History 490 Section 7
Historical Research and Writing
THEME: Exploration and Migration in North America before 1900

Fall 2011

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Class: MWF 2:00-2:50 p.m.
Office Hours: MWF: 8:30-9:30 a.m. or by appt.

INTRODUCTION & OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to help the advanced student of history refine her/his research, analytical, interpretive, and writing skills. Building on what you have already learned in History 200, our seminar-style approach will discuss general issues and establish a few basic guidelines. History 490 is intended to be a synthetic experience for seniors, wherein they can build upon four years of course work in the major and produce a 18 to 25 page scholarly research paper of publishable quality based upon critical analysis of primary sources and addressing the theme of North American exploration and migration.

COURSE POLICIES

There are some basic guidelines for this course. This research paper is your original contribution to the historical record. Submitting a paper you have written for another class or engaging in plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course and notification to the honor code office. You must use either footnotes or endnotes as outlined in Turabian. Attendance is mandatory and due dates are firm. Grades for late assignments will be deducted five percent per day. Please feel free to come see me during my office hours or by appointment. Your overall success in this class rests entirely upon the amount of effort you put into it.

By the end of the semester, you will have written a 18 to 25 page research paper that:
1) is based upon your incorporation and interpretation of primary sources
2) grows out of existing scholarship (historiography) but offers something fresh (a new question; a new answer to an old question; a revised answer to an old question; a synthesis of new sources)
3) proposes a thesis (a claim supported with convincing evidence)
4) is a joy to read!

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Historical Analysis: Acquire the ability to analyze historical questions and issues clearly, assess historical information accurately, and distinguish between questionable and valid historical assertions.

Research Literature: Demonstrate proficiency in using the historical method of research effectively by skillfully and honestly using primary and secondary sources.

Effective Communication: Skillfully integrate data into a coherent argument expressed through a clear, well-written style and through oral communication.
ASSIGNMENTS:

1. a paper proposal (prospectus) describing your topic (+2 typed, double-spaced pages) and explaining your thesis and its relevance. A prospectus consists of (a) a statement of the historical problem and its importance drawn from your reading of the literature on the subject, (b) how your paper will address the problem, © your preliminary thesis, (d) the scope of your project (including methodology and sources), and (e) the implications of your findings. You will also include an annotated bibliography (as long as necessary) in which you describe and evaluate the primary and secondary sources you will be using as supporting evidence. (10 points)

2. a finely-crafted draft of your entire paper. The paper will be graded particularly on its completeness (does it have an introduction, body, and conclusion) and the clarity of the body (transitions, do paragraphs fit together in a logical fashion, does the evidence support the assertions). Bring two copies: one for the professor and one for your colleague who will be assigned to critique your work. (25 points)

3. a critique of another student’s draft (3-4 pgs) wherein you critique it based on the instructions for the paper as outlined above. When turning in your critique, be sure to prepare two copies — one for your critic and one for the professor. (10 points)

4. Text Analysis/Bio. Sketch/Comparative Book Review (5 points)
Research Log/Class Participation (5 points)
Oral Report (5 points)

5. the completed paper, in which you will be graded on your improvement in the areas graded on the first draft, your ability to incorporate the comments you get from your critique partner and your professor, and your ability to link your work to the work of other scholars, analyze your sources, and prove your work’s significance. One hard copy I will grade and return and email one electronic copy to jay_buckley@byu.edu. (40 points)

CORE CONCEPTS

1. Research
-identifying topics for historical research in a variety of fields, historical significance
-making an original scholarly contribution; identifying primary and secondary sources for historical research/location and use of finding aids. Students should use key indexes, bibliographic tools and data bases to identify primary and secondary sources regarding their topic
-techniques of historical analysis/uses and limitations of different types of evidence
-relating research findings & placing a research paper within its historiographical context

2. Writing
-organizing research material; writing a proposal or prospectus
-compiling an annotated bibliography/writing a bibliographic essay
-effective intros: thesis statements; effective sentences & paragraphs, transitions, conclusions
-documentation (foot/endnotes, bibliography); Turabian/Chicago Style
-style of writing; revision & editing
-giving & receiving criticism

3. Publication
-learn about the publication process and the steps that an author takes in submitting and preparing an essay for publication in a professional journal.
REQUIRED TEXTS

*Kate L. Turabian, A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* 7th ed.

*other handouts will be made available in class or on blackboard

CLASS SCHEDULE

29 Aug: Introduction to the course. Characteristics of a good research paper. You should begin thinking about topics—you must submit a research proposal no later than 28 September.

