

**History 421**  
**English Paleography**  
**3016 JKB**  
**8:00-9:50am MWF**  
**Summer 2009**

Instructor: Dr. Harris  
Office: 2150 JFSB, ext. 2-6408  
Email: amy.harris@byu.edu  
(I do not read, nor respond to, student emails on Sundays)

Office Hours: Mondays 10-11:00am and Wednesdays 2:30-3:30pm  
Other times by appointment

**Note on the Honor Code, Special Needs Policies, and Learning Outcomes**

For more details see the attached Policies and Learning Outcomes sheet. The Honor Code will be enforced because you will follow it and therefore avoid any awkward moments for yourself, the instructor, and your fellow students.

**Learning Outcomes**

This course is designed to provide the student with an overview of alphabets and documents in use in Britain and American between 1500 and 1850. It also provides practical, hands-on experience with document analysis and transcription.

Each program at BYU has developed a set of expected student learning outcomes. All history courses contain elements meant to help students acquire and refine the skills listed in the history major learning outcomes. Some of the outcomes applicable to this class include:

- Utilize a significant range of skills and abilities in critical thinking, both in historical analysis and genealogical evidentiary analysis
- Demonstrate proficiency in using the historical method of research effectively by skillfully and honestly using primary and secondary sources.
- Possess a command of the key historical and genealogical terms, as well as theoretical background in the discipline;
- Identify and solve historical and genealogical problems through primary and secondary source research, using library archival and technological resources;
- Apply research skills learned to the search for their own ancestors and assist others in their searches, integrating in the process the world of academics and reason with that of faith.

For more details see [https://learningoutcomes.byu.edu/wiki/index.php/History\\_BA](https://learningoutcomes.byu.edu/wiki/index.php/History_BA) and [https://learningoutcomes.byu.edu/wiki/index.php/Family\\_History\\_BA](https://learningoutcomes.byu.edu/wiki/index.php/Family_History_BA)

**Texts**

**Required**

Raymond Clemens and Timothy Graham, *Introduction to Manuscript Studies* (2007)  
Course Reader available at bookstore

**Course Requirements**

This course is designed to give students a brief overview of the history of English language paleography and to provide students with hands-on experience reading and transcribing historical and genealogical documents. The course covers the basic handwritings, alphabets, and documents in use in Britain and America between 1500 and 1850.

Class time will consist of lectures, activities, group work, exams, and student presentations. Because practice is the only way to become proficient in reading and transcribing old handwriting there are several small assignments and one large transcription project. The smaller assignments are determined by the professor, but the larger project can be any original document chosen by the student, and approved by the professor. The document must be at least 1000 words for documents between 1700 and 1850, or at least 700 words for documents before 1700. Unless noted otherwise all assignments should be turned in to [hist421@gmail.com](mailto:hist421@gmail.com).

### **Grading**

“Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.” Winston Churchill

**Participation** is necessary for successful completion of this class. Reading the texts will only provide you with a small fraction of the information that you will gain from interaction with your fellow students and the instructor.

**Grading will be tough, but everyone can be successful** if they do the required work at the standards of excellence. Letting sloppy work slip with passable grades does both you and the school a disservice. Earning an A will require diligence and effort, not just check-listing the assignment’s components (that’s C level work). However, as grading is supposed to measure (not punish) learning, improvement during the semester will weigh in your favor (thus, later assignments are worth more than assignments early in the semester). If you feel that you are not making the progress in the class you would like to, **consult with the instructor** when it is still early enough to make effective corrections.

Homework turned in late will result in a 10% deduction in grade for the first day (calendar, not class day) and an additional 5% deduction each subsequent day.

Grading will be done on the following scale (94% and above A; 90-93% A-, 87-89% B+, 84-86% B, 80-83% B-, etc.).

### **Point Break-down (see attached Assignment Descriptions for details)**

Completing on-line student evaluation at the end of the semester: 5 points

Approval of transcription project: 5 points

Alphabet: 10 points

Presentation of transcription project: 25 points

Transcription/Abstract of Round Hand/Italic Document: 25 points

In-class transcription assignments: 5 points each, 30 points total

Extraction and Data Entry of Cheshire Marriage Bonds: 30 points

Transcription/Abstract of Secretary Hand Document: 40 points

Transcription/Abstract of Court Hand Document: 55 points

Final exam: 75 points

Transcription project: 100 points

**TOTAL: 400 points**

## **University Policies**

In keeping with the principles of the BYU Honor Code, students are expected to be honest in all of their academic work. Academic honesty means, most fundamentally, that any work you present as your own must in fact be your own work and not that of another. Violations of this principle may result in a failing grade in the course and additional disciplinary action by the university.

Students are also expected to adhere to the Dress and Grooming Standards. Adherence demonstrates respect for yourself and others and ensures an effective learning and working environment. It is the university's expectation, and my own expectation in class, that each student will abide by all Honor Code standards. Please call the Honor Code Office at 422-2847 if you have questions about those standards.

Sexual discrimination or harassment (including student-to-student harassment) is prohibited both by the law and by Brigham Young University policy. If you feel you are being subjected to sexual discrimination or harassment, please bring your concerns to the professor. Alternatively, you may lodge a complaint with the Equal Employment Office (D-240C ASB) or with the Honor Code Office (4440).

If you have a disability that may affect your performance in this course, you should get in touch with the office of Services for Students with Disabilities (1520 WSC). This office can evaluate your disability and assist the professor in arranging for reasonable accommodations.

