

History 709-02 (Fall 2009)
Introductory Seminar in US History
“Public Culture in Twentieth-Century America”

Professor Thomas Jackson

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Office Hours: Tuesday, 3:30 PM-4:30 PM; Wednesday, 1 PM-2 PM;

And by appointment Tuesday through Friday mornings

Fall 2010

MHRA 3209

Th. 6:30-9:20

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In this course you will be expected to research and write an article-length paper on a problem of your choosing. The first third of the course will be devoted to examining important questions in the history of 20th century US "public culture." As a group, we will consider several methodologically innovative scholarly articles that might serve as models for your research. In the course of your research, you will each report on a piece of scholarship that you judge represents the "best practices" of your chosen sub-field. The professor has strengths in political history, cultural history, social movement history, and especially the history of the African American freedom movement. By early October, all students will be in possession of an important question and a body of sources likely to yield answers. Some students may already have projects in mind. Others should be willing to be guided to a researchable problem that will draw upon rich primary source materials available through the Jackson library, local collections, oral histories, or the Internet.

You will each learn how to select a topic, frame important questions that can energize research on that topic and make it compelling to others, identify pertinent secondary and primary sources, present hypotheses and findings both orally and in writing, and constructively criticize the work of your peers. Students will write a research paper based on primary sources in a step-by-step process: choosing a topic; learning the historiography; identifying primary sources; compiling a bibliography; formulating working hypotheses; drawing up an early draft of the paper; evaluating each other's work through a peer-review system; and revising the final draft. Paper topics will vary widely, but students in the class will all be dealing with the same challenges of researching and writing a piece of original scholarship, so the effort will also be collaborative to a degree.

Our first month together will be spent examining models of best practices in research and writing, some selected by me for common discussion, others by you for reporting to the class.

Course Learning Outcomes:

A research project on this scale is very challenging, and my goal as instructor is to help you develop critical thinking and research skills that will serve you well at this University and beyond. By the end of the semester students will be able to:

Interpret and analyze primary source material and draw original conclusions relevant to an existing body of historical literature

Critically evaluate various types of sources while formulating an historical argument supported with evidence.

Conduct independent research and present the findings of their research orally as well as in written form

Constructively criticize the work of their peers while also utilizing feedback from others to revise their own projects.

Integrate writing into all phases of the research process, in order to break the undergraduate notion that writing only happens at the end!

Required Readings:

Kate L. Turabian, Wayne Booth, et. al., *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*, 7th Edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007). Purchase is recommended but not required. Two copies are available on one-day reserve in Jackson Library; two are available there for building use only, and two more are available at the music library. This book is also available for \$9.97 on Amazon.com. I also placed an order with the bookstore.

A series of journal articles on historiography and various topics. Search through Journal Finder or look on Blackboard for PDF files. Read these on your computer or print them out.

Bibliographies and descriptions of some possible research problems with sources will be listed on Blackboard as soon as I get a sense of where people are going.

Assessment and Evaluation

Process: 25%

This includes the quality and timeliness of your interim exercises toward production of the final draft: statement of topic interests; annotated bibliography with working hypotheses; early write-up, and first draft. These exercises are designed to incorporate proven principles into your research process. Writing is not something you reserve for the end of "research," but is integral to the process of discovery, discerning research choices, and every stage up to the final draft.

Participation: 25 %

This includes your regular contributions to class discussion, presentations, and the quality of your peer reviews. By no means should you miss a class unless in the most dire emergencies.

Each of you will give a 7 minute presentation of an article length scholarly work that you would use as a model for your own (12 minutes maximum including question and answer time from the class). Please clear your choice with me in advance. (See Turabian, Booth, et. al. *A Manual for Writers*, p. 26 on models and 122-127 on the rudiments of presentation).

Final Paper: 50% -- Approximately 25 pages formatted according to Turabian Bibliography Style. Due printed out for me and dropped off in the department December 15.

Discussion and Presentation Rubric

Rubric for discussing common scholarly articles and presenting your own choice (see also Turabian, 122-126 on presentations):

What are the three main claims this scholar makes?

How does the author situate her claims in relation to the literature and articulate their larger implications (the all important "so what" question)?

How does the author reason from evidence to support his claims? Are the analytical concepts and reasons clear and well deployed? What are the main sources yielding evidence, secondary and primary, and where are they located?