BEGIN RESEARCH LOG
Readings: 1st day of class
*Assignment: (3 or 4 people/themes/topics + potential sources)

31 Aug: Getting started
Readings: Brown, “Exploration and Explorers”; Mattox, “Explorers...New World”
*Assignment (Biographical Sketch); Assign Books

2 Sept: Narrowing your topic/Sources/Primary documents
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH DUE; Discussion of articles
Readings: *The Craft of Research*, intro. to Part 2 & chs. 3-4; “Why Biography”

5 Sept: Martin Luther King Holiday

7 Sept: Sources: How do we interpret and use them? What distinguishes primary documentation from secondary and tertiary sources? How do we organize these to make the most effective use of them? During this class period we will venture to the library. You have access to literally tens of millions of sources by simply using resources available to you through HBLL 2232 VISIT HBLL LIBRARY/SPECIAL COLLECTIONS
Readings: *The Craft of Research*, chapters 5-6; “Plagiarism”
*Assignment (Text Analysis)

9 Sept: Primary documents and your topic;
Readings: Unruh, *Plains*, Ch. 1-5; Ronda; Van Sledright, “Think Historically”
TEXT ANALYSIS DUE

12 Sept: Arguments & evidence
Readings: *The Craft of Research*, intro. to Part 3 & ch. 7-8; Unruh, *Plains*, Ch. 6-11
*Assignment (Book Review)

BOOK REVIEW DUE

16 Sept: Outlining & re-outlining

19 Sept: Beginning to draft. Sign up to present prospectus.
Readings: *The Craft of Research*, intro. to Part 4 and chapters 12-14, skim 15-16

21, 23 Sept: Student Consultations

26 Sept: **PROSPECTUS & ANNOTATED BIB DUE.**
Present proposals to class, answer questions. This provides you a chance to briefly explain your project and to have fellow students act as a sounding board for ways to improve your research. During the next few weeks you should spend considerable time researching and writing. As your draft progresses, seek help from the Writing Lab and have friends, spouses, and others read your work and offer suggestions for improvement. Sign up for Student Consultation sessions.

28 Sept: Pick Up Prospectus/Brief Student Consultation

3-14 Oct: Research/writing (Research/Writing Log); available for consultations

17, 19 Oct: Scheduled Student consultation (bring Research/Writing Log; 6-12 page draft)

21 Oct: In-class progress reports

24, 26, 28 Oct: Research/writing (Research/Writing Log); available for consultations

31, 2 Nov: Scheduled Student consultation (bring Research/Writing Log; 12-18 page draft)

4 Nov: Scholarly Publishing Process

7 Nov: **FINELY-CRAFTED DRAFT DUE**
Bring 2 copies of your paper to class—one for your critic and one for your professor. *Remember, this draft is actually a completed paper.*

14 Nov: **CRITIQUE DUE.**
Bring 2 copies—one for your peer and one for your professor. These must be 3-4 typewritten, double-spaced pages. Peers will make their assessments and present their ideas for improvement.

21 Nov: **PICK UP DRAFT & CRITIQUE from professor**
At this time I will return your papers with my comments. You should now begin revising and polishing the final drafts of your papers using the comments and suggestions you have received from your peer and from your professor.

22, 28, 30 Nov: Revise & Refine (no class)

2, 5 Dec: **ORAL REPORT** on projects (10-15 minutes each)

7 Dec: **FINAL PAPER DUE** in class. (2 copies)
Bring 1 copy to be graded & returned; send an electronic copy to: jay_buckley@byu.edu

9 Dec: no class: Party, 6 p.m.
BYU POLICIES RELEVANT TO THIS COURSE

Course Information & Learning Outcomes

General information such as the class syllabus, handouts, and study guides can be found on the class web page on Blackboard, accessible through your Route Y account. Please update your current email address on Route Y today. Learning outcomes for the history major can be found at https://learningoutcomes.byu.edu/wiki/index.php/History.

Honor Code/Academic Integrity

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. Brigham Young University encourages and expects the highest standards of academic honesty from all students. The Student Code of Conduct state that “cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty” may result in a failing grade in the course and additional disciplinary action by the university. Refer to the Student Code of Conduct for additional information. 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, as well as deal with the stress and strain of college life without resorting to cheating. Please know that as your professor I will notice instances of cheating on exams or plagiarizing on papers. See http://www.byu.edu/honorcode for specific examples of intentional, inadvertent plagiarism, fabrication, and falsification.

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.

