

Syllabus History 703
Seminar in American History
Professor Schweningen Fall 2004

The purpose of this course is to write a research paper on some aspect of American history using secondary and primary sources.

The paper should stand by itself but can be a section or chapter of a larger study.

To start, each student should choose a topic. You should consult with your teaching mentor about the appropriateness of a given topic and how it fits with your long range goals.

Once a topic is chosen, you should survey the secondary literature and compile a bibliography of at least fifteen or twenty books and/or articles.

From the secondary literature you should pose a set of questions that are not adequately addressed in secondary sources. You should then identify a body of primary sources to answer the questions.

During the semester, each member of the class will produce two drafts of a paper and read and critique fellow classmates drafts of a paper.

For questions regarding note taking, citations, bibliography, etc., you should consult Mary Lynn Rampolla, [A Pocket Guide to Writing in History](#), fourth edition (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004). While most of you are probably already familiar with this information, Professor Rampolla has many useful insights about how to identify and evaluate secondary and primary sources, how to organize a research paper, how to conduct research, use internet materials, take effective notes, develop a working thesis, make an outline, and revise your paper. She also presents information on how to document sources with footnotes and endnotes, how to use and document internet and non-written sources, how to compile a bibliography, and how to compose a correct citation entry.

For the nature of primary sources, you might consult Loren Schweningen, ed., [The Southern Debate Over Slavery: Volume 1, Petitions to Southern Legislature, 1778-1864](#) (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001; an e-book online at http://library.uncg.edu/slavery_petitions).

The class schedule will be as follows:

- August 26 Preliminary discussion of possible topics
- September 2 Preliminary discussion of secondary and primary sources
- September 9 Meet in Library in room across from Circulation Desk; Reference Librarian Kathy Crowe will discuss primary and secondary sources
- September 16 Finalizing topic and sources
- October 14 Summarize Preliminary Findings to Class; pass out first draft to classmates
- October 21 Critiques of First Drafts. Everyone will read and evaluate all of the papers but one person will be chosen as a "lead evaluator" for each paper while others will add what the lead evaluator might have missed.
- November 11 Summarize revisions and additions to class; pass out second draft to classmates
- November 18 Critiques of Second Drafts. Everyone will read and evaluate all of the papers but one person will be chosen as a "lead evaluator" for each paper while others will add what the lead evaluator might have missed.
- December 2 Papers due (they will not be returned so keep a copy for your files); no more than twenty-five pages in length, including bibliography and footnotes.

My office is 240 McIver; my office hours are Thursday, 2:00-4:00 and by appointment. Your grade will be based on your critiques and your final paper.