic based on the student's assessment of the historical literature. Whether you agree or disagree with the prevailing historical interpretations, your analysis must be supported by the evidence and must respond to oppositional interpretations. In short, your topic should be one about which historians disagree as to causes and/or interpretation; you will then weigh in on the debate.

NOTE: Begin formulating a research topic immediately as you may encounter difficulties accessing the primary sources you will need to write the paper. Discuss your ideas with the instructor as early as possible so that you can begin your investigation into the availability of materials and whether or not you will be able to complete the research in a relatively short amount of time. You might select a topic that cannot be accessed without foreign language competency or without extensive travel. Students might select the same or similar topics and will be competing for limited source materials. In other instances, Gee Library does not have a sufficient or up-to-date collection of sources or scholarly works on some topics, which means relying on interlibrary loan. In short, do not wait to begin working on the paper.

To assist students in the research and writing process, the final grade for the research paper is broken down into several components. **Each component must be completed to pass the class; failure to complete any one component will result in automatically failing the course.** Each component is due on the date listed in the Course Outline and Calendar below; if you have an unavoidable scheduling conflict on the due date in question, please make alternative arrangements with the instructor **in advance**. Any late component will be penalized 10% for each day it is late. No hand-written work will be accepted and assignments may not be submitted electronically – only typed, printed, “hard copies” are acceptable.

- **Component 1:** Topic Statement (10% of final grade) – Students must submit a statement of the broad research question, topic, theme they intend to investigate. This statement should be about one paragraph (at least three sentences) in length. Some preliminary research should be completed before this component is submitted – students should have some general idea of the topic they wish to explore, the questions they wish to ask and/or the thesis they intend to prove. Your topic statement must be a coherent paragraph that discusses the topic. Any statement less than three sentences in length will be returned and the assignment will be considered late. Once approved by the instructor, the paper topic may not be changed, although the specific focus of the paper can be refined with the instructor's approval.
- **Component 2:** Working Bibliography (10% of final grade) – The Working Bibliography is the basic list of sources to be used in the research paper. This list will include both primary and secondary sources related to the research question, categorized according to type of source and separated by sub-headings. The bibliography should include the student's name, the general research topic or working title of the paper and a list of search tools (such as card catalog, WorldCat or First Search) used to compile the bibliography; this listing should be provided at the top of the bibliography. The Working Bibliography must contain at least twenty sources, including no fewer than eight primary sources. At least five of the secondary sources must be scholarly works – books and peer-reviewed articles published after 1985. Secondary sources may not include textbooks, book reviews, juvenile literature, websites or webpages, or articles from popular media (e.g., *TV Guide*, *People*, or *Newsweek*). Entries must be formatted according to Turabian style. Note: As this is a “working bibliography,” students are expected to continue to add sources to it even after this component

is submitted for a grade (you do not need to identify all the sources you will use when the working bibliography is submitted).

- Component 3: Outline (10% of final grade) – This component is a narrative outline of your research paper. It should be a detailed plan of what you will discuss in the paper, including your potential thesis statement. There is no cap on the length of the outline, although it must be at least two pages.
- Component 4: Completed Draft (10% of final grade) – This component is a full and complete draft of your research paper. The draft should be carefully proofread and free of typographical errors. It must be at least ten pages in length (text and notes) and a bibliography and title page must be attached. The draft must follow the formatting guidelines for the final paper and footnotes should use Tuyrabian style. The draft will be evaluated according to the standards set for the final research paper.
- Component 5: Final research paper (20% of final grade) – The final research paper is due on the date and time indicated in the Course Outline and Calendar below. It is the completed, revised approximately 15-page final paper; revisions must incorporate or address comments received on the draft paper and therefore should be a substantially different paper than the draft. **Late papers will not be accepted.** If the due date poses a problem for you, you are welcome to submit the final paper before the deadline or you should discuss your situation with the instructor. Students must submit their final papers to Turnitin; electronic submission to Turnitin is due by 5.00 pm on the same day the final paper is submitted to the instructor. The final grade of any student failing to comply with this stipulation will be withheld. See below for instructions on using Turnitin.com.

