

**Senior Seminar
HIST 4484 W
CRN 81471
Thurs. 5:30 – 8:00 pm
TLC 1203
Fall 2017**

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Office hours: T 8:00-9:00, 11:00-noon, 1:30-4:00
R 8:00-9:00, 11:00-noon, 1:30-5:00
or by appointment

Course Description

This course provides students with the opportunity to conceive and execute their own original historical study. It thus represents the capstone of the history major's course of study at the University of West Georgia. The work in this course is the apex to which the history program at West Georgia has been building. In the first part of the course we will do some common readings together. Our analysis of each of these readings will focus on examining what evidence the historians found and how they used that evidence to construct an original historical argument. I hope that the readings will offer models and guidance for students' own research projects. In the second part of the course, the focus shifts to the research and writing of those student projects. Along the way, there will be several milestones that must be reached.

This course is writing-intensive. Effective writing is essential to the historical discipline and to a liberal education. The "W" designation for this course indicates that it is a Discipline-Specific Writing course.

This course is a hybrid course. Most class meetings will be face-to-face, but some class meetings will be online. The schedule indicates when there is no face-to-face class meeting.

Prerequisites

Each student must have already completed HIST 2302 and have senior standing. Any student registered for the course who has not completed the prerequisites must see the instructor.

Learning Outcomes

This course is designed to provide students with the opportunity to conceive and execute their own original research project. Students who complete this course will be able to:

- Demonstrate content knowledge of history;
- Analyze primary and secondary sources for their historical content and interpretations;
- Demonstrate ability to research according to historical methods; and
- Demonstrate writing skills that reflect persuasive historical arguments based on evidence and proper citation.

Required Materials:

All of the required common readings will be provided through the internet or CourseDen.

Grading

Participation	10 percent
Topic statement	5 percent
Question and bibliography	5 percent
Primary source presentation	5 percent
Introduction and historiography section	10 percent
Thesis statement	5 percent
Peer review activities	5 percent
Paper	50 percent
Reflective essay	5 percent

Each student will write an original, typed, double-spaced research paper 20-25 pages in length examining some question of interest related to the course. The paper must assert a thesis and sustain it on the basis of evidence drawn from both primary and secondary sources. The paper must cite its sources in footnotes and list works consulted in a bibliography according to the style specified in the Chicago Manual of Style.
http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

The final paper must be an original work undertaken for this course. Students building on prior related work must submit any previously submitted paper by the second week of the course.

The paper is due at the beginning of class on November 16. Each student must submit **two** paper copies of the final paper and submit an electronic version to the Dropbox in CourseDen.

We will start the semester with some common readings. The readings are intended to help us to consider how best to understand the past and to write about it. Students should consider the readings as potential models for their own work. Students should bring all of the completed readings with them each week, because we will compare and contrast approaches among them.

Each student is encouraged to consult with a professor who specializes in the field that the student is researching. Students should submit a written draft bibliography to an expert professor for advice and heed that advice in researching their questions.

On August 17, each student must submit a one-page, written plan describing briefly how and when they will complete the work required in the course. This assignment is ungraded.

On August 24 each student must submit a topic statement. The topic statement is a typewritten statement of the topic to be addressed by the paper. The topic statement must include a date range specifying what period of time the paper will examine. A clear, workable topic statement submitted on time will receive an "A." One letter grade will be deducted from that topic statement grade if the statement of the question presented diverges from the topic statement. One letter grade will be deducted if the primary source presented does not address the topic selected. One letter grade will be deducted if the final paper does not address the topic selected in the topic statement.

On September 7, each student must submit a statement of the question to be addressed and a bibliography to the Dropbox. The written statement of the question to be addressed should represent a refinement of the paper's topic. The question should be sufficiently interesting and important to merit at least a twenty-page paper. It should be sufficiently narrow to be answerable adequately within at most a twenty-five-page paper. The question should be answerable in a statement that will be the paper's thesis. A question that meets those requirements and that is supported by an appropriate bibliography will receive an "A." One letter grade will be deducted from the grade awarded for the question presented if the primary source presented does not address the question stated. One letter grade will be deducted if the final paper does not answer the question stated.