Grading Scale: A+: 98-100; A: 93-97; A-: 90-92; B+: 87-89; B: 83-86; B-: 80-82; C+: 77-79; C: 73-76; C-: 70-72; D+: 67-69; D: 63-66; D-: 60-62; F: 59 and lower.

Schedule of Meetings and Deadlines

August 26: Introductions

Assignment: Intellectual Autobiography on the Blackboard Discussion Board

If you have not already done so, please write 300-400 words about how you got here, what history has inspired you, general or specific interests and topics you imagine you might like to focus on. Or expand upon this after the first class. (Please post a small photo if you want to help me and your classmates remember your name).

September 2: Discerning the Currents – From Interests to Topics to Questions

Turabian, Booth, et. al. *A Manual for Writers*, 3-23. How does this mysterious process work: refining our “interests” into “topics” and beginning to generate “working hypotheses” about important questions?

Common Readings: Visual Culture and Workers’ Culture at the End of World War II

[NB: I reserve the right to substitute common readings as I get to know you].

Robert Harriman, and John Louis Lucaites, "The Times Square Kiss: Iconic Photography and Civic Renewal in U.S. Public Culture," *Journal of American History* 94, no. 1 (2007): 122-31.

Kevin Boyle, "The Kiss: Racial and Gender Conflict in a 1950s Automobile Factory," *Journal of American History* 84, no. 2 (1997): 496-523.

These readings are two great introductions to the broad concept of "public culture." See bibliography for the work of Thomas Bender and others, especially his critics.

Student Best Practices Reports, 1-3

Historiographical Review Assignment -- Before September 16 on Blackboard: Read one of the many historiographical articles I have listed in a bibliography of historiographical essays posted on Blackboard. Write and post on Blackboard 300 words on what your author considers to be the most cutting-edge conceptual and methodological developments in his or her respective fields. We will weave these insights into discussion when appropriate.

September 10: Sounding Depths and Casting Nets -- Finding Sources and Imagining Results

Turabian, Booth, et. al. *A Manual for Writers*, 24-47. (Finding and engaging sources).

Student Best Practice Reports, 4-6

Common Readings: Race and Economics in the 1960s Media

Lisa Levenstein, “From Innocent Children to Unwanted Migrants and Unwed Moms: Two Chapters in the Public Discourse on Welfare in the United States, 1960-1961,” *Journal of Women's History* 11.4 (2000) 10-33.

Jackson, Thomas F., "Jobs and Freedom: The Black Revolt of 1963 and the Contested Meanings of the March on Washington," Paper delivered to the Biennial Conference of the Policy History Association, Columbus Ohio, June 6, 2010. On Blackboard.

September 13, Monday: The First Dive!

Assignment: Preliminary Topic Description. Each of you should write up and post on Blackboard (with accompanying .rtf file) a brief description of your topic (400-500 words) with the following information:

- a) (Tentative – take a wild stab) title of the proposed study.
- b) A brief description of the topic including its significance and also a justification for the proposed beginning and ending dates of your study.
- c) Briefly list or describe the *accessible* primary sources that will be relevant for your study—e.g. newspapers, memoirs, archival material, oral histories, online sources.
- d) Identify 2-3 important and influential secondary works on your topic and suggest how your study (as you imagine it at this point) will add to the ongoing conversations among historians.

I will approve or urge clarification of these in the next week. Please respond to at least two of your classmates with brief constructive suggestions through "reply" on the Blackboard discussion board.

September 16: Assaying the Shipwrecks and Avoiding the Sharks

Discussions of (Original and Revised) Topic Descriptions on Blackboard

Come prepared to give a 5-minute report on your topic, its historiographical context, your primary sources and any preliminary findings or insights you may have -- these reports will be staggered over the next couple weeks.

Formation of Teams of 3-4 People with Common Interests

Student Best Practice Reports, 7-9

Common Readings: Places We Hadn't Looked

Choose three:

Horowitz, Daniel. "Rethinking Betty Friedan and *the Feminine Mystique*: Labor Radicalism and Feminism in Cold War America." *American Quarterly* 48, no. 1 (1996). (Superb detective work)

Michael Willrich, "Home Slackers: Men, the State, and Welfare in Modern America," *Journal of American History* 87, no. 2 (sep2000): 460-89.

Brown, Victoria Bissell. "Jane Addams, Progressivism, and Woman Suffrage: An Introduction to 'Why Women Should Vote' (and Text by Jane Addams)." In *One Woman, One Vote: Rediscovering the Woman Suffrage Movement*, edited by Marjorie Spruill Wheeler, 179-202. Troutdale, OR: New Sage Press, 1995.

