Objective and Philosophy of Instructor

This is the real deal. History 490 is your chance to do what professional historians do: original historical research and writing. Your task is to produce a historical essay of publishable quality. Only a few students actually achieve this standard (though in grading you I honor effort). But the exercise of striving for it will teach you a great deal, add to your portfolio if you apply to graduate school, and be a capstone to your career as an undergraduate history major.

Many majors train students in the practice of a profession. Students who major in nursing, for instance, learn and practice nursing as part of their education and are equipped to go to work upon graduation. Similarly, accounting majors practice accounting. Education majors practice teaching as part of their undergraduate studies. Students majoring in history, however, often take courses simply because they are appealing and informative. History students sometimes learn relatively little on a practical level about being a professional historian.

I am of the opinion that history majors should “practice” history. That is what this course is about. For many history students, History 490 looms large as an anxiety-producing obstacle on the path to graduation. It is something to be put off as long as possible. However, I am personally convinced that with consistent effort and attention in this class you will have an enjoyable and gratifying experience and be able to say with greater honesty and pride, “I am a historian.”

As a note for this section, we will study the history of religious freedom in various aspects, but I define that field broadly and welcome topics relevant to religious freedom from any region, time period, or approach.

Texts

We have a variety of texts to read. The reading will go quickly and is an important exercise in training you as a historian. The reading has two objectives: First, we want to become acquainted with a variety of history writing styles and techniques. Second, we want to become more familiar with the subject matter that will engage our research for the semester. Our discussion of the texts will focus on such things as identifying the author’s argument, his or her style or approach, the analytical techniques utilized, and what the strengths and weaknesses of the work are. You will not be expected to remember all the details or “facts” of what you read. You will catch the rhythm of what this reading is about very early in the semester, and you will become accustomed to working through the reading quite quickly.

Suggested reference texts (not required)

- For matters of footnoting and so forth, consult a reliable style manual, such as Kate L. Turabian, *A manual for writers of term papers, theses, and dissertations*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. The latest edition is available in the bookstore. With a few exceptions, Turabian’s book is
an abridged version of *The Chicago Manual of Style*. An abbreviated form of that work is available for free on line. The full work is in the library.


**Schedule**

*January: Discuss good writing, read and analyze books, choose topic*

Jan. 4: Get oriented. Talk about the skills and “occupational hazards” of being a historian. Begin reading.


Jan. 11: Review handouts. The elements of good historical essays.

Jan. 13: Turn in and discuss your analysis of the first book. Devise a supervision schedule. Choose a topic if you have not already done so.

Jan. 18: No class. Research time.

Jan. 20: Attend class. Turn in and discuss analysis of second book. Discuss the prospectus assignment.

Jan. 25, 27: No class. Research time. Read and analyze the third book. (I will be out of town this week.)

*February: Supervisions, work on paper in earnest*

Feb. 1, 3: Come to my office at your assigned time for a scheduled individual supervision to hand in your prospectus and discuss your progress.

Feb. 8: Attend class. Turn in and discuss analysis of third book.

Feb. 10-24: No class. Report your progress briefly each week by email. I will be available in my office, as needed, to answer questions and resolve difficulties during normal class hours and at other times by appointment. (I may be out of town on Feb. 22 and/or Feb. 24.)

*March-April: Turn in first draft, critique other papers, in-class presentations*

Mar. 1, 3: Come to my office at your assigned time for a scheduled individual supervision. Be prepared to discuss the organization and content of your paper in some detail. Prepare a written outline to help you be prepared (not turned in but checked at the supervision).

Mar. 8-15: No class. Work on draft.

Mar. 17: Meet again as a full class. Hand in your first draft. **DO NOT HAND IT IN LATE. This draft must be your very best effort, what you would normally expect to hand in as a final draft for any other class.** You need three copies of this draft, one for me and two for other members of the class. We will discuss the purpose of and how to prepare a critique. You will then prepare a written critique of each essay you are assigned to review, to be turned in at the next class session.

