



## **COURSE SYLLABUS**

### **HISTORY 253.01E**

### **READING AND WRITING HISTORY**

### **FALL 2015**



**Instructor:** Dr. Sharon Kowalsky

**Office Location:** Ferguson Social Sciences 105

**Office Hours:** Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:00-2:00, or by appointment

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#### **COURSE INFORMATION**

##### **Course Materials:**

The following texts are required for this course and available in the bookstore. Please be sure you obtain the correct editions as listed here:

- Strunk and White, *Elements of Style*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Pearson, 2000) ISBN 978-0205309023, \$9.95
- Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition (Chicago, 2013) ISBN 978-0226816388, \$18.00
- Black, *Clio's Battles* (Indiana University Press, ) ISBN 978-0253016812, \$

Any additional materials will be distributed in class by the professor or made available to students through eCollege.

### **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.

Classroom discussions and activities, as well as homework assignments and independent research work, will build the skills necessary for students to "do" history. One additional goal of the major project for this course, the research paper, is for students to prepare papers that can be presented at a regional history conference. Papers determined to be of sufficient quality will be able to be submitted for presentation.

### **Student Learning Outcomes:**

Over the course of the semester, students will:

1. demonstrate an understanding of historiography, that is, a familiarity with a range of historical methods, theories, and schools of interpretation; and
2. be able to research and write a thesis-driven paper of at least 12 pages on an historical topic, using appropriate sources.

### **Course Objectives:**

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

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

**Please note:** This syllabus is your contract with me, the professor, for the semester. By enrolling in this class you agree to the policies and requirements set out below and understand that all the requirements must be fulfilled to pass this

class. These terms are non-negotiable and will remain in effect for the duration of the semester. If you have any questions about anything in this syllabus, please ask.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### **Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments:**

#### Attendance and Participation:

Attendance at all class meetings is strongly encouraged. You are responsible for all material covered in our class meetings, regardless of your physical presence in the room. Excessive absences will be reflected negatively in the final grade. Students are expected to come prepared to engage with and discuss the assigned material. This means preparing the assignment before class and bringing the reading material with you to class. I expect all students to participate in our class discussions and to contribute their thoughts, ideas, and questions to our collective exploration. Our classroom meetings will be collaborative sessions during which we will explore ideas and issues together. This requires your participation and engagement. I especially encourage you to bring your questions to class. I will create, and expect you to uphold, an intellectual environment in the classroom where we can listen to and consider others' arguments and opinions with an open mind and where we respect viewpoints other than our own. Your participation grade will be based on your engagement in our class discussions and be guided by the following rubric:

- A = Always prepared, frequently participates, rarely absent
- B = Always prepared, participates only when called on, rarely absent
- C = Usually prepared, rarely speaks, rarely absent
- D = Often unprepared, several absences
- F = Usually unprepared, frequent absences

The professor reserves the right to give unannounced pop quizzes or homework assignments. These cannot be made up and will count as part of the participation grade.

#### Assignments:

*Exams:* Students will take one exam.

*Research Paper:* The core work of this course is the conceptualization, research, and writing of an original historical research paper based on primary historical sources on a topic of the student's choosing. The class will equip you with the tools to successfully accomplish this goal and you will progress toward it through steps monitored by the professor. The topic of this paper is your choice but must be approved by the instructor and once approved cannot be changed, although the exact focus may be refined in consultation with the professor. The final paper must be a length of 12-15 pages of text and notes (excluding bibliography and title page). The paper must use footnotes in proper format and include a bibliography (that lists all sources cited and consulted) and cover page (containing at a minimum your name and the title of the paper). All citations should be formatted in Turabian style. The text should be double spaced, the pages should be numbered, and the

paper should be in Times New Roman 12pt or equivalent font with 1-inch margins. The paper may not be submitted in more than one class. The ultimate goal of this research paper, beyond introducing students to the methods of doing history, is to produce a work of original research that is of sufficient quality that it can be presented at the regional Phi Alpha Theta (National History Honors Society) conference.

The paper will be graded using the following criteria:

1. compliance with the assignment;
2. the presence, strength, and originality of a thesis;
3. the use of evidence to support that thesis;
4. the degree to which the paper is analytical and evaluative rather than descriptive;
5. evidence that the texts and sources were read and understood;
6. organization and logic of thought progression; and
7. mechanics, i.e. spelling, grammar, syntax, and punctuation.

To assist you in completing what may seem like a daunting task, the research paper will be broken down into several component parts. **Each component must be submitted in order to pass the class. Failure to complete any one component element will result in automatic failure for the course.** Each component is due on the date indicated in the Course Schedule. If you have a conflict, please make alternative arrangements with the professor in advance. If a component is late, it will be penalized 10 points per business day. **Please note: it is worth submitting a missing component even if it is very late and earns you no points, because not submitting that component will result in an automatic failing grade for the class.**

Component 1: Topic Statement. 10 points. Due in class. Students must submit a statement of the broad question/topic/theme they wish to investigate. This statement must be typed and should not exceed one page in length (but must be at least two paragraphs). Some research should be conducted before this component is turned in; i.e. you should have a general idea of the topic you wish to explore, the questions you wish to ask, and the thesis you want to prove. This component should be a substantive paragraph that delves into the topic. Anyone handing in one sentence statements will have their component returned to them and their assignment will be counted as late. Once approved, the topic cannot be changed. However, the specific focus of the topic statement may be refined with the professor's approval. Remember, students may not submit the same paper in more than one class.

