

# HISTORY 490 SENIOR WRITING SEMINAR

History 490 Section #3 Summer 2009  
T TH 1:00-3:50 B132 JFSB

Instructor: George Ryskamp  
Office Hours in JFSB 2105: M 2:-3PM, W 10-11 AM, other times by appointment  
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## Course Description

History 490 represents the culmination of your undergraduate academic training in history at BYU. The course builds on the foundation that has been laid in other courses including History 200 and upper-division electives. You must have successfully completed History 200 to enroll in this course. The principal purpose of this course is to assist you in honing research and writing skills and in developing expertise in critical analysis and interpretation. These skills will be developed as you produce written work including a publishable senior paper (approximately 20 pages), a bibliographic essay, a prospectus, and critiques of other's work. There is no busy work in this class; each assignment represents a vital part of the process of historical research and writing. After all of the history that you have read and talked about in your many courses at BYU, this is your chance to *be* a historian. You will be researching and writing like a historian. You have finally arrived; take advantage.

## Required Readings

### IMMIGRATION STUDIES:

Daniels, Roger. *Coming To America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life*. Princeton, New Jersey: Harper Perennial, 1990.

Gjerde, Jon. *Major Problems in American Immigration and Ethnic History*. New York, New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998.

Swierenga, Rober R. *Faith and Family: Dutch Immigration and Settlement in the United States, 1820-1920*. New York, New York: Holmes and Meier, 2000.

Totoricalguena, Gloria. *Basque Migration and Diaspora Transnational Identity*. Reno, Nevada: The Center for Basque Studies, 2005.

### WRITING :

Storey, William Kelleher, *Writing History, A Guide for Students*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Sixth edition; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Mills, Elizabeth Shown. *Evidence Explained, Citing History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace*. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2007.

You may also need to consult William Strunk and E. B. White, *The Elements of Style*.

## Course Assignments: Why, What, How, & When

History 490 introduces you to the History seminar method and, by simulating certain experiences of graduate students in history or of professional historians, seeks to develop the appropriate, necessary knowledge and skills:

- a) formulating an original research project,
- b) exploiting primary sources, including sources accumulated in databases.
- c) using evidence honestly and skillfully,
- d) composing a paper based on one's own conclusions and written in a publishable format, and
- e) critiquing the work of colleagues.

Attendance, Participation & Responsibility: A successful seminar requires each member's regular physical presence and whole-hearted intellectual participation. Attendance at scheduled group and individual sessions is therefore mandatory; absences will be penalized. Moreover, mere presence, although necessary, is not sufficient; seminar members are expected to prepare themselves for all sessions and to involve themselves fully, albeit judiciously, in them. The seminar's overall success will depend largely on the level of responsibility assumed and exhibited by its participants, individually and collectively. Responsibility means regular attendance, intellectual preparation, judicious participation, and punctuality in carrying out and in submitting assignments. All assignments are due at the beginning of class. They will often provide material for discussion that day. Late papers will be penalized by 5% for each day (not class day) that the assignment is late.

## Prospectus, Bibliographies, Chronology, Important Figures and Visuals Lists and Curriculum Vitae:

a. A prospectus is a brief, preliminary statement (in this case, 500-750 words) about your research project. As a genre, it is used most frequently when researchers apply for grants to funding agencies and when M.A. or Ph.D. thesis-writers seek approval for their topics from their supervisory committees. A prospectus is supposed to demonstrate, among other things, that the researcher is qualified to undertake the project, that in general the project is feasible under the conditions specified, that in particular the project is framed in terms of a testable proposition and suggests a reasonable working hypothesis (preferably related to a body of theory), that the researcher has a grasp of the relevant social science and historical theories as well as of appropriate data-gathering and analytical methods, that the researcher has become familiar with the data and interpretations contained in the main secondary sources about the topic and has also become aware of relevant bodies of primary sources, and that the researcher has developed an effective, realistic plan of work.

A suggested organization of the prospectus might therefore be to devote a paragraph to each of the following: general topic, testable proposition, relevant theory, principal secondary-source authorities consulted so far and their main interpretations, your tentative hypothesis, primary sources to be used to test tentative hypothesis, primary sources to be used to test the proposition/hypothesis, and plan of work. A bibliography of useful sources consulted to date should be appended to the Prospectus. This should be in proper bibliographical form in accordance with the concepts and formats and critical commentary found in Turabian.

b. Oral Summary of Prospectus: On the assigned date, each participant will present orally to the seminar a 5-to-10 minute summary of his/her prospectus, emphasizing the

delimited topic, relevant theory, the major secondary and primary sources, the proposition to be tested, the working hypothesis, and the research strategy. Each presentation will be discussed and constructively criticized by the other seminar members. If it is pertinent, the criticism ought to be taken into consideration when the prospectus is put into its final, written form.

