

**Senior Seminar
HIST 4484 W
CRN 81471
Mondays 5:30 – 8:00 pm Pafford 107
Spring 2019**

Instructor Information:

Professor: Dr. Elaine MacKinnon

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Email: emcclarn@westga.edu (Do not email me through Course Den)

Office hours: MW 11:30 am to 1:30 pm

TTh 2:00 to 4:00 pm online office hours via email or Google groups
or by appointment

Course Description

This course provides students with the opportunity to conceive and execute their own original historical study. It represents the capstone of the history major's course of study at the University of West Georgia. It challenges you to bring together skills and information gained in previous classes in order to craft an original 20 to 25 page piece of well-written, well-organized, and well-argued historical research based firmly on primary and secondary sources. In the first part of the course we will do common readings together. Our analysis of each of these readings will enable us to review important steps in the historian's craft. We will review the process of research and explore together various types of sources historians use. We will discuss the ways in which historians construct historical arguments on the basis of evidence, and emphasize the importance of questioning and verifying historical sources. We will discuss the meaning of historiography and how historians, and students of history, must position their research and writing within the existing body of historical literature. 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 students' own term projects. Students will work towards a final product, a paper based on original research, through a series of steps as noted below in the syllabus.

This course is writing-intensive. Effective writing is essential to the historical discipline and to a liberal education. 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. You will submit most assignments to Course Den. Most class meetings will be face-to-face, but some class meetings and/or discussions may 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.

The History Department believes that these learning outcomes will contribute to a student’s ability to think historically, which includes:

- understanding the people of the past.
- understanding the perspective of historical actors and to view those historical actors from a critical, scholarly perspective.
- recognizing that people, events, ideas, and cultures have influenced later people, events, ideas, and cultures.
- recognizing that history involves both change and continuity over time; and,
- explaining connections between particular people, events, ideas, or texts and their historical contexts.

Required Materials:

All of the required common readings will be provided through Course Den.

GRADING

Grading Assignment	Weight
Participation	10 percent
Topic statement	5 percent
Question and bibliography	5 percent
Primary source and Final presentation	10 percent
Introduction and historiography section	10 percent
Thesis statement	5 percent
Paper	50 percent
Reflective essay	5 percent

Explanation of Grading Criteria:

Overall, “A” grades reflect totally excellent work—work that is well written, well organized, and well argued; work that avoids summarizing and instead integrates evidence from primary and secondary sources into a deep analysis. “A” work contains no factual errors, excellent writing with no mistakes in spelling, grammar, or organization, and displays complete mastery of the main issues of our class.

“B” grades indicate good work—work that mixes analysis with summary. “B” work contains few factual errors, good writing with few mistakes in spelling, grammar, or organization, and displays a good command of the main issues of our class.

“C” grades indicate average work that offers only summary and lacks analysis and organization.

“C” work contains some factual errors, average writing with some mistakes in spelling, grammar, or organization, and displays an average command of the main issues of our class.

Something to think about: a “C” reflects summarizing of the material (the questions of who, what, and when)—“B” and “A” indicate you have gone beyond mere summary to address the crucial questions of why and how.

“D” grades reflect poor work that fails to demonstrate a mastery of assigned material. “D” work contains many factual errors, poor writing with many mistakes in spelling, grammar, or organization, and displays a less-than-average mastery of the main issues of our class.

“F” grades reflect work that fails to achieve any of the above criteria and display no mastery of assigned materials.

GENERAL POINTS ABOUT ASSIGNMENTS:

All assignments are due on the date indicated in the Course Outline below. Only a serious and unavoidable cause, such as a documented medical condition or family emergency, will be accepted as an excuse for failing to completing an assignment on time. Official documentation must be provided for all causes.

Assignments must be submitted electronically, via the Course Den Assignment Folder on the days marked on the Course Outline below.

All assignments must be typed, double-spaced, in 12-pt Times New Roman font, with regular margins (1.25 left and right, 1.0 top and bottom). You must write the full page-length of the assignment—that means, any space devoted to your name, the date, the class, etc. at the top of the first page does not count towards fulfilling the page length.

RESEARCH PAPER:

Each student will write an original, typed, double-spaced research paper 20-25 pages in length (exclusive of notes and bibliography) examining some question of interest related to the course or approved by the instructor. The paper must assert a thesis and sustain it on the basis of evidence drawn from both primary and secondary sources. The paper must incorporate at least **six primary and ten secondary sources**.

This is a research paper, intended to take you further into a subject than you have gone in previous courses. You are expected to seek out materials that you have not used in prior courses.

