

Fall 2015: History 391 (01); (3:3) RI
MW 2-3:15 in MHRA 1206

Historical Skills and Methods

Instructor: Jeff Jones
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Office Hours: M 10-10:50; T 12:-1:15; F 11-11:50 and by appointment

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Course Description

This is a required course for all history majors (except for social studies concentration candidates, who take HIS-430 as the equivalent of it). It fulfills the Research Intensive (RI) marker required for history majors and serves as a prerequisite for the capstone course in the major, the Seminar in Historical Research and Writing (HIS-511). The main goal of HIS-391 is to outline and practice a set of skills students can take with them to other upper-level history classes, especially the capstone course. 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 (i.e., asking Who? When? Where? Why?); 5) identifying the arguments of secondary sources and evaluating those arguments; and more. We will divide the semester into roughly two halves, the first half dealing with the Soviet-Afghan War and the Soviet 1980s as a case study in research methodology, and the second half dealing with the HIS-511 options for the Spring 2016 semester, preparing students for those courses.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to ...

- Analyze historical duration, succession, and change in terms of human agency and larger systems or structures in a wide variety of places and periods.
- Use historical thinking to contextualize and analyze primary and secondary sources representing different points of view.
- Use evidence-based reasoning to interpret the past coherently while developing and presenting an original argument, orally and in writing.
- Critically appraise varying historical arguments and clearly express their own interpretations.
- Think creatively about different kinds of research questions inspired by primary source documents and recognize the kinds of questions that can be addressed by historical research.
- Identify and evaluate appropriate scholarly sources for investigating different kinds of research questions.
- Present research findings in a way that offers audiences a clear understanding of the complexity of the topic and recognizes that writing is integral to the research process.
- Practice history with integrity based on the American Historical Association Standards of Professional Conduct: <http://www.historians.org/pubs/Free/ProfessionalStandards.cfm>
- Use peer review, instructor feedback, self-analysis, and research findings to effectively revise research design and written communication.

Course Materials

- William Kelleher Storey, *Writing History: A Guide for Students*, 5th ed. (Oxford University Press, 2016).
- Films: “Cargo 200” (2007; 89 mins.) directed by Aleksey Balabanov; “The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman” (1974; 110 mins.) directed by John Korty; “Europa/Zentropa” (1991; 112 mins.) directed by Lars von Trier
- Other materials identified below and available online or at the library

Course Activities

- Book Review 10%
- Secondary Source Analysis 10%
- Primary Source Analyses (2 of these at 10% each) = 20%
- Participation 25%
- Oral Report 10%
- Research Proposal for HIS-511 25%

Attendance & Technology Policies: Attendance is *very* important and students are expected to attend all classes. Students with more than 3 unexcused absences or 6 total absences will fail the course; if you have to miss class, let me know beforehand (and/or provide documentation afterward) to have it counted as an excused absence. Technology is welcome in the classroom ***if*** used appropriately; those caught texting, emailing, facebooking, etc. will lose technology privileges.

Book Review: Students will write a review of a title agreed upon at the beginning of the semester dealing with either the Soviet-Afghan War or the Soviet 1980s. Students will locate and identify the title, either a monograph or anthology, they want to review themselves but the selection is subject to approval by the instructor. Students are also encouraged to identify published reviews of the book in major scholarly journals (i.e. *The American Historical Review*; *Slavic Review*; *Russian Review*; etc.) as a starting point. **Your review should be double-spaced, 12-pt. font, and ~750 words (3 pages) in length.** Briefly summarize the main points of the author’s thesis and assess the strengths and weaknesses of the book’s argument. Consider the following questions: What is the author’s thesis? What sources/evidence does the author rely on? Where does the book fit with historiographical trends in the field? How convincing is the author’s interpretation and the book’s overall argument? A hard copy of your review is due in class Monday, September 14. Also, post your book review on Canvas at that time for your classmates to read per the assignment explained below.

Secondary Source Analysis: There will be one graded Secondary Source Analysis (as designated below) worth 10% of the overall course grade. For this assignment you need to locate an article on an ideal HIS-511 topic of your choosing in an academic journal (i.e. *The American Historical Review*; *Journal of American History*; etc.); seek assistance from a reference librarian if necessary. Analyze the article in a written piece, **double-spaced, 12 pt. font, ~500-750 words (2-3 pages) in length:** What is the article about (*briefly* summarize)? What is the author’s argument/thesis? What is the source base for the article? How does the article fit into broader historiographical trends in the field? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the article?

Primary Source Analyses: There will be two graded Primary Source Analysis assignments (as designated below) each worth 10% of the overall course grade. For these assignments students should investigate the assigned documents for depth and meaning in a **double-spaced, 12 pt. font, ~500-750 word (2-3 pages)** written analysis addressing the follow questions: What type of source is this and what is its intended purpose? Who is/are the author(s) of this source and what is its intended audience? Most importantly, as a historian what significant conclusions can one draw based on this/these source(s)?

Participation: Students are expected to be engaged in the course material and to come prepared and ready to discuss course readings, assignments, etc. The Participation grade, which is 25% of the overall course grade, will reflect students' level of engagement in course discussions with an emphasis on *quality* of involvement, *not* quantity. The assigned library quizzes (designated below) are also part of this grade.

