

History 391 – Historical Skills and Methods: Evaluating the Reign of King Stephen



Course Information

History 391-01; Fall 2014; CRN: 83599

Time: TR 12:30

Room: MHRA 3208

Instructor Information

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Office Hours:

Tuesdays 11-12 AM, Thursdays 2-3 PM, and by appointment

Course Description:

This course is required for History Majors, and is a prerequisite for the senior capstone course (His 511). As a result, History 391 necessarily must pursue several goals. The first major goal is to reinforce (at the least) and introduce (at the worst) some of the techniques and methods that historians practice when they devise, research, and write research papers. In other words, the first goal is to introduce or reinforce a set of skills that students can take with them to other upper-level history classes and especially to History 511. Among these skills are the following: 1) producing feasible research questions and topics from the reading of primary and secondary sources; 2) becoming familiar with the main categories of (and

attributes of) primary sources pertinent to a topic; 3) becoming familiar with the locations and/or databases in which these sources can be accessed; 4) analyzing primary sources as texts, and not merely as data-mines (i.e., asking Who? When? Where? Why?); 5) identifying the arguments of secondary sources and evaluating those arguments; and more.

But we cannot practice these skills in a vacuum, and so the other main goal of the course is to examine and study the rich primary source base from, and the contested historiographical interpretations of, the reign of King Stephen of England (1135-1154). To this end we will start by reading a recent modern biography of Stephen to get a handle on the main contours of the reign; while we do this, we will be talking in general about some of the research techniques listed above. From this baseline we turn first to extended analysis of types (or categories, or genres) of primary sources. Finally we will turn to an examination of some particularly thorny and/or recurring debates between modern historians over how to interpret and assign meaning to various aspects of Stephen's reign.

Required Books

1. Edmund King, *King Stephen*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012. ISBN: 978-0300181951

Note: the rest of the reading will be available electronically, either through Blackboard or other databases. **It is the responsibility of all students to acquire and read electronic readings, and to bring those readings to class.** I strongly urge you to print them out so that you can annotate them and thereby consult them more easily in class.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Analyze historical duration, succession, and change in terms of human agency and larger systems or structures in a wide variety of places and periods.
2. Use historical thinking to contextualize and analyze primary and secondary sources representing different points of view.
3. Conduct preliminary, but original, research by investigating and interpreting primary and secondary sources.
4. Use evidence-based reasoning to interpret the past coherently while developing and presenting an original argument, orally and in writing.
5. Locate and manipulate research tools – bibliographies, source databases, source collections, etc. – appropriate to the development of a research topic.

Teaching Methods and Assignments

A. Teaching Methods

The success of the course is predicated on a collaborative, interactive environment. This means I will not offer lectures. Our purpose is to critically investigate and question all the readings that we encounter, both in terms of the content of those readings (e.g., a historian's argument, or simply 'what was going on' in a primary source) and in terms of meta-analysis of historical methods. In short, you should come to class having completed the reading and ready to discuss both content and how historians might use that content to construct a research question or research paper. When we read secondary sources, you should also come prepared to discuss the author's argument and its strengths and/or weaknesses. When

we read primary sources, you should have thought a bit about the features of that type of source, and should also have thought about its content.

B. Assignments

1. Participation (Learning Goals 1, 2, 4)

This is not a lecture class. Students are expected to take part in the discussion of readings and of skills and methods. At the end of each class I will consider the participation of each student and assign check-plus, check, or minus in my grade book. To earn a check-plus one must contribute more than once, and have something substantive to say (not just a question). To earn a check, one offer at least one well-thought-out intervention. A minus is earned for those who do not participate or who are absent. At the end of the semester, I will add up the daily marks (1 for check-plus, 0 for check, -1 for minus) and consider the total. If the aggregate is +7 or greater, I will award two points to the final average; if it is +1 to +6, I will award one point; if it is negative, I will subtract 2 points.

2. Exercise Locating Primary Sources (Learning Goals 3, 5)

Locate two primary sources using the methods outlined on the assignment sheet.