Mar. 22: Meet as full class. Trade written critiques and comments from other students. Keep polishing your papers!

Mar. 24, 29: Come to my office at your assigned time for a scheduled individual supervision to discuss your first draft.

Mar. 31-Apr. 7: Attend class. While you keep refining and rewriting your essay outside of class, you will each
make a fifteen-minute oral presentation of your essay to the class, including some time for brief discussion and questions for the author.

Apr. 12: Meet as a class one last time to turn in your final draft of the essay and discuss what we got out of the experience. DO NOT HAND IT IN LATE. In addition to turning in your final paper, be sure to turn in the two critique drafts, with comments, supplied by your fellow students. You must attend this session, which I plan to use as an oral evaluation of sorts (pass/fail).

NO FINAL EXAM.

Individual supervision

A good portion of the semester consists of free time for you to pursue research and writing. In addition to seeing you in class, I will conduct individual supervision of your work. Individual supervision is one of the most important components of the course. Formal supervision sessions will be in my office during our class hours at specifically scheduled times. I am also available in my office during office hours for informal meetings.

Grading

This is a research and writing class. Most of your grade will be based on your essay. Depending on the sort of problems you have to work through, I will give substantial weight to the first draft of your essay, possibly more than 50% of your final grade. The first draft reflects your own work more than the subsequent drafts, which will probably incorporate many suggestions from others. DO YOUR BEST AND TRY TO HAVE A GREAT FIRST DRAFT.

The standard to aim for is a publishable paper. If your paper is of the sort that is publishable, it will get an A. I take into account the fact that you are learning and that you are undergraduate students. Superior student work, even if it fails to meet the publishable standard, still leads to an A.

Honest effort also makes a difference. If you learn a lot, make an honest and consistent effort, and show good progress toward being able to write a publishable paper, you will receive between a B and an A-. Honest effort that somehow just does not produce a good paper will probably get B- or C+. Poor work, especially when accompanied by poor effort, earns a lower mark. Intentional plagiarism earns an E and a referral to the Honor Code Office. Please be warned that plagiarism is easier to spot than some people think. I make a point of tracking down the sources of papers that smell of plagiarism. It is not a wise choice.

Graded elements of the class:

- Analyses of readings Graded ✓, ✓+, ✓- 5% X 3 = 15%
- Prospectus Graded ✓, ✓+, ✓- 5%
- Supervision sessions (Don’t miss them) Variable impact
- First draft Letter grade Variable, but usually 50%
- Critiques of other papers Graded ✓, ✓+, ✓- 5%
- Oral presentation Graded ✓, ✓+, ✓- 5%
- Final draft Letter grade Variable, but usually 20%
- Participation, attendance, etc. Variable impact
Important Additional Information

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Students are expected to be familiar with and abide by the Brigham Young University Honor Code (available at http://honorcode.byu.edu/The_Honor_Code.htm). Lifting material from the internet, from a published author’s work, or the work of another student and putting it in your own words without proper citation is considered plagiarism. In any case of plagiarism (intentional or unintentional), the student will receive a zero for the assignment and the case will be referred to the Honor Code Office. For assignments in this course, no internet web sites may be used as sources, unless they are primary sources and have been approved by the instructor.

LEGAL ISSUES

Honor Code Standards

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.

Preventing Sexual Discrimination or Harassment

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).

Students with Disabilities

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.

Expected Student Learning Outcomes

Each program at BYU has developed a set of expected student learning outcomes. These will help you understand the objectives of the curriculum in the program, including this class. To learn the expected student outcomes for the programs in this department and college go to <http://learningoutcomes.byu.edu> and click on the College of Family, Home and Social Sciences and then this department. You can also look at the expected outcomes for General Education classes under the heading Undergraduate Education. We welcome feedback on the expected student learning outcomes. Any comments or suggestions you have can be sent to <FHSS@byu.edu>.