Jacqueline Hall, "'You Must Remember This': Autobiography as Social Critique" *Journal of American History*, (Sep 1998), 439-465. (Katherine Du Pre Lumpkin's autobiography can be used to deconstruct the constructed memories of the Lost Cause).

September 23: Swimming Together -- An Abundance of Marine Life

Turabian, Booth, et. al. *A Manual for Writers*, 48-61. (Good construction of arguments).

Student Best Practice Reports, 9-12

Keep refining your annotated bibliography and start connecting secondary and primary sources in terms of the kind of questions you will answer.

Common Readings: Memory and Place

Karen J. Leong, Christopher A. Airriess, Wei Li, Angela Chia-Chen Chen, and Verna M. Keith, "Resilient History and the Rebuilding of a Community: The Vietnamese American Community in New Orleans East," *The Journal of American History* December 2007

J. Mark Souther, "The Disneyfication of New Orleans: The French Quarter as Facade in a Divided City," *The Journal of American History* December 2007

Alecia P. Long, "Poverty Is the New Prostitution: Race, Poverty, and Public Housing in Post-Katrina New Orleans," *The Journal of American History* December 2007

September 27, Monday

Assignment: Annotated Bibliography and Working Hypotheses. Compile a list of at least 4-5 key secondary works (books or journal articles) on your topic and *briefly* summarize the authors' findings and describe their sources. Add a list of the most important primary sources you intend use in your paper and briefly describe them as well as any preliminary information from those sources that you can add at this point. **Formulate some working hypotheses that will help you gather relevant research notes.**

September 30: On Our Own -- Navigating the Depths

Turabian, Booth, et. al. *A Manual for Writers*, 62-81. (Sticking with a plan).

Student Best Practice Reports, 13-15

Common Readings: Racial Conflict and Movement Culture

Thomas J. Sugrue, "Crabgrass-Roots Politics: Race, Rights, and the Reaction against Liberalism in the Urban North, 1940-1964," *Journal of American History* (September 1995): 551-578.

Kwame Hassan Jeffries, "Organizing for More Than the Vote: The Political Radicalization of Local People in Lowndes County, Alabama, 1965-1966," in *Groundwork: Local Black Freedom Movements in America*, eds. Jeanne Theoharis and Komozi Woodard (New York, 2005), pp. 140-63.

October 7: No Class -- Conferences with Professor and Teammates

October 11, Monday -- Four Weeks to First Draft!

Assignment: Early Write-up. In what is intended to be an early draft of the first 3-4 pages of your paper, identify the following in a formal written form:

- a) The main historical problem or issue that you are addressing and the claim you expect (hope) to make, i.e. your (preliminary) thesis statement
- b) The evidence you are using to research and solve your historical problem
- c) A brief summary of the most important scholarly literature on your topic with a clear indication of what your research will contribute to that body of literature

October 14: Individual and Team Conferences during Class Period

Turabian, Booth, et. al. *A Manual for Writers*, 98-130, passim.

Be prepared to orally give constructive feedback to your teammates.

October 21: No Class -- Conferences

October 28: No Class -- Conferences

November 4: No Class -- Conferences

November 8, Monday: FIRST DRAFTS DUE! Five Weeks to Final Draft!

Print out and turn in the first draft—as much as you have plus the remainder in outlined form if necessary—to the instructor and post on Blackboard by noon for your peer reviewers.

November 11: Peer Reviews in Teams

Read 2-3 other students' first drafts (as assigned in teams; feel free to read others) and write up a constructive critique of each of them; identify strengths of the essay but make sure that you concentrate on the aspects of the essay that need strengthening.

November 18: Diving Trophies -- Presentation of Key Findings

Turabian, Booth, et. al. *A Manual for Writers*, 122-128.

Please take no more than 10 minutes to highlight the most interesting and significant pieces of your argument and show some supportive illustrations.

December 2: Diving Trophies -- Presentation of Key Findings

Please take no more than 10 minutes to highlight the most interesting and significant pieces of your argument and show some supportive illustrations.

December 13: Absolute Drop Dead Done Done Done No Bull No Excuses Deadline (Give the Big Fish Back, This Is Catch and Release!)

The final draft will be evaluated on its coherence, logical development, significance for history, relationship between interpretation and evidence, and its lucid compelling writing style! This is when I reap the rewards of all of our hard work. Please give them to me elegantly filleted and delicately cooked!