3. Exercise Locating Secondary Sources (Learning Goals 3, 5)

Locate a secondary source related to each of the two primary sources you previously located, using the steps outlined on the assignment sheet.

4. Quiz on King (Learning goals 1, 2)

After finishing Edmund King's book, we will have a 30-minute, in-class quiz on its content and arguments. The questions will be short-answer.

5. Exercise in Constructing Research Topics (Learning Goals 2, 3, 5)

Produce two possible research topics. These must have a) a three-to-five sentence description of the topic; b) a feasible research question derived from the description; c) two- to three-sentence explanations of the degree to which the question satisfies each of our four criteria for a good research topic, that is, is the topic specific? Analytical? Feasible with regard to length? Feasible with regard to sources? See assignment sheet for more information.

6. Primary Source Analysis (Learning Goals 2, 3, 4, 5)

Locate a primary source (it can be one you found for a previous assignment provided it meets the criteria listed on the assignment sheet) and read enough of it to allow you to complete the Primary Source Analysis sheet for that source. Some regulations apply! Make sure you read the assignment sheet carefully.

7. Secondary Source Analysis (Learning Goals 2, 3, 4, 5)

Locate a scholarly article connected in some way to the primary source you analyzed previously, read the article, and complete the Secondary Source Analysis Sheet. Make sure you follow the instructions on the assignment sheet.

8. Final Exam (Learning Goals 1, 2)

An in-class exam that covers the readings for the semester. There will be some short answers related to the content we have covered (King, primary sources, secondary articles), as well as some short answers concerning the use and value of types of sources.

9. Final Project

Based on the preliminary assignments, students must develop a potential research project. The project must have a project description and research question, must have plausibly useful primary sources associated with it, and must make an effort to explain how they are 'original', that is, how they challenge, modify, or expand existing scholarly opinion on the subject.

9a. Written Project (Learning Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

The format of the written portion of the project is as follows: 1) a 4-6 page analysis of the problem or question to be investigated, the sources to be used, and the rationale for doing the project; 2) an annotated bibliography of both primary and secondary sources to be used in the project. The bibliography should have at least 3 primary sources and at least 5 secondary sources. Annotations should be two sentences long and should explain the utility of the source for the intended project.

9b. Oral Presentation (Learning Goals 2, 3, 4)

Students will make a 5 minute (no more than that!) presentation concerning their research during the last week of classes. The presentation should do the following: a) state the research topic; b) explain the specific research question that the student has derived from that topic; c) describe the main primary source(s) to be used in answering that question; and d) explain how the proposed topic modifies, expands, or challenges modern scholarship on the topic.

Grade Breakdown

Participation	modifier to final grade
Exercise in Locating Primary Sources	5%
Exercise in Locating Secondary Sources	5%
Quiz on King	15%
Exercise in Constructing Research Topics	10%
Primary Source Analysis	10%
Secondary Source Analysis	10%
Oral component of Final Project	10%
Final Exam	15%
Written component of Final Project	20%

Grading Scale

100-97=A+	79-77=C+	59 or lower = F
96-93=A	76-73=C	
92-90=A-	72-70=C-	
89-87=B+	69-67= D+	
86-83=B	66-63= D	
82-80=B-	62-60= D-	

Schedule of Readings and Classes

1. August 19: Course Intro

2. August 21: History, Historiography and Historians

Questions to consider: how is 'the past' different from 'history'? What role does interpretation have in 'history'? Is there history without an observer/interpreter? What is the historian's task?

Specific Question: Is Henry of Huntingdon's description of the death of Henry I and the accession of King Stephen significant? Why? For what reasons?

Reading:

Blackboard: Henry of Huntingdon, *History of the English People*, pp. 65-67 (find this reading in the folder for October 1)

Blackboard: Martha Howell and Walter Prevenier, "The Nature of Historical Knowledge," in *From Reliable Sources: An Introduction to Historical Methods* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), pp. 119-150

3. August 26: Primary Sources: Genre Features, Reliability and Sufficiency

Questions to consider: what is a reliable source? Why do we care about having 'sufficient' sources? Can sources be assigned into categories, types, or 'genres'? If so, what features identify them as belonging in such categories? Why should we care about genre features?