c. Curriculum Vitae (CV) is a personal academic and employment history in outline form. Normally accompanying applications for research grants, for acceptance into graduate school, and for most jobs, a CV ought to contain the following kinds of information: personal data (birthplace and date, nationality, current address, marital status, etc.), education (H.S. diploma, emphasis of B.A. program, etc.), relevant employment experience, writings published (if any), important research papers delivered or submitted, honors or prizes received, residence and/or travel abroad, language competence, and references (employers or professors best able to evaluate your previous work and potential).

d. Bibliographies and Chronology, Important or Representative Figures and Visuals lists will help you to analyze your research and focus the work you are doing to prepare your paper.

### Research Project

a. The topic should be chosen carefully so that, first, the paper will reflect the three most important criteria of professional acceptability: originality, significance, and accuracy. Secondly, the research should be framed in terms of a testable proposition/hypothesis which can be pursued with available primary sources. Thirdly, the paper will examine the topic thoroughly while remaining within the prescribed parameters of lengths: no less than 5,000 words and absolutely no more than 7,500 words.

b. The paper is to be written and typed precisely according to the specifics set forth by Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (1987 edition) and Mills, Elizabeth Shown, *Evidence Explained*. No other style manual is acceptable. The mechanics of your paper must conform in all respects to those established by Turabian and Mills. Footnotes are to be located at the bottom of the page. Spelling and grammar contribute to a successful paper.

c. Each participant will present his/her paper to the seminar on an assigned date. The oral presentation will be a very brief summary (no more than 5 minutes--please time yourself beforehand) to allow time for two brief but formal critiques and for general discussion. At this stage the written paper, although yet susceptible to revision, must nevertheless represent your best effort and should be in what you consider to be 'perfect' form. So that each member of the seminar may read your paper before your oral presentation, you are responsible for submitting your paper to the instructor two days before it is scheduled to be discussed in class no later than the beginning of class on Tuesday August 4.

d. Each seminar member will serve as a Principal Reviewer for two of the papers. Each Principal Reviewer carefully and critically reads the assigned paper and writes a critique (maximum of three double-spaced pages), which will be read in the appropriate seminar session. With constructive criticism, the critique is to assess the paper in terms of its originality, accuracy, and significance, the strength and soundness of its thesis, its use of secondary and primary sources, its organization and coherence, and its writing style and

format. Two copies of each typed (double space) critique are to be submitted after being read. One copy will be given to the writer of the paper critiqued; the other will be retained by the instructor and will contribute to the final grade in the course.

e. Seminar members other than the two Principal Reviewers are expected to read each paper carefully and, in addition to the general oral discussion, to make written comments on the paper itself, suggesting ways in which it can be improved. All copies of each paper will be submitted to the instructor at the end of the particular session; the instructor will evaluate each reader's comments before passing them on to the author of the critiqued paper. Comments are to be written on the papers in one color prior to the session and in a different one during it.

f. After the class discussion of your paper, it should be revised, incorporating the pertinent suggestions offered by the Principal Reviewers, the other seminar members, and the instructor. The paper should then be retyped in a final, perfect form. Two copies should be submitted. One copy will be returned to the author; the other will be deposited in the History Department files. (Frequently the faculty refer to these papers when writing letters of recommendation; some graduate departments of history require a copy of the senior seminar paper as a part of the entrance application.)

## Grading

In a perfect world, the love of learning would be enough to get us through the term. On this campus, however, grades are required. To satisfy the powers that be, you will be required to submit (and I will be required to grade) the following:

A. Attendance, preparedness, participation, general level of responsibility and review of assigned essay. 150 points

B. Written topic paragraphs and Oral presentation of prospectus. 50 points

C. Annotated bibliography and lists. 50 points.

D. Paper Outline. 50 points

E. Written prospectus, Preliminary bibliography. 75 points

F. Role as Principal Reviewer and two written critiques. 100 points

G. Role as informal reviewer and comments on papers. 50 points

H. Oral presentation. 75 points

I. First formal draft of paper. 300 points

J. Final version of paper. 100 points

2. Numerical grades will be given to each category or assignment; at the end of the course, these will be translated into letter grades based on percentages of the total of 1000 points as follows:

100%-93%	A	76%-73%	C
92%-90%	A-	72%-70%	C-

89%-87%	B+	69%-67%	D+
86%-83%	B	66%-63%	D
82%-80%	B-	62%-60%	D-
79%-77%	C+	59% & below	E

3. An incomplete (I) grade cannot be given in this seminar. Each paper must be exposed to the critiques and discussion of the seminar members; otherwise, it is not a seminar experience. A paper which has not been subjected to this process cannot be accepted.

