



Martha Ryan Cipher Book (Coll. #1940)

Introductory Research Seminar

HIS 709.01

Fall 2005

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Office: McIver 210

Hours: Tues./Thurs 2:00-3:00

and by appointment

Course Objectives

This course is designed as an advanced introduction to professional research practice. You will develop your own research project based on your individual interests. But this course will not operate as if you were pursuing a set of unrelated independent studies. Though your topics will differ widely, you will all be facing similar research and writing problems: finding primary sources, understanding what your evidence means, presenting your findings in an interesting and compelling interpretation. Thus the subject of this course is not based on any particular historical period or topic, rather it is the historical method—the process of historical investigation, and particularly the role of writing in the research process. I agree wholeheartedly with Booth, Colomb, and Williams, who explained in *The Craft of Research* that “writing is not just the last stage of a research project but from its beginning a guide to critical thinking.”

Your primary goal in this course is to write a compelling proposal for an original research project. You will develop the proposal in stages and, as in any professional grant competition peer review will be an important part of the research process in the course. The course will focus particularly on the types of methodologies historians have used to interpret written sources. To develop an expertise in research methods using non-text sources you may want to investigate courses the department offers in material culture and oral history.

By the end of the semester you should be able to:

- Recognize and understand the AHA standards of professional conduct and research practice.
- Identify and employ best practices in grant proposal writing in the humanities.
- Construct a meaningful original research problem.
- Explain the significance and contribution to the field of your original research project.
- Understand the relationship between historians and archivists and use archival finding aids to identify appropriate primary sources for your project.
- Develop a meaningful research bibliography.
- Identify and apply the best research methodologies for successfully completing your project.
- Assess different approaches to historical writing and employ the best approach for your project.

Course Readings

Required Style Manual(at UNCG bookstore):

Kate Turabian. A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Journal Articles (various electronic databases and Reserves):

Cmiel, Kenneth. "After Objectivity: What Comes Next in History?" *American Literary History*, Vol. 2, No. 1. (Spring, 1990), pp. 170-181.

Demos, John. "Using Self, Using History," *Journal of American History* 2002 89(1): 37-42.

Goodman, James E. "For the Love of Stories," *Reviews in American History*, Vol. 26, No. 1, Special Issue: The Challenge of American History. (Mar., 1998), pp. 255-274.

Isaac, Rhys. "Ethnographic Method in History: An Action Approach," *Historical Methods* 1980 13(1): 43-61.

James West Davidson. "The New Narrative History: How New? How Narrative?" *Reviews in American History*, Vol. 12, No. 3. (Sep., 1984), pp. 322-334.

Johnson, Michael P. Denmark Vesey and His Co-Conspirators. *William and Mary Quarterly* 58, no. 4 (October 2001): 913-976.

Kammen, Michael G. "An Americanist's Reprise: The Pervasive Role of Histoire Probleme in Historical Scholarship Concerning the United States Since the 1960s," *Reviews in American History*, Vol. 26, No. 1, Special Issue: The Challenge of American History. (Mar., 1998), pp. 1-25.

Mandemakers, Kees and Lisa Dillon. "Best Practices with Large Databases on Historical Populations," *Historical Methods*, 37, no. 1 (Winter 2004): 34-38.

Paris, Jan and Roslyn Holdzkom. *The Invisible Process: Ingenuity and Cooperation in Finding Women's Lives*. Chapel Hill: Academic Affairs Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1997.

Rice, William Craig. "Who Killed History? An Academic Autopsy," *Virginia Quarterly Review* 1995 71(4): 601-615.

Steckel, Richard H. "The Quality of Census Data for Historical Inquiry: A Research Agenda," *Social Science History*, Vol. 15, No. 4. (Winter, 1991), pp. 579-599.

Various authors. "Forum: The Making of a Slave Conspiracy," part 1 and part 2. *William and Mary Quarterly* 59, no. 1 (January 2002): 135-202.