Goal: establish a list of criteria that we should we apply in evaluating the usefulness of a source

Specific question: what are some 'genre' features of the type of source to which King Stephen's coronation charter belongs?

Reading:

Watch: tutorial on primary/secondary sources: <http://uncg.libguides.com/his> (make sure you watch the World History tutorial)

Blackboard: King Stephen's Coronation charter (first document in pdf for October 8)

Blackboard: R.H.C. Davis, "Appendix III: the Chronicle Sources", in his *King Stephen*, 3rd edition (Longman, 1990), 144-149.

Blackboard: Martha Howell and Walter Prevenier, selections from *From Reliable Sources: An Introduction to Historical Methods* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), pp. 17-27 and 42-68 (with special attention to 42-43 and 60-68)

4. August 28: Locating Sources: Using all your resources

Questions to Consider: What is a bibliography? What is its purpose? How do readers use one? What is a footnote or endnote? How do readers use them?

Specific Questions: which 2-5 primary sources from White's article would seem to bear further investigation? What scholarly article from King's bibliography seems interesting and/or useful, and why?

Reading:

Edmund King, *King Stephen*, pp. i-xvii, 340-359, and 1-25 (we won't discuss pp. 1-25 today)

Blackboard: Graeme J. White, "The Myth of the Anarchy," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 22 (2000), 190-203. For now look only at White's footnotes, and try to make lists both of the categories of primary source that he employs and the specific primary sources he uses most frequently

Online: Go to the Library's Tutorials Page (<http://library.uncg.edu/tutorials/>) and complete the following tutorials connected to the research process: #2 (question to keyword), #4 (library catalog), #5 (finding articles), and #6 (scholarly vs. popular). They take 5 minutes each.

5. September 2: From Stephen of Blois to King Stephen

Reading:

King, pp. 1-70 (you should have read pp. 1-25 for last Thursday)

For your consultation:

Blackboard: Davis, "Appendix II: Principal Participants in the Civil War," in Davis, King Stephen, 142-143. (reference chart to use during course)

6. September 4: Stephen as King

Reading:

King, pp. 71-114

Due: Exercise in Locating Primary Sources

7. September 9: Analyzing a Secondary Source – what criteria? How to find it?

Reading:

King, pp. 115-174

8. September 11: King Stephen: Peaks and Valleys

Reading:

King, pp.175-235

Due: Exercise in Locating Secondary Sources

9. September 16: Formulating a Research Question

Reading:

King, pp. 236-300

10. September 18: King Stephen: End of the Reign and Assessment

Reading:

King, pp. 301-339

Section II: Interpreting Genre and Content of Primary Sources

11. September 23: **MEET AT CITI in Jackson Library**: Chronicles: Purpose and Use

Half the class will involve a presentation by one of the research Librarians. We will then discuss (in CITI) the assigned readings.

Reading:

Blackboard: Given-Wilson, xix-xxiii and 1-20;

Blackboard: William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, introduction (pp. xvii-xxxiii) and Book 1 (pp. 3-43, but only right-hand pages)

12. September 25: William of Malmesbury and Quiz on King

Reading:

Blackboard: William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, Books 2 and 3 (pp. 45-133, but only right-hand pages)

Due: in-class quiz on King

13. September 30: Henry of Huntingdon

Reading:

Blackboard: Henry of Huntingdon, *History of the English People*, Introduction (pp. xiii-xxxii), Prologue (pp. 3-5 and notes on pp. 121-122), and Book 3 (pp. 65-96, plus explanatory notes at pp. 133-140)

14. October 2: *Gesta Stephani*

Reading:

Blackboard: *Gesta Stephani*, pp. TBA

Due: Exercise in Constructing Research Topics

15. October 7: **MEET AT CITI in Jackson Library**: Charters and Administrative Documents

Half the class will involve a presentation by one of the research Librarians. We will then discuss (in CITI) the assigned readings.