The paper must cite its sources in footnotes and list works consulted in a bibliography according to the documentary note style of the *Chicago Manual of Style*. You can consult for guidelines the [Chicago Manual of Style Quick Citation Guide](#). I also highly recommend for not only for citation guides but also other useful information on writing, [The Purdue Online Writing Lab](#). In particular, visit their [Purdue Online Writing Lab Chicago Manual of Style Workshop](#).

The final paper must be an original work undertaken for this course. Do not turn in a paper that you have done for another history course. If you wish to continue research that you have begun in a previous course, you will need to speak with the instructor. Students building on prior related work must submit any previously submitted paper by the second week of the course to the Course Den assignment folder labeled “Previous Papers I have Written Connected with My Topic.” The final paper would have to be completely different and not just lengthened to meet the requirements of this course.

A minimum of ten substantive books must be used in the paper, not just listed in the bibliography; a solid research paper of this length requires at six primary sources

Your final 20 to 25 page paper will be evaluated using the History Department’s official rubric for assessing the four departmental learning outcomes. That rubric is posted separately on Course Den. I **strongly recommend** you read through it closely before submitting your final paper so as to understand what standards you will be evaluated on. Of particular importance are the quality of the research, the analysis, and the writing, including organization, grammar, punctuation, spelling, and conformity with proper citation format.

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The final draft of the paper is due by 5:30 pm on Monday, April 15. Each student must submit **two** paper copies of the final paper and submit an electronic version to the Assignment Folder in Course Den labeled “Final Paper.”

I strongly recommend that you turn in a rough draft of the paper. Rough drafts of the complete paper must be turned into the Assignment Folder in Course Den labeled “Rough Draft of Final Paper” **no later than 11:30 pm on March 31**.

On dates given in the syllabus, students will turn in to be graded incremental parts of the final paper, as explained below (topic statement, question and annotated bibliography, primary source, thesis statement, introduction and historiography section, final paper). Students will also make presentations to the class on designated days in conjunction with turning in these assignments.

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.

REQUIRED STEP BY STEP ASSIGNMENTS AND DUE DATES:

- 1) Completion Plan:** On **January 21** (by 11:30 pm), each student must submit to Course Den a one-page, written plan describing briefly how and when they will complete the work required in the course. Be precise. Each week, you have 168 hours to devote to everything in your life – work, school, relationships, eating, etc. Think about how many hours you need to work over the week, how many hours you need to devote to other classes, and how many hours you need to give to just living life. Then think about what time is left over for your Senior Seminar project and how you intend to use it week by week. In your completion plan, I want you to lay out what you intend to do on a weekly basis over the semester. This assignment is graded for participation.
- 2) Topic Statement:** On **January 28**, each student must submit in class a topic statement (at least one paragraph). The topic statement is a typewritten statement of the topic to be addressed by the paper, and should include an explanation of its temporal, geographic and historiographical context. You should also consider what sorts of questions you want to ask about it. These may include referring to historical perspectives such as a focus on gender, or economic, cultural, or political dimensions.

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.

- 3) Research Question and Annotated Bibliography:** On **February 11 by 11:30 pm**, you will submit a written statement of the question to be addressed and an annotated bibliography to the Assignment Folder in Course Den labeled “Question and Annotated Bibliography.” The written statement of the question to be addressed should represent a refinement of the paper’s topic. Do keep in mind the question needs to be historical, in that you need to be studying issues of the past, not trying to make any ideological or political points (from any side) in the present. Also, the question must be related to your topic; otherwise your grade will be impacted. 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 a bibliography will receive an “A.” One letter grade will be deducted from the grade awarded for the question presented if the thesis statement does not answer the question. One letter grade will be deducted

from the grade awarded for the question if the introduction and historiography section does not address the question stated. One letter grade will be deducted if the final paper does not answer the question stated.

You will also submit on this date an **annotated bibliography** of your project's sources, both primary and secondary. The bibliography should meet the following standards:

- First, it should conform to Chicago Style.
- Second, it must be as comprehensive as possible, listing as many relevant primary and secondary sources as possible. In terms of secondary sources, I want you to focus upon printed scholarly works (books and scholarly journal articles). **Your secondary sources should reflect current scholarship as well as classic works in the field.** Avoid all encyclopedias, including Wikipedia. One useful website for scholarly journal articles is JSTOR, available through the Ingram Library's database collection.
- Third, it must clearly **separate the secondary sources from the primary sources and identify each category.**
- Fourth, for this submission, your bibliography must be annotated. That means for each source you will need to write several sentences that: a. describe the source (what is it; who wrote it; what are the author's credentials, what is the main argument, methodology, etc), and, b. explains how the source helps answer your project's central question. For the primary sources, you should also provide a paragraph that identifies the source (letter, newspaper article, memoir, official document, etc.), the purpose of the document, who the author or creator is, and the date of the source; if you are using a collection of documents, then explain how the editors selected the sources, how much additional information they provide concerning the sources, and whether they have translated the sources. Then you must explain how this source or source collection relates to your research question, and how you propose to use it in your paper.
- At the end of the semester, your final paper should end with a bibliography – that final bibliography, however, must not be annotated.