Grading:

Student performance will be evaluated as follows:

- Research paper (60% of the final grade, according to the components listed above)
- 2 document analyses (each assignment is 5% of final grade, 10% total)
- Historiography exam (10% of final grade)
- Participation (10% of final grade)
- attendance (10% of final grade)

All requirements and assignments must be completed to pass this course

Written work: Grading criteria for written work holds true for exams, written quizzes or occasional written “homework” assignments. It is based on the following:

- A = Mastery of content and reading material; factual accuracy; thoughtful interpretation or argument that synthesizes original thoughts and ideas with content; technically clean
- B = Good-to-excellent command of the majority of content and reading material; competent factual accuracy; a generally solid historical argument backed with adequate evidence
- C = Fair command of content material; reasonable factual accuracy; ability to articulate a specific thesis or argument even if it is not original or is poorly supported by the evidence
- D = Poor command of content; factual errors; no real argument driving the essay

General letter grades correspond to the following scale:

A = 90–100

B = 80–89

C = 70–79

D = 60–69

F = less than 59

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS, ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

The following information is provided to assist students in preparing to use technology in this course:

Word processing: Students will need access to a word processor and a printer to access and print out reading assignments, to write research papers, to prepare for debates and written exams and to complete type-written response assignments. Students' word processors must enable them to read and insert footnotes into a Microsoft Word document.

Internet: Students will need email access to receive reading assignments and course-related correspondence and for submitting the final paper to Turnitin.com.

Turnitin: Turnitin is a web-based plagiarism detection software site that scans student papers into a database of all such papers and check submitted papers against those in the database and virtually every website on the Web to determine whether or not paper content was "lifted" or fabricated in any fraudulent way. Students must submit their papers in Microsoft Word format after creating an account tied to this course. To submit a paper to Turnitin, go to www.turnitin.com and click on "new user." Choose "student" and click "next." Enter the Class ID and Password (details on ID and password are forthcoming). Once you input your information into the system, you should see History 253 listed in your classes. Click on the appropriate assignment, click on the icon under "submit" and follow the instructions to upload your paper. Please let me know if you have any problems (and do not wait until the very last minute to upload your paper). Submissions to Turnitin are due by 5.00 pm on the same date the hard-copy work is submitted to the instructor.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Students are encouraged to contact the instructor whenever the need arises; clear lines of communication enable the instructor to better assist your learning processes and provide any necessary support. Outside the classroom, the best way to contact the instructor is by email and during posted office hours. Do not hesitate to talk to me about any concerns you may have or any problems or issues you may experience during the semester – I can only assist you if I am aware of what is going on with you.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Classroom Behavior:

To avoid being a distraction to either other students or the instructor, please take care of personal needs before class begins and turn off cell phones. Do not send text messages, chat on IM or post Facebook updates during class; although you think you can do these things subtly, you can not – it is a distraction.

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment.

Written Assignment Format and Late Assignment Policy:

Papers must be typed and double-spaced with one-inch margins. Pages must be numbered. Your name, the course number and the due date must appear at the top of the title page. Pages should be stapled. Any authors' quotations or ideas that are derived from another writer must be properly cited, with footnote citations according to Turabian style. We will briefly discuss citations in class, but if there are any questions about how to cite or what to cite, please ask. Any papers that do not conform to these guidelines will be returned to the author for resubmission and will be penalized for being submitted late.

All writing assignments will be turned in at the beginning of class on the due date. Late assignments will only be accepted with advance permission and will be penalized 10% for each day it is late. No late submissions of the final paper will be accepted.

Academic Honesty:

In all our courses, history faculty members expect that all work turned in by students for grades is their own work. It is the policy of the university, the history department and the instructor that no form of plagiarism, cheating, collusion or any other form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated. Plagiarism is defined as taking the words or ideas of someone else and passing them off as your own. Cheating is defined as obtaining unauthorized assistance on any assignment. Collusion is defined as selling or purchasing academic products with the intention that they be submitted to fulfill an academic or course requirement. Students are expected to uphold and support the highest possible academic standards at all times. Any student found guilty of violating academic integrity policy will fail the assignment in question, will automatically fail the course and will be subject to disciplinary action by the university (see Texas A&M University-Commerce Code of Student Conduct 5.b. [1,2,3]). Further information on the history department's plagiarism policy can be found on the department webpage. If you are unclear about what constitutes academic dishonesty, ask.