Reading:

Blackboard: King Stephen's 'Coronation' Charters

Blackboard: Charters involving Geoffrey de Mandeville

Blackboard: the Pipe Roll of 1130, excerpt

Blackboard: the Disposition of the King's Household, intro and text

16. October 9: Letters

Reading:

Blackboard: Giles Constable, "Medieval Letters and the Letter Collection of Peter the Venerable," in Constable, ed., *The Letters of Peter the Venerable*, v. 2 (Cambridge, MA, 1967), 1-44.

Blackboard: Selected Letters of St Bernard, from Letters of St Bernard of Clairvaux, tr. Bruno Scott James (Cistercian Publications, 1998), letters 98, 103-106, 133, and 187-205.

October 14: NO CLASS: FALL BREAK

17. October 16: Laws and Court Proceedings and Visit to Special Collections

After discussing the readings in our normal classroom, we will walk as a group to Jackson Library for a quick overview and tour of the Special Collections department (from 1:15-1:45)

Readings:

Blackboard: Excerpts from *English Lawsuits*, pp. 243-245, 247-250, 255-256, 258-262, 265-266, 278-280, 281-286 and 298-301.

18. October 21: Saints' Lives

Reading:

Blackboard: Aelred of Rievaulx, *Life of Saint Edward, King and Confessor*, in *Aelred of Rievaulx: the Historical Works*, tr. Jane P. Freeland (Collegeville, MN: Cistercian Publications, 2003), Introduction (pp. 1-7, 20-35) and text (pp. 125-243).

19. October 23: Vernacular Narratives

Reading

Blackboard: History of William Marshal, selections from *History of William Marshal*, 3 vols., ed. A.J. Holden, tr. S. Gregory, historical notes D. Crouch (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 2002-2006), vol. 1, lines 1-712 (pp. 1-37, right-hand pages only), plus v. 3, p. 3-10, 23-41, and 55-60.

Due: Primary Source Analysis

Part III: Evaluating Scholarship: Historiography and Historical Argumentation

20. October 28: Gender and Power

Reading:

Blackboard: Marjorie Chibnall, "Women in Orderic Vitalis," *Haskins Society Journal* 2 (1990): 105-121.

Susan Johns, *Noblewomen, Aristocracy and Power in the Twelfth-Century Anglo-Norman Realm* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 13-49, 53-80, 195-201.

21. October 30: Stephen and the Bishops

Reading:

Blackboard: Christopher Holdsworth, "The Church," in Edmund King, ed., *The Anarchy of King Stephen's Reign* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 207-229.

Blackboard: Stephen Marritt, "King Stephen and the Bishops", *Anglo-Norman Studies* 24 (2002): 129-144.

22. November 4: Anarchy? A Dispute

Reading:

Blackboard: Graeme J. White, "The Myth of the Anarchy," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 22 (2000), 323-337

Blackboard: Hugh Thomas, "Violent Disorder in King Stephen's England: A Maximum Argument," in *King Stephen's Reign, 1135-1154*, ed. Paul Dalton and Graeme J. White (Boydell, 2008), 139-170.

November 6: No Class. Instructor at Conference

23. November 11: The Problem of Geoffrey de Mandeville

Reading:

Blackboard: R.H.C. Davis, "Geoffrey de Mandeville Reconsidered," *English Historical Review* 79 (1964): 299-307.

Blackboard: J.O. Prestwich, "The Treason of Geoffrey de Mandeville," *English Historical Review* 103 (1988): 283-317 (including comment by R.H.C. Davis at 313-317)

Blackboard: J.O. Prestwich, "Geoffrey de Mandeville: a Further Comment," *English Historical Review* 103 (1988): 960-966

Blackboard: R.H.C. Davis, "Geoffrey de Mandeville: a Final Comment," *English Historical Review* 103 (1988): 967-968

Blackboard: J.O. Prestwich and R.H.C. Davis, "Last Words on Geoffrey de Mandeville," *English Historical Review* 105 (1990): 670-672.