All sources must be cited according to the guidelines laid out in *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

Annotations should be free of grammatical, spelling, and mechanical errors.

- 4) **Primary Source Presentation:** On **February 18**, you will select one of your primary sources and discuss it with the class. 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? How will it help you to answer your research question? Each student will also answer questions from the group about the source. Grades will be based on the quality of the analysis.
- 5) **Thesis Statement and Peer Review of Thesis Statement:** **On March 4**, students must bring your concise thesis statement in one sentence. Your thesis statement answers the question you posed earlier in the semester and reveals your paper's argument. For guidance, see the [University of Mary Washington Thesis Statements page](#). Your thesis statement must be typed and brought to class. In class we will do peer reviews: 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. The peer reviews will be part of your participation grade and will be evaluated by the instructor on the basis of whether the feedback met the instructions, its thoughtfulness, and its helpfulness.

- 6) **Introduction and Historiography Section:** By no later than 12:00 noon on March 13, students will turn into Course Den the introduction and historiography section of their papers.

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 in 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.**

So, the introduction and historiography section should follow these criteria:

- It should be around three to five pages in length.
- It should raise the historical question you examine and state clearly your answer to that question (ie, your thesis).
- Besides clearly stating the thesis/argument, it should clearly explain how you intend to prove the argument (including the source evidence you use to prove the argument).
- It must situate your argument within the larger historiographical context and in so doing explain your paper's contribution to existing scholarly debates related to your topic and question.

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- 7) **Final Draft of Research Paper:** On **April 15**, you will submit your final draft to Course Den by 5:30 pm. We will not have a general class meeting but you must turn in two hard copies to me by 5:30 pm, either to my office or to my mailbox in the History Department mailroom. During the last two class meetings, **April 22** and **April 29**, each student will present a brief (five to ten minute) overview of their final paper to the class, summarizing your argument and what you learned from doing the paper. This is a required assignment.
- 8) **Reflective Essay:** On **April 29**, you will turn in your reflective essay and submit an electronic copy to Course Den. The reflective essay should be 2-3 pages in length, double-spaced, 12-pt font and it should address the following question: What have you learned during your time as a student and as a history major at West Georgia? The essay will be graded on the basis of the quality of the reflection and the writing.

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.

Policies

• Participation

Your active participation is absolutely critical for the success of our class. Discussions are an important component of this course and I expect you to be ready to ask and answer questions. Beyond speaking during discussions, participation means being actively engaged in the process of learning at all times. This includes being alert, asking questions directly related to class material, and taking notes during lectures and taking advantage of office hours. 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.

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. 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. Being absent, arriving late, or leaving early will earn you 0 participation points for the day. So, too, will sleeping in class. Ten percent of your final grade rests on your participation—that is the difference between an A and a B, a C and a D.

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

• Etiquette and Obligations

Throughout the semester, I expect you to behave with civility and courtesy. By choosing to enter UWG, you have decided to engage in a professional endeavor, and must comport yourself accordingly. Not only does this mean always being respectful of your colleagues even when you disagree with their viewpoints, but also means continually contributing to a productive learning environment for all.

These contributions include keeping all comments and questions connected to specific course material, and making sure your cell phone and other electronic devices (I-Pods, etc.) are turned off and not used or consulted during class. Laptops will only be allowed with a valid medical cause and the permission of the instructor.

Again, it should go without saying that when you come to class, you are to remain awake, alert, and mentally engaged for the entire period. If you chose to come to class, you must stay awake and remain. Do not sleep or leave early.

Unprofessional behavior and any disruption of the learning environment cannot and will not be tolerated. Continual behavioral issues constitute grounds for being dropped from the course.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

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](#).

Academic honesty prohibits taking credit for someone else's work. ANY ACT of plagiarism (the use of someone else's words or ideas without citation) from ANY SOURCE (class materials and/or outside, including from the internet) will be dealt with severely, so remember to always cite all words and ideas that are not your own. Please recall that when you entered UWG, you consented to uphold our Honor Code, in which all students "pledge to refrain from engaging in acts that do not maintain academic and personal integrity. These include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrications, aid of academic dishonesty, lying, bribery or threats, and stealing." 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.

Plagiarism is simple to avoid: if in doubt, cite! If you have any questions regarding plagiarism and the policies stated above, please come see me.

