

History 398: Senior History Research Seminar
Fall 2008
Wednesday, 2-4:30

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursdays 1-3pm, Wednesdays 11-12, and by appointment.

This is a capstone course for History majors in their senior year. The objective for this course is to allow you, someone who has taken many courses exploring the work of other historians, to act as a historian yourself. Each student will choose his or her research project and the course is structured to move you through the stages of shaping a topic, researching it, and finally writing the long paper (which will take several drafts). Much of the early stages of the class will require students to work independently, but in later stages you will be expected to read each other's drafts and provide constructive criticism and commentary to each other. My role is to act as your guide and advisor at every stage and I will give as much help to you as you need. I will also direct you to one of my colleagues in the department, who will act as an expert advisor on readings and primary sources relevant to your topic.

The required final product for the semester is a 20-25 page essay (including footnotes or endnotes, plus the bibliography) in twelve-point, double-spaced type. Your essay must demonstrate your original research in primary sources, a thoughtful argument that you have crafted after deliberation, and the careful placing of your own work in the context of relevant historical scholarship. The intellectual objective is to add to, or to revise, what historians have asserted that is relevant to the field of your topic.

Although we will meet at the assigned hour, we will only stay as long as necessary, so the class may sometimes end before 4:30.

Due Dates are firm. Emailed or faxed papers will not be accepted. There are a few rare exceptions; use your head if you need to ask for one.

Stages of the Research Paper and grading percentages: Please note that this class is about the process as well as the end product, and thus you actually earn MORE points for process than the final paper. Meeting with advisers and showing up to class with work completed are considered part of the course; they are not optional.

Attendance: Is **MANDATORY. 10% of your semester grade.** If you miss more than two classes, you will receive zero points in attendance. Excused absences (and you cannot exceed two) include family emergencies, weddings/funerals, senior interviews, pre-scheduled athletic events, and an illness that is either contagious or makes you unable to get out of bed.

Topic: 5% of grade. A statement of your intentions for the research paper. It should include a tentative title and a single paragraph outlining your topic and the issues you hope to address.

Source List: 5% of grade. A list of (approximately) five primary and five secondary sources for the paper (if your topic requires fewer primary sources, you need to make that clear). This is a tentative list that will be subject to change.

First Draft: 10% of semester grade: The first draft should be about 8 pages (double-spaced, 12 pt font). Here you should write on at least some of the topics/issues that you intend to cover, and outline the rest of your current plan in heading or note form. The 8 pages includes your bibliography, which by now should include a solid list of primary sources and 6-10 secondary sources.

Second Draft: 10% of semester grade. The second draft of your research paper should be at least 16 pages long, including the bibliography. It should cover most of your intended parameters. Whatever you don't cover should be suggested in outline or note form.

Final Paper and presentation: 25 pages (double-spaced, 12 point font), plus your cover page and bibliography. The 25 pages length includes your footnote or endnote citations. **40% of semester grade.**

Adviser sheets: You are required to meet with your adviser **FOUR** times over the course of the semester. Each time you meet you will meet 5% of your semester grade (20% total). In order to do this fairly, I am **REQUIRING** that you turn in a signed and dated sheet for each visit. Sheets are available on blackboard under course documents and at the end of this syllabus.

Schedule:

Week one (August 26): Class meets in room 100 Mather House to discuss goals of the course, choosing a topic, etc. We will also have department faculty stop by for introductions.

Week Two (September 2): Meet in our normal classroom to discuss topics.

Week Three (September 9): Class meets: Topics due—short paragraph. Discuss primary sources and research methods.

Week Four (September 16): Class meets: Everyone should bring a tentative list of primary and secondary sources to class. We will discuss bibliographies and citations.

Week Five (September 23): No class meeting. You are expected to meet with your adviser to discuss your topic and show him or her your tentative source list. Have him or her sign THE sheet.

Week Six (September 30): Class meets: Introductory paragraph and outline due. We will go over a selection of these as a group, so be prepared to share your work publicly. We will also discuss how to properly use your adviser as a mentor. BRING signed sheet to class.

Week Seven (October 7): No class meeting. You are expected to meet with your adviser to discuss any questions you have about creating the first draft.

Week Eight (October 14): Class meets: **first drafts due**; students will be assigned co-readers. BRING signed sheet to class.

Week Nine (October 21): class meets: discuss drafts with co-readers.

Week Ten (October 28): No class meeting. Meet with Individual adviser to discuss correcting the first draft.

Week Eleven (November 4): **Second draft due—bring one to class and give one to your adviser. BRING signed sheet to class.**

Week Twelve (November 11): You are writing on your own.

Week Thirteen (November 18): **Presentations of work.**

Week Fourteen (November 25): No class meeting! Meet with individual adviser about final revisions.

Week Fifteen: December 2 **Presentations of work; bring signed sheet to class.**

Final Research Paper : one copy to Professor Sentilles and one to your individual adviser due on Dec 9 by 5pm.

History 398: Adviser/Student Meeting

Student is responsible for providing this sheet, getting it signed, and turning it in to Professor Sentilles at the next class meeting.

Date of discussion: _____

Student: _____

Adviser: _____

Topic of discussion (ie, first draft):

Proof that student met with adviser:

Adviser's signature or initials: _____

Proof that student was prepared for the meeting. If not, do not sign but write a short note of explanation below.

Adviser's signature or initials: _____