Due: Secondary Source Analysis

24. November 13: The Origins of Chivalry

Reading:

Blackboard: David Crouch, "From *preudhommie* to *chevalerie*," in Crouch, *The Birth of Nobility* (Pearson-Longman, 2005), pp. 29-86.

25. November 18: Government or Lordship?

Reading

Blackboard: Graeme White, "Continuity in Government," in Edmund King, ed., *The Anarchy of King Stephen's Reign* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 117-143.

Blackboard: Thomas Bisson, *The Crisis of the Twelfth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 1-21, 168-181, 269-288.

26. November 20: Assessing King Stephen/Research Topics

Reading

Review: King, 301-339

Blackboard: David Crouch, "The Impact of Stephen's Reign" and "Conclusion", in Crouch, *The Reign of King Stephen* (London: Longman, 1990), 293-342.

Due: Oral Reports, for half of class

27. November 25: Assessing King Stephen/Research Topics

Reading:

Blackboard: Donald Matthew, "Assigning Blame," in Matthew, *King Stephen* (London: Hambledon and London, 2002), 149-195.

Due: Oral Reports, for the other half of the class

Tuesday, December 2: Reading Day

Thursday, December 4, at Noon: **Due: Final Exam**

Friday, December 5, by 5:00: **Due: Final Project**

Academic Integrity Policy

Students are expected to include the following statement on all formal writing submitted for the course: "I have adhered to the UNCG Academic Policy in preparing and submitting this assignment." If you are unfamiliar with the policy, please read it carefully at <http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/complete/>.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is expected at all class meetings. Missing more than 3 class meetings will result in a one-point deduction from the final grade for each subsequent absence.

Additional Requirements and Advice

1. In case later consultation should prove necessary, students should keep copies of all graded assignments until the end of the semester (at least).
2. All course requirements must be completed to receive a grade for the class.

3. Late Work: Assignments are due on the date and at the time listed on the syllabus; if a crisis (such as illness) arises, it is your responsibility to contact me. If you do not contact me, the work (when eventually received) will be penalized, usually at the rate of 1/3 of a letter grade per day.

4. Consultation of websites not assigned on the syllabus: many students feel that they can obtain the “answer” (or even a good interpretation) concerning a historical problem by simply looking it up on the web. While the web has many uses, this is almost invariably a fatal strategy. Looking up someone else’s ideas is no substitute for your own analysis. Some observations from the instructor’s point of view: 1) use of a web-site without citing it is plagiarism, which, if detected, can result in serious academic penalties (see above); 2) instructors can often detect uncited use of a website when either the writing style of the student’s paper changes drastically, or when facts/ideas/dates/people not discussed in class or in any of the assigned readings appear in an assignment. Again, I don’t want to discourage you from gaining more perspectives by using the web. What I’m saying is that ultimately you are being evaluated on your analysis of the assigned readings, not on your ability to plug the ideas of some web site into your essay.

BLACKBOARD SITE

All materials for the course (except for the required books) will be posted on the Blackboard site for the course. This is particularly important for primary sources, for announcements and for E-Reserves. It is a good idea to check the Blackboard site regularly. You can get to our Blackboard here:
<https://blackboard.uncg.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp>.

TECHNOLOGY

1. Email: I prefer to communicate by email (rebarton@uncg.edu). Please be advised, however, that I generally do not check email at night. I will try to respond to all email within 24 hours. If you haven’t had a response by then, try again. On the flip side, I can communicate with you only by your UNCG email account (that is the email linked to Blackboard, for instance); make sure you check your UNCG email regularly.

2. Laptops in the Classroom: Laptops are okay if used for note taking. If I detect that you are using your laptop for other purposes, you will be banned from using it again for the rest of the semester.

3. Phones: Please turn your phones off before class. If your phone rings during class, you will be counted as absent for that class period. If I detect that you are using your phone to text (or surf) you will also be counted as absent for that day. Subsequent offenses will be treated with increasing severity.