In the primary source presentations, each student will pick one important primary source from among the primary sources used for the paper. The presentation will describe the source to the class and explain how the paper will make use of the source in its argument. Students should come to class with copies of the source or relevant extracts of the source for everyone in the class. The presentation should address questions such as: Who wrote the document? Who was the audience of the document? What was the purpose of the document? What does it say? Why is it significant? Each student will also answer questions from the group about the source. Grades will be based on the quality of the analysis.

Two peer reviewers will be assigned to offer constructive feedback and ask at least one question in the online discussion following the primary source presentations. Each peer reviewer must submit four statements and one question. The first statement must begin: "One strength of the primary source presentation was . . ." The second sentence must begin: "The primary source analysis could be improved by . . ." The third sentence must state whether the source presented in class was, in fact, a primary source, or a secondary source. The fourth sentence must state whether the evidence in the primary source was relevant to the question to be examined in the presenter's paper. Finally, the peer reviewer must ask a question related to the primary source and/or its analysis.

On October 19, students must submit electronically their thesis statement in one sentence. The thesis must be submitted to the Dropbox and as an attachment in an email to the peer reviewer. A fellow student will critically evaluate the thesis, providing three sentences of feedback. The first sentence must begin: "One strength of the thesis is . . ." The second sentence must begin: "The thesis could be improved by . . ." The third sentence must state whether the thesis states a historical claim worth arguing about. This peer review must be provided to the fellow student and the instructor by email by October 24. Note we do not have class that day.

The peer reviews will be graded by the instructor on the basis of whether the feedback met the instructions, its thoughtfulness, and its helpfulness. The peer review grade will be the average of the scores assigned to the feedback provided on the primary source presentation and on the thesis.

On October 26, students will turn in the introduction and historiography section of their papers. That section should be about three pages in length. It should introduce the historical question the paper examines and briefly state the paper's answer to that question. That is, *be sure to state the paper's thesis*. Since the thesis has already been reviewed by a peer, every introduction should include a thesis. The draft should also place the paper in its historiographical context and identify the paper's original contribution to the existing historical writing related to the question under examination. Note that the section handed in **should not be a rough draft**. It should be a polished draft, as good as it can be, since it will be graded, and that grade will weigh 10 percent the final grade for the course.

I will comment on the introduction and historiography section and assign it a grade. Each student should take into account those comments in the final paper and incorporate a rewritten introduction and historiography section in the final paper. The final paper should represent an improvement over the earlier version of the section. The marked-up draft of the introduction and historiography section must be turned in along with the final paper.

The reflective essay due at the end of the course should be 2-3 pages in length and it should address the following question: What have you learned during your time as a student at West Georgia? The essay will be graded on the basis of the quality of the reflection and the writing. It is due on November 30.

All students must complete a short, ungraded online questionnaire about their experiences as history majors at UWG. Responses help us improve our efforts to assist future students. Thoughtful contributions made in class discussions will be credited in the class participation grade. Behavior (such as tardiness) that impedes other students' learning will be penalized.

Extra Credit

Students may earn up to five points of extra credit in the course. The extra credit points will be assigned to the earliest graded assignment in the course that earns less than 100. There are two means of earning extra credit. First, any student who completes the online academic honesty module will earn a half-point of credit for each correct answer on the academic honesty quiz. Students will earn one point of extra credit, up to a maximum of two points for each specific improvement suggested to the plagiarism module or to the rubric for the final paper. The suggested improvement must be made in the form of a Word document emailed to the instructor. The document must include tracked change to the original rubric or quiz, with an explanation of the reason for the suggested change. Points will be awarded only if the suggestion is adopted by the instructor. The instructor's judgment is final. All extra-credit work must be completed by September 28.