Evaluation

Class Participation	20%
Long Research Proposal	50%
Short Research Proposal	30%

There will be a series of required, research and writing exercises designed to help you develop your proposal in stages. The work you produce will be an important focus of class discussion throughout the semester. It is therefore essential that you complete this work on time. Your class participation grade will be based in part on the quality of your work on these assignments. See the following due dates:

25 August	Preliminary Topic Description (2-3 pages)
15 September	Revised Topic Description, Statement of Project Significance, Research Bibliography
22 September	Using SHC Finding Aids: http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv.html Use the online finding aids to locate at least one folder or box you would request with research potential for your project. Write a description of your search process and rationale for your selections.
13 October	Methodology and Research Goals; Revised bibliography
3 November	Short Proposal due (3-5 pages)

Course Schedule

18 August Getting started: course goals and how we'll achieve them

25 August Standards of Professional Conduct

Read:

NEH policy on research misconduct:

<http://www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/researchmisconduct.html>

AHA Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct

<http://www.historians.org/pubs/Free/ProfessionalStandards.cfm#SharedValues>

Grant competitions:

<http://www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/fellowships.html>

<http://www.acls.org/burkguide.htm>

<http://www.americanantiquarian.org/longterm.htm>

Assignment: Preliminary topic overview, 1-2 pages; post to Blackboard by 10:00 am on 24 August. All students should read proposals and come to class prepared with questions and evaluation of strengths and weaknesses of each proposal.

1 September Intro to the Historical Method

Read: *WMQ Forum*: The Making of a Slave Conspiracy, part 1 and part 2

Michael P. Johnson. Denmark Vesey and His Co-Conspirators. *William and Mary Quarterly* 58, no. 4 (October 2001): 913-976.

Various authors, *William and Mary Quarterly* 59, no. 1 (January 2002): 135-202.

8 September Constructing a Research Problem

Read:

Michael G. Kammen, "An Americanist's Reprise: The Pervasive Role of Histoire Probleme in Historical Scholarship Concerning the United States Since the 1960s," *Reviews in American History*, Vol. 26, No. 1, Special Issue: The Challenge of American History. (Mar., 1998), pp. 1-25.

15 September **Assignment:** Revised Topic Description and Statement of Project Significance and bibliography due.

22 September Finding Evidence: Working with Archivists

Read:

Paris, Jan and Roslyn Holdzkom. *The Invisible Process: Ingenuity and Cooperation in Finding Women's Lives*. Chapel Hill: Academic Affairs Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1997.

Assignment: Using SHC Finding Aids: <http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv.html> Use the online finding aids to locate at least one folder or box you would request with research potential for your project. Write a description of your search process and rationale for your selections.

29 September Research Methodology—Using Statistical Data

Read:

Richard H. Steckel, "The Quality of Census Data for Historical Inquiry: A Research Agenda," *Social Science History*, Vol. 15, No. 4. (Winter, 1991), pp. 579-599.

Kees Mandemakers and Lisa Dillon, "Best Practices with Large Databases on Historical Populations," *Historical Methods*, 37, no. 1 (Winter 2004): 34-38.

- 6 October Research Methodology—Ethnographic Method and History
Read:
Rhys Isaac, "Ethnographic Method in History: An Action Approach," *Historical Methods* 1980
13(1): 43-61.
- 13 October **Assignment:** Methodology section and primary source bibliography due
- 20 October Research Methodology—History and Theory
Read:
Kenneth Cmiel, "After Objectivity: What Comes Next in History?" *American Literary History*, Vol.
2, No. 1. (Spring, 1990), pp. 170-181.
John Demos, "Using Self, Using History," *Journal of American History* 2002 89(1): 37-42.
- 27 October Approaches to Writing History: Narrative History v. Analytical History
Read:
James West Davidson. "The New Narrative History: How New? How Narrative?" *Reviews in
American History*, Vol. 12, No. 3. (Sep., 1984), pp. 322-334.
James E. Goodman, "For the Love of Stories," *Reviews in American History*, Vol. 26, No. 1,
Special Issue: The Challenge of American History. (Mar., 1998), pp. 255-274.
William Craig Rice. "Who Killed History? An Academic Autopsy," *Virginia Quarterly Review* 1995
71(4): 601-615.
- 3 November **Assignment:** Short Proposal due:
Peer Review and the Research Process
- 10 November PEER REVIEW
- 17 November PEER REVIEW
- 24 November Thanksgiving Holiday
- 1 December Final Proposals due