Component 2: Proposal. 100 points. Due to the eCollege Dropbox. For this component you will prepare a 3 page proposal for your research project. A successful proposal will set out the topic or problem you want to investigate, will propose a thesis, will discuss the relevant secondary literature on the subject and how your thesis fits into this literature, will discuss the primary sources you intend to use for the paper, and will establish the significance of the proposed research. The proposal is preliminary but should clearly set out what you intend to study, why, and how the topic fits with other historical studies like it.

Component 3: Working Bibliography. 100 points. Due in class. The Working Bibliography is the basic list of sources to be used in the research paper. The Working Bibliography should consist of both primary and secondary sources related to the research question, categorized according to type of source (i.e. primary or secondary) and separated by subheadings. The Bibliography should include the student's name, the general topic being researched or the title of the research project, and a list of the search tools (such as WorldCat or FirstSearch, card catalog, etc.), electronic or otherwise, used to compile the Bibliography. These should be provided at the beginning of the bibliography. The Working Bibliography must contain at least twenty sources. Of these, at least 8 must be primary sources and at least 10 secondary sources (it may contain more). At least five of the secondary sources must be scholarly works (books and peer-reviewed journal articles) published after 1985. Secondary sources may not include reference works, textbooks, book reviews, juvenile literature, web sites, or articles from popular media (like *TV Guide*, *People*, or *Newsweek*). Entries should be formatted according to Turabian style. Proper formatting is essential. As this is a "working bibliography," students are expected to continue to add sources to it even after it is turned in (i.e. you do not need to identify ALL the sources you intend to use before this component is submitted, but you should identify as many as possible).

Component 4: Outline. 100 points. Due in class. For this component you will turn in an outline of your research paper. It should be a detailed plan of what you intend to discuss in the paper, including your potential thesis (for guidelines on structuring an outline, see Turabian, 63-64). The outline may be as long as necessary, but should be a minimum of 2 pages. We will discuss outlining in class before the component is due.

Component 5: Completed Draft. 100 points. Due to the eCollege dropbox. This component is a full and complete version of your research. The draft should be proofread, properly formatted, and free of mistakes. It should be a minimum of 12 pages of text and notes, plus bibliography and cover page. The draft should follow the formatting guidelines for the final paper and should include footnotes in Turabian style. The draft will be evaluated according to the standards set for the final research paper.

Component 6: Final Research Paper. 100 points. Due to the eCollege dropbox. The final research paper is due on the date and time indicated below in the Course Schedule. It should be the completed, 12-15-page paper that incorporates the comments received in the draft component stages and represents a substantially revised version of the draft component. **Late papers will not be accepted.** If the due date and time pose a problem for you, please discuss your situation with the professor or plan to turn in your paper early.

### **Grading:**

*Grades will be determined according to the following breakdown:*

Research Paper:	60%
Participation:	20%
Exam:	20%

Your grades for written work will be determined based on the following rubric:

- A = Mastery of reading and class material; factual accuracy; thoughtful, historical argumentation demonstrating ability to synthesize and/or some originality of thought; technically clean
- B = Good to excellent command of most reading and class material; accuracy; good level of historical argumentation; reasonable thesis statement
- C = Good command of class material; accuracy; ability to articulate a historical point of view, even if it is not compelling or is poorly reasoned
- D = Poor command of required assignments; errors; ahistorical or narrow reasoning

The grading scale used for this course is as follows:

90-100	=	A
80-89	=	B
70-79	=	C
60-69	=	D
59 or less	=	F

## **TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS, ACCESS, AND NAVIGATION**

The following information has been provided to assist you in preparing to use technology successfully in this course:

**Word Processing:**

You will need access to a word processor to prepare written exams and research projects. You should be able to insert footnotes in your papers. Please plan to use MS Word and not any online system, like Google Docs. The formatting does not work correctly.

**eCollege:**

This course is web-enhanced through eCollege, the Learning Management System used by Texas A&M University-Commerce. To access eCollege you will need an internet connection, preferably high speed, and your CWID and password. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, please contact Technology Services at 903-468-6000 or [helpdesk@tamu-commerce.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamu-commerce.edu). To get started with the course, go to: <https://leo.tamu-commerce.edu/login.aspx>. eCollege will be used to send you announcements and reminders, to post grades, and to provide access to course materials (except required readings) such as handouts and assignments. In addition, eCollege will be the primary means for me to communicate with you outside the classroom. Be sure that you can access the email account the university has on record for you. You should get into the habit of checking the eCollege site for this course on a daily basis.

**Turnitin:**

All written work must be submitted to Turnitin.com. Submissions to Turnitin are made through the dropbox on eCollege. All written work for this course will be turned in through the drop box in eCollege. Please let me know if you have any problems.