Accessibility

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.

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 [Common Language for Course Syllabi](#). Additions and updates are made as institution, state, and federal standards change, so please review it each semester.

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.

Note: *I reserve the right to modify this syllabus during the semester if circumstances warrant. You will be informed at all times of any changes. If changes are substantial, I will either tell you in class or issue a revised syllabus.*

Course Schedule:

January 7: Introduction

January 14: Introduction to Library Resources/Discussion of questions--How do I make an original argument? How do I find sources? How do I structure my paper?
WE WILL MEET IN INGRAM LIBRARY'S MAIN FLOOR CLASSROOM

Reading:

J. Harrison Powell, "Seven Year Locusts': The Deforestation of Spotsylvania County during the American Civil War," *Essays in History*. Accessible in Course Den and at [Seven Year Locusts](#)

Kathryn E. Holland Braund, "Guardians of Tradition and Handmaidens to Change: Women's Roles in Creek Economic and Social Life during the Eighteenth Century," *American Indian Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (Summer, 1990), 239-258. Available in Course Den and through J-Stor

Due in Course Den: Prior work serving as basis for Senior Seminar Paper (for those building on previous projects) Submit no later than Friday January 18 at 6:00pm

January 21: MLK Holiday—No Class But Completion Plan is Due January 21 in Course Den by 6:00 PM

January 28: Conducting Research through UWG Databases/Finding Sources
WE WILL MEET IN INGRAM LIBRARY'S MAIN FLOOR CLASSROOM

Topic statement due in class

February 4: Strengths and Weaknesses in Writing

Reading:

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): Available in Course Den

Kirk McFarland, "A Split Decision: How Republican Division Ensured Democratic Victory" *The University of Arizona Undergraduate Historical Review* 1 (2009), pp. 28-49; Available in Course Den

Tyler Green, "George B. McClellan: Political Forces and Generalship," *The University of Arizona Undergraduate Historical Review* 1 (2009), pp. 5-15; Available in Course Den

NOTE: Nate Michalewicz graduated from UWG with both his B.A. and M.A. in History. He based the article on ideas raised in his own Senior Seminar project. McFarland and Green wrote these papers as undergraduates. All three papers offer models of things to do and things to avoid. Think about how they lay out their arguments, how they situate those arguments within the larger historiography, and how they use evidence to support their arguments. Besides these general points, pay attention to how the authors

raise the general topic of their argument and the specific questions regarding that topic they intend to explore.

February 11: Written statement of question to be addressed and annotated bibliography due

in Course Den by 11:30 pm (NO CLASS MEETING)

February 18: Primary Source Presentations

February 25: What Can I Do with My History Major? Career Panel Discussion (required attendance)

March 4: Thesis Statement Due in Class/Peer Reviews/Discussion of historiography

Reading: Read one or both of the following two articles and be ready to discuss the meaning and method of historiography

Nathan Rosenstein, “New Approaches to Roman Military History,” available in Course Den
Bryan Holden Reid, “The Civil War 1861-5,” in James C. Bradford, ed., *A Companion to American Military History*, available in Course Den

March 11: NO CLASS MEETING (individual meetings recommended)

Work on your Introduction and Historiography Section

Introduction and Historiography Due in Course Den by 12 noon Wednesday

March 13

March 18: Spring Break: You should be writing!

March 25: No general class meeting—Individual Meetings. You will schedule time to meet individually with me at my office (TLC 3222) to discuss your project’s status and return to you the Introduction and Historiography section with my comments.

Optional but Recommended Rough Draft of paper due no later than 11:30 pm on March 31. Submit to Course Den Assignment Folder labeled “Rough Draft”

April 1: Presentation from Career Services (tentative)

This is a useful moment to think about the skills you are using in this research project and how you can sell those skills on the job market. Be prepared as well to discuss whether you have been able to meet the deadlines you established in your original Plan, where you are in the project (as in how much research and writing still need lie before you), what challenges you have faced in the writing process, and how you have overcome those challenges.

April 8: No Class Meeting

We will **not** meet as a class during the week of April 8 so you can concentrate on completing your final drafts.

April 15: Final Papers Due by 5:30 pm (two hard copies submitted to my mailbox or my office in TLC #3222 and one electronically to Course Den Assignment Folder)/

NO CLASS MEETING

April 22: Class Meeting/Final presentations

Be prepared to share with the class a brief overview of your research project, your argument, and the most important conclusions you reached and insights you gained from writing this paper.

April 29: Final Presentations/Reflective Essay Due

Be prepared to share with the class a brief overview of your research project, your argument, and the most important conclusions you reached and insights you gained from writing this paper.

You will turn in your reflective essay at this class.