Writing Center:

Students are encouraged to take advantage of the Writing Center's resources for assistance with drafting their written assignments. Although the center will not write your paper for you, it may help you to improve your writing skills. If you use the Writing Center, plan in advance because it can only help you if there is adequate time to incorporate their suggestions into your paper. Additionally, I am willing to read rough drafts (and even multiple drafts) of your written work so long as the drafts are submitted at least one week prior to the due date.

Students with Disabilities:

Students requiring special accommodations for learning disabilities must work with the Academic Support Committee. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities.

If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
Gee Library, Room 132,
Phone: (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax: (903) 468-8148
Email: StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu.

Note: This syllabus is your contract with the instructor for the semester. By enrolling in this course you agree to abide by all the policies and requirements set forth below. The terms of this contract are non-negotiable, apply equally to each student, and remain in effect throughout the semester; only the instructor may alter the terms of this agreement. Please contact the instructor if there are any questions about this syllabus or the terms herein.

COURSE OUTLINE AND CALANDAR

Tentative course schedule (and themes):

The following schedule is meant to be a guide for students throughout the semester and indicates when assignments are due. Please refer to the schedule frequently. I will do my best to keep to this schedule, but I reserve the right to change it as the semester progresses and as such circumstances arise.

August 28 – Introduction

PART 1 — DOING HISTORY

August 30 – A chat about history, historians, etc.

September 4 – What is History? What is Historiography?

- Brundage, chapter 1
- “In Defense of History” and “The History of History” (email attachment)

September 6 – Identifying a topic

- Turabian, pp. 5–23

September 11 – What is a source?

- Brundage, chapter 2
 - Assignment due: Component 1 (topic statement) due in class

September 13 – Finding sources

- Brundage, chapter 3
- Turabian, pp. 24–35

September 18 – Library Day: no class

- *Outline the initial research process (discussion for 9/20)*

September 20 – Evaluating sources & note-taking

- Brundage, chapter 4 & pp. 95–104
- Turabian, pp. 36–47

September 25 – Formatting: bibliography & footnotes

PART 2 — INTERPRETING HISTORY

September 27 – The use and misuse of sources

- “Historians and their Facts” (email attachment)
 - Assignment due: Component 2 (working bibliography) due in class

October 2 – Arguing history

- Turabian, pp. 48–61

October 4 – The “objectivity question”

- “Objectivity and its Limits” (email attachment)
 - Assignment due: Component 3 (outline) due in class

October 9 – Interpreting history

- Brundage, chapter 5, pp. 104–109
 - Assignment due: source analysis #1 due in class

October 11 – History as cause and effect

- “Causation in History” (email attachment)

October 16 – History from below

- “Society and the Individual” (email attachment)

October 19 – Postmodernism

- Assignment due: source analysis #2 due in class

October 23 – History workshop: historiography

October 28 – History workshop: summarizing others’ arguments

- “Sentiments and Patriotism” (email attachment)

October 30 – **Historiography exam**

PART 3 — WRITING HISTORY

November 1 – Writing history

- Brundage, chapter 6
- Turabian, pp. 62–70

November 6 – Writing history

- Turabian, pp. 71–81

November 8 – Writing workshop: quotations & plagiarism

- Turabian, pp. 71–81, 347–358

November 13 – Writing workshop: paraphrasing, citation and quotation

November 15 – Writing workshop: spelling and punctuation

November 20 – Writing workshop: essay exams

- Assignment due: Component 4 (first draft) due in class

November 22 – ***Thanksgiving – no class***

November 27 – Writing workshop: editing – spelling, punctuation, citation, quotation

November 29 – Writing consultations: no class, work on final drafts

December 4 – Writing consultations: no class, work on final drafts

December 6 – Conclusions

- Assignment due: Component 5 (final draft) due in class