Preventing Sexual Discrimination or Harassment

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 also prohibits sexual harassment of students by university employees, other students, and visitors to campus. If you encounter sexual harassment or gender-based discrimination, please talk to your professor; If the problem is not resolved, contact the Equal Employment Office at 801-422-5895 or 1-888-238-1062 (24-hours); http://www.ethicspoint.com; Honor Code Office: 801-422-2847.

BYU's Commitment to Students with Disabilities

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 affect your performance in this course, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities (422-2767; 1520 WSC). This office can evaluate your disability and assist the professor in arranging for reasonable accommodations.

BYU Writing Lab

Laura Turner, FHSS Writing Lab, 1049 JFSB, (801) 422-4454

FHSS Writing Lab: To get help with your paper’s organization, structure, focus, tone, and documentation style, you can go to the FHSS Writing Lab in 1049 JFSB to meet one-on-one with a peer advisor. All advisors are students from our college and are trained in APA, Turabian, and some AMA and MLA.

To prepare for a tutorial, take 1) a copy of the assignment; 2) a hard copy of your draft, whatever stage it may be in 3) a list of questions and concerns you have about your paper

Walk in Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. or make an appointment online: http://fhsswriting.byu.edu
For more information, go to their website or email fhss-writinglab@byu.edu
History 490

Historical Research and Writing Tips

Common Errors in Formal Writing
1. use of abbreviated words
2. overuse of passive voice (to be verbs: is/are, was/were)
3. subject/verb disagreement
4. incorrect citation (use Turabian)
5. incorrect format (margins, etc.)
6. no thesis
7. forgotten/disappearing thesis
8. incorrect use of apostrophes
9. using papers for two classes
10. avoid use of first person

Questions to Ask in Revising a Paper
(based on Richard Marius, A Short Guide to Writing About History)
1. What point do I want to make in this paper? What is my major reason for writing it? What do I want to say?
2. Have I said clearly the thing I want most to say here?
3. What parts of this draft do not contribute directly to my main point? Should I cut them out?
4. How long must a reader read before knowing what my subject is and the point of view that I take toward it? Can I get into my subject more quickly than I do?
5. Where's the evidence? How much of my paper is opinion unsupported by evidence?
6. How good is my evidence? Is it the best evidence available?
7. Where do I make inferences on the basis of the evidence?
8. Do I take contrary evidence into account? Have I written in such a way that someone who knows the evidence as I do can compliment me for having done a careful job in putting everything together?
9. What is my tone in this paper? Emotional, preachy, belligerent, immature, apologetic, bold, etc.
10. Does my conclusion end the paper gracefully? Is this the best conclusion that I can write?
11. Do I need to add more information? Have I given enough facts to make my point clear and plausible?
12. Does my paper flow from idea to idea so that readers can follow without wondering how I got here?
13. Are my sentences clear? Can I simplify some by eliminating prepositional phrases or tendencious clauses?
14. Can I eliminate some sentences? Is every sentence I have written necessary and unique?
15. Can I make some sentences more vivid by using the active rather than the passive voice?
16. Can I make some sentences more vivid by selecting more precise words? (I.e., a torrential rain rather than a hard rain or crestfallen rather than deeply disappointed)
17. Do I provide too much explanation or moralizing? (If you have vividly described a murder, let the reader decide for herself the severity of the act.)
18. Do I repeat some word or phrases too often? Can I find another word or phrase to give variety to my prose? Are there echoes in my prose? (I.e., “The writer wrote” or “Her description described”)
19. Have I used cliches? (I.e., “beyond a shadow of a doubt,” “the cold, hard facts,” or dead as a doornail)

Read your work aloud. Have others read your work and then ask, “What do you think I'm saying in this paper?”

Five Typical Problems in History 490 and Their Solutions (adapted from Shawn W. Miller)

1) Lack of effort/investment/time.
   You need to spend at least 9 hrs. per week outside of class reading and writing for this class—twelve or more when we do not meet in class.

2) Weak start.
   Hit the ground running, especially during the first month. Better to encounter any surprises in the first few weeks than after it is everlastingly too late.

3) Delaying finding your topic and its primary sources.
   Do not rest until you have scoured the globe and found your niche.

4) Failure to use primary sources as the core evidence for your article.
   Find them, analyze them, use them, incorporate them, etc. Make sure the article is positioned within the historiography.

5) Failure to demonstrate that you have added anything to the historical record.
   It does not have to be earth-shattering, but should be at least a modest contribution. Make sure the article is positioned within the historiography.