4. The paper written for this class must be originally researched and written for this class and may not be used for another class this semester.

### **Some Words of Wisdom**

While all students sign the honor code, there are still specific skills most students need to master over time in order to correctly cite sources, especially in this age of the internet. Please know that I will notice instances of plagiarizing in papers. Don't plagiarize. Just don't. If you plagiarize, you fail the course. See <http://www.byu.edu/honorcode> for specific examples of intentional and inadvertent plagiarism, as well as issues of fabrication and falsification.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimi

nation in education. Title IX covers discrimination in programs, admissions, activities, and student-to-student sexual harassment. BYU's policy against sexual harassment extends not only to employees of the university but to students as well. If you encounter unlawful sexual harassment or gender-based discrimination, please talk to me; contact the Equal Employment Office at 422-5895 or 367-5689 (24 hours); or contact the Honor Code Office at 422-2847.

Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere which reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability which may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the University Accessibility Center (422-2767). Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified documented disabilities. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the UAC office. If you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures. You should contact the Equal Employment Office at 422-5895, D-282 ASB.



## Class Schedule

Assignments due are in bold and are due at the beginning of class. Readings must be done before the beginning of each class. More information will be given for each assignment as the term progresses.

- 23 June INTRODUCTION-Scope and requirements of the course; Selected Lecture Topic: Migration From the Casa de Contración to Kosovo: People on the Move and the Records They Left Behind.
- 25 June Lecture/Discussion Topic: Immigration, Assimilation and Alienation in U.S. History. Presentation of CFHG immigration databases.  
Assigned Reading: *Major Problems*, xv-28; *Coming To America*, 1-306.  
**Submit in writing a short paper that identifies the thesis sentence of each chapter you have been assigned to read in *Coming To America* and briefly discuss whether the author sustains the thesis in the chapter.**
- 30 June Lecture/Discussion Topic:  
Research and Writing Techniques Including Use of Statistical Studies;  
More Thoughts on Ways to View Immigration  
Assigned Reading: Individual assignments in *Faith and Family: Dutch Immigration and Settlement in the United States, 1820-1920* or *Basque Migration and Diaspora Transnational Identity*; *Writing History*, pp. ix-58.  
**Submit a summary and commentary on assigned chapters in *Faith and Family: Dutch Immigration and Settlement in the United States, 1820-1920* or *Basque Migration and Diaspora Transnational Identity*.**
- 2 July NO CLASS. Each student will have one scheduled session with the instructor during these three hours to discuss research topic to be selected.
- 7 July Lecture Topic: Developing a research strategy; presentation of reviews of assigned selected essays and Topic Paragraphs.  
**Bring three different topic paragraphs (9 copies) and submit a summary and commentary on the assigned essays from chapters in *Major Problems*.**
- 8-14 July NO CLASS. INDIVIDUAL STUDY. Each individual continues work on project. Each student will have one scheduled session during this week with the instructor (other individual sessions with the instructor, as needed and as time permits).
- 16 July. Lecture Topic: Outlining and Other Useful Skills; Guest Speaker on Statistical Analysis Tools.  
Assigned Reading (to be read before class): *Writing History*, pp. 59-90.  
**Oral presentation of prospectus.**  
**Submission of preliminary bibliography.**

- 21 July Lecture/Discussion Topic: Writing Skills and Research Challenges.  
**Submission of final form of prospectus and first outline of paper. Bring 2 copies, typed per Turabian, to the instructor's office before 6 p.m.**
- 23 - 29 July NO CLASS. INDIVIDUAL STUDY. Individual work on project. Each student will have at least one session with instructor. Other individual sessions may be scheduled as needed, time permitting.
- 30 July Lecture/Discussion Topic: More on Writing Skills.  
Assigned Reading (to be read before class): *Writing History*, pp. 91-107.  
**Revised, expanded outline of paper due;**  
**Annotated bibliography due**  
**Annotated list of figures and visuals due.**
- 4 August **Final Draft Papers due at beginning of class.**  
Lecture Topic TBA Based on Class Needs.
- 6 August **Presentation of papers. Papers will be presented by oral summary during each class, followed by oral critiques by 2 principal reviewers for each paper and general discussion. This class may last up to 4 hours**  
**Written critiques by principal reviewers are due after presentation.**
- 11 August, 5PM **SUBMISSION OF FINAL DRAFT OF RESEARCH PAPER.**  
**Bring 3 copies, typed per Turabian, to the instructor's office or leave at History Dept.**