Oral Report: The oral reports on the Research Proposal, which comprise 10% of the overall course grade, will be 5-7 minutes in length with an additional 3-5 minutes for discussion. Students are encouraged to visit the Speaking Center for help. [The University Speaking Center](#) provides online services as well as one-on-one tutoring and instructional workshop services designed to help students further develop their oral communication confidence and competence. Assistance is offered in the preparation and delivery of speeches and presentations and development of knowledge and skill in interpersonal, group, or team communication. The Oral Report on the Research Proposal will be graded according to the following criteria:

- 1) Description of topic. Tell us *briefly* what your Research Proposal/Oral Report will focus on and why you chose this topic, i.e. your thesis statement.
- 2) Analysis. The heart of your talk should be a clear summation of what you see as the main points regarding your Research Proposal with specific examples from the written proposal, your research question, key secondary sources as well as the main primary source base you intend to tap for your project.
- 3) Clarity of communication. Convey your points clearly and succinctly.

<p>A = excellent performance on all three criteria. B = above average on all three, or excellent on some tempered by flaws in others. C = average across the board, or above average in part but with significant flaws. D = below average overall performance.</p>

Research Proposal for HIS-511: Although this may change (and we will adjust accordingly), at this time two sections of HIS-511 are scheduled for the Spring 2016 semester: HIS-511a (US) “The Black 70s” by Dr. Watson Jennison; and HIS-511b (Europe) either (to be determined) “The Weimar Republic” or (most likely) “Americans in Germany—Liberators or Occupiers? 1945-1989” by Dr. Emily Levine. Students are to write their Research Proposals based on one of these two course offerings. Specifically, a Research Proposal will consist of an opening paragraph (the “hook”); followed by (1-2) explanatory paragraph(s) explaining the student’s research topic/question with a preliminary hypothesis/argument; a description of the student’s methodology and primary source base; and (1-3) historiographical paragraph(s) identifying the

2-3 key secondary sources dealing with the student's topic, a *brief* summary of the authors' arguments in those secondary accounts, and a clear statement as to how the student's proposed topic offers a different perspective on the proposed research topic. **This part of the proposal should be double-spaced, 12-pt. font, and ~1000-1250 words (4-5 pages) in length.** The rest of the proposal consists of an **Annotated Bibliography** of secondary and primary sources you intend to utilize for your HIS-511 project. For the section on **secondary sources**, list all book titles, book chapters in anthologies, and/or journal articles relevant to your chosen topic *in proper bibliographic format (double-space between listings)* with a brief summary **(3-5 lines, single-space within each listing)** of each title clarifying the author's argument and primary source base (feel free to consult published reviews of the works). For the section on **primary sources**, list all materials you identify relevant to your chosen HIS-511 topic and give a brief description of the source, its relevance to your topic, and how you intend to approach this source base analytically (i.e. what methodology you intend to employ in utilizing this particular source). Thus **the Annotated Bibliography in total should be ~750-1250 words (3-5 pages) in length,** making the **entire Research Proposal ~1750-2500 words (7-10 pages) in length.**

Course Schedule

Monday, August 17. Introduction to the Course

Wednesday, August 19. Introduction to the Course (cont'd): The "Hook"

- Reading for Monday, August 24: Storey, *Writing History: A Guide for Students*; list 5 useful tips from Storey's Guide to discuss in class

Monday, August 24. Writing History: Discussion of Storey's Guide

Wednesday, August 26. Writing History (cont'd)

- Reading for Monday, August 31: Karen Petrone, "[Coming Home Soviet Style: The Reintegration of Afghan Veterans into Soviet Everyday Life](#)" in Chatterjee, Choi; Ransel, David L.; Cavender, Mary; and Petrone, Karen, *Everyday Life in Russia Past and Present* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN: 2015), 350-367; and Alan J. Kuperman, "[The Stinger Missile and U.S. Intervention in Afghanistan.](#)" *Political Science Quarterly* 114 (1999), 219-263.

Monday, August 31. Secondary Sources: Discussion of Readings

- Reading for Wednesday, September 2: Jeff Jones, "[Ideological Reflections of the Cold War: Andrew Eiva, the KGB, and the Soviet-Afghan War](#)" (1st DRAFT); SKIM [Dr. Michael Hunt's comments on the Draft](#) (just look through his comments on the first page and his marginal comments on the draft itself); SKIM [Draft 2](#) of the article for revisions

Wednesday, September 2. Secondary Sources (cont'd): Discussion of Readings

- Assignment for Wednesday, September 9: Per the directions above write a **Secondary Source Analysis** and come to class prepared to discuss the article you chose in detail.

Wednesday, September 9. Secondary Sources (cont'd): Discussion of Journal Articles

Monday, September 14. Secondary Sources (cont'd): Discussion of Journal Articles. **Book Review due in class and also post it on Canvas.**

- Reading for Wednesday, September 16: read the book reviews of 2 classmates (to be assigned in class); print them out and make suggested revisions either on the text itself or in Microsoft Word and bring to class to turn in.

Wednesday, September 16. Secondary Sources (cont'd): Discussion of Book Reviews

Monday, September 21. Secondary Sources (cont'd): Discussion of Book Reviews

Wednesday, September 23. Secondary Sources (cont'd): Discussion of Book Reviews

- Reading for Monday, September 28: [The Report of an Arab Traveler in Kievan Rus](#) by Ibn Fadlan; [My Impressions of Kiev](#) by Jeff Jones

Monday, September 28. Primary Source Analysis: Discussion of Readings

- Assignment for Wednesday, September 30: Per the directions above write a **Primary Source Analysis** (due in class) for these two sources on the Soviet-Afghan War: 1) [Politburo Discussion about the crisis in Herat, Afghanistan, March 17-