Exams and assignments are due on the dates stated in the syllabus. Exceptions will not be made, except for extreme circumstances. Do not ask for exams and assignments to be scheduled for a later date to accommodate travel and other plans. If you have a conflict, you may turn in assignments early.

## **Section One: Mechanics**

22 June: Course Overview: Studying and Using Old Handwriting

- Readings
  - (skim) Raymond Clemens and Timothy Graham, “Correction, Glossing, and Annotation” in *Introduction to Manuscript Studies* (2007), 35-48
- Activity: Ducking Stool Game (no, that is not a joke)

24 June: Paper, Parchment, Ink, and Terms

- Readings
  - Raymond Clemens and Timothy Graham, “Writing Supports” and “Glossary” in *Introduction to Manuscript Studies* (2007), 3-17, 263-272

26 June: Alphabets, Transcriptions, Abstracts, and Extracts

- Readings
  - Hilary Marshall, “The Characteristics of Individual Letters” from *Palaeography for Family and Local Historians* (2004), 23-39
  - Clemens and Graham, “Working with Medieval Manuscripts” and “Manuscript Description” in *Introduction to Manuscript Studies* (2007), 71-93, 129-134
- **Assignment**: Approval of transcription project (send digital copy to [hist421@gmail.com](mailto:hist421@gmail.com))

29 June: Abbreviations, Contractions and Dates/ Calendars, Numbers, Currency

- Readings
  - Kip Sperry, “Abbreviations and Contractions” from *Reading Early American Handwriting* (1998), 19-32
  - Kip Sperry, “Numbers and Roman Numerals” and “Dates and the Calendar Change” from *Reading Early American Handwriting* (1998), 33-42
- **Assignment**: Alphabet exercise (see attached assignment sheet)

1-6 July: Historical Development of Hands

- Readings
  - David Gardner and Frank Smith, “Alphabets” from *Genealogical Research in England and Wales*, vol 3 (1964), 11-40

8 July: Fieldtrip to 2232 HBLL

- Activity: TNA tutorial

## **Section Two: English Round Hand and Italic Hand**

10 July: Family and Probate Records

- Readings/Transcription Exercises
  - Travell family documents (handed out in class)
  - Jean Preston and Laetitia Yeandle, “Account Book of Sir William, 1548-1550” (Plate12) from *English Handwriting, 1400-1650* (1992)
  - The National Archives (TNA), Prerogative Court of Canterbury and related Probate Jurisdictions, Will Registers: Daniel di Salamon Serra, the will of a Jewish Merchant, dated 1783.  
<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/palaeography/doc38/about.htm>

13 July: Census and Church Records

- Readings/Transcription Exercises
  - Find a census from 1841 or 1851 related to your family (available at ancestry.com and some at familysearch.com)
  - Church records (handed out in class)

### **Section Three: Secretary Hand**

15-17 July: Church Records

- Readings/Transcription Exercises
  - Hilary Marshall, “Entries of Burial in Kingston, Surrey” (Plate 37) from *Palaeography for Family and Local Historians* (2004) (handed out in class)
  - Cheshire Marriage Bonds (handed out in class)
- **Assignment:** Transcription/Abstract of Round Hand/Italic Document (15 July)

20-22 July: Probate Documents

- Readings/Transcription Exercises
  - Ann Rycraft, “1444 Will” (Plate 4) and “1466 Codicil to a Will” (Plate 8) from *English Mediaeval Handwriting* (1973)
  - Jean Preston and Laetitia Yeandle, “Codicil in English to the Latin Will, 1449” (Plate 6), and “Will of Philip Langdon, 1621” (last plate from this reading included in Course Reader) from *English Handwriting, 1400-1650* (1992)

27-29 July: Family and Business Records

- Readings/Transcription Exercises
  - Jean Preston and Laetitia Yeandle, “Promissory Note, 1525” (Plate 9A), “Autograph Letter from Richard Topcliffe, 1577” (Plate 18), “Autograph Letter from Queen Elizabeth I, 1593” (Plate 21), “Greetings Subscriptions, 1610” (Plate 26) from *English Handwriting, 1400-1650* (1992)
- **Assignment:** Transcription and Data Entry of Cheshire Marriage Bonds (27 July)

31 July: Court and Manor Court Documents

- Readings/Transcription Exercises
  - Ann Rycraft, “1408 Judgment in a Matrimonial Court” (Plate 3) from *English Mediaeval Handwriting* (1973)
  - Jean Preston and Laetitia Yeandle, “Court Paper, 1594” (Plate 22) from *English Handwriting, 1400-1650* (1992)
- **Assignment:** Transcription/Abstract of Secretary Hand Document

### **Section Three: Court Hand and Latin**

3 August: Charters and Land Records

- Readings/Transcription Exercises
  - (skim) Clemens and Graham, “Charters and Cartularies” in *Introduction to Manuscript Studies* (2007), 222-239
  - Hilary Marshall, “Final Concord, 1648” (Plate 48) from *Palaeography for Family and Local Historians* (2004) (handed out in class)

5 August: Fieldtrip to Special Collections

7 August: Latin

- Readings/Transcription Exercises
  - Denis Stuart, “Chapter 4” and “Chapter 7” from *Latin for Local and Family Historians* (1995), 47-56, 71-76, 91-93
  - Eileen Gooder, *Latin for Local History* (1978), 76-77, 94-95, 106-107, 110-118
- **Assignment:** Transcription/Abstract of Court Hand Document

10 August: Final review

- **Assignment:** Transcription Project

12 August: Final exam

- 7-8:50am, 3016 JKB