## **COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT**

### **Interaction with the Instructor:**

Students are encouraged to contact the professor for any and all reasons whatsoever. The more you let me know what is going on with you, the better I can help you out when necessary. Beyond the classroom, the best way to get in touch with the professor is through email. I am also available during office hours. Please come to talk to me about any concerns you might have and about any problems or issues that arise during the semester. I can be very understanding but only if I know what is going on with you.

## **COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES**

### **Classroom Behavior and Student Conduct:**

All students are expected to observe basic tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment (See Student's Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct). During class time, I expect your undivided attention. This means turning off cell phones, pagers, iPods, and other devices, and putting away newspapers and other forms of distraction, for the duration of the class period (exceptions will be allowed for emergencies with advance permission of the professor). Please come to class on time and plan to stay for the entire period. Coming late and/or disrupting the learning environment shows disrespect for us, your colleagues, and the educational endeavor in which you are engaged. If you must leave early, please let me know at the beginning of class. I can be very understanding of problems that might arise over the course of the semester, but only if I know what is going on with you. I encourage you to come to my office hours, to get to know me, and to keep me informed of any issues you might have that would affect your performance in this class.

### **Late Assignments:**

All written assignments due to the eCollege dropbox are due by midnight on the date listed in the Course Schedule below. Other assignments must be turned in during class, as indicated on the syllabus. Late assignments may be accepted only with the advance approval of the professor and may be assessed a penalty of one letter grade per week. If you have a problem with a due date because of a specific emergency, please notify the professor in advance or plan to turn the assignment in early. *I can be very understanding and flexible with you, but only if you come to talk to me in advance.* To pass this class, all assignments must be completed. Any missing assignments at the end of the course will result in an overall course grade of D or F.

### **Academic Honesty:**

In all courses, I expect that all work that you do and turn in is your own. It is the policy of the University, the History Department, and myself that no form of plagiarism, cheating, collusion, or any other form of academic dishonesty will be

tolerated. Plagiarism is defined as deliberately taking the words or ideas of someone else and passing them off as your own. Cheating is obtaining unauthorized assistance on any assignment. Collusion is the selling of academic products with the intention that they be submitted to satisfy an academic requirement. Students are expected to uphold and support the highest academic standards at all times. Any student found guilty of academic dishonesty will automatically fail the assignment in question, will likely fail the entire 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 plagiarism policy can be found on the History Department web page. If you are even unclear about what constitutes plagiarism or academic dishonesty, please ask.

### **Writing Center:**

Students are encouraged to take advantage of the resources of the Writing Center for assistance with drafting their papers. The Writing Center is a resource for you. They will not write your paper; they will help you improve your writing skills. If you use the Writing Center, please plan ahead. They can only help you if you see them in advance and have time to incorporate their suggestions into the final paper. More information can be found at <http://www.tamu-commerce.edu/litlang/CSC/>.

### **Nondiscrimination Statement**

A&M-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

### **Students with Disabilities:**

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  
Texas A&M University-Commerce  
Gee Library 132  
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835  
Fax (903) 468-8148  
[StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu)  
[Student Disability Resources & Services](#)**

### **COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR**

This schedule will guide you through the semester and indicates when your assignments are due. I will do my best to adhere to this schedule, but I reserve

the right to make adjustments to it during the course of the semester as such circumstances arise. Reading assignments are indicated on eCollege for each class meeting.

Week 1

August 31: Introduction

September 2: Finding a Topic

Week 2

September 7: no class, Labor Day

September 9: Finding Sources

**Due: Component 1: Topic Statement. In class.**

Week 3

September 14: Library Orientation (Rosh Hashanah)

September 16: Evaluating Sources

Week 4

September 21: Taking Notes

September 23: Library Day (Yom Kippur)

Week 5

September 28: Historiography

September 30: Historiography

Week 6

October 5: Historiography

October 7: **Exam**

Week 7

October 12: Citations and Formatting I

**Due: Component 2: Proposal. eCollege dropbox.**

October 14: Citations and Formatting II

Week 8

October 19: Citations and Formatting III

October 21: Outlining: Why we should

**Due: Component 3: Working Bibliography. In class.**

Week 9

October 26: Writing is hard work

October 28: How to write

**Due: Component 4: Outline. In class.**

Week 10

November 2: Writing is still hard work

November 4: Writing/Plagiarism

Week 11

November 9: Footnoting: why and how

November 11: Footnoting: I really mean it.

Week 12

November 16: Spelling and grammar

November 18: Spelling and Punctuation

**Due: Component 5: First Draft. eCollege dropbox. Copies should be provided to peers as indicated by the professor.**

Week 13

November 23: Writing (individual consultations as appropriate)

November 25: Thanksgiving, no class

Week 14

November 30: Writing Workshop

December 2: Writing Workshop

Week 15

December 7: Writing Workshop

December 9: Writing Workshop

**Component 6: Final Draft, due at final exam period, Monday, December 14, 10:30-12:30. eCollege.**