Policies

I expect each student to understand and to comply with the University of West Georgia's policies on Academic Honor and Academic Dishonesty. They may be found in the Student Handbook, on the web at <http://www.westga.edu/documents/catalogs.php>.

Academic honesty prohibits taking credit for someone else's work. Justice requires that punishment fit the infraction. Egregious academic dishonesty will result in failing the course and may also bring additional penalties imposed by the university.

I encourage any student who has questions or needs help with the course to come to my office hours or send me an email to set up a time to talk.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and university policy, I will make reasonable accommodation for any recognized disability. Students should contact me during the first three weeks of the course and present the Student Accommodation Report.

I strongly encourage students to attend class. Students who attend class tend to learn more and get better grades than those who do not. Class discussion sometimes affords new insights that cannot be planned or even predicted. In case of absence, it is the responsibility of the student to obtain notes from a classmate covering what was missed. I do not penalize students for absences, but students receive no credit for participating or on any tests or quizzes on missed class days. A student who does not take a quiz or test in class with the rest of the class receives a zero. I do not permit students to take any test, quiz, or other graded work at any time other than in class as administered except in rare cases of prior approval by the instructor or with a physician's note.

Late assignments will be penalized by deducting one letter grade for each day the assignment is late.

For important policy information, i.e., the UWG Honor Code, Email, and Credit Hour policies, as well as information on Academic Support and Online Courses, please review the information found in the Common Language for Course Syllabi documentation at

https://www.westga.edu/academics/assets/docs/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf

Additions and updates are made as institution, state, and federal standards change, so please review it each semester.

Course Schedule

Aug. 10 Introduction

Aug. 17 How do I make an original argument?

Reading: J. Harrison Powell, "'Seven Year Locusts': The Deforestation of Spotsylvania County during the American Civil War," *Essays in History* <http://www.essaysinhistory.com/articles/2011/4>

Completion plan due

Aug. 24 How do I find sources for my paper? (Class meets in the library)

Kirk McFarland, "A Split Decision: How Republican Division Ensured Democratic Victory" *The University of Arizona Undergraduate Historical Review* 1 (2009) (online)

<http://clubs.asua.arizona.edu/~pat/Journal/Summer%202009%20UA%20Undergrad%20Historical%20Review.pdf>

Topic statement due in class

Aug. 31 How do I structure my paper?

Reading: Alon Confino, "Why Did the Nazis Burn the Hebrew Bible? Nazi Germany, Representations of the Past, and the Holocaust," *The Journal of Modern History* 84, no. 2 (June 2012): 369-400 (access through library database).

Nathan Michalewicz, "François de Beaucaire de Péguillon and the Ottoman Empire: Perceptions of a Sixteenth-Century Militant Bishop," *Journal of the Western Society for French History* 40 (2012): <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/w/wsfh/0642292.0040.002/--francois-de-beaucaire-de-peguillon-and-the-ottoman-empire?rgn=main;view=fulltext>

Sep. 7 Written statement of question to be addressed and bibliography due (no face-to-face meeting)

Sep. 14 Individual meetings with the instructor in the office TLC 3218

Sep. 21 Presentations of primary sources

Sep. 28 Presentations of primary sources

Oct. 5 Fall Break!

Oct. 12 Online discussion of use of primary sources (no face-to-face meeting)

Oct. 19 Thesis statement due (no face-to-face meeting)

Oct. 24 Send email with peer review of thesis statement due to instructor and author (no class)

Oct. 26 Introduction and historiography section due (no face-to-face meeting)

Nov. 2 Discussion of introduction and historiography sections

Nov. 9 Submit ungraded draft to Dropbox (no face-to-face meeting)

Nov. 16 **Paper due** (no face-to-face meeting)

Nov. 23 Thanksgiving!

Nov. 30 Reflective Essay due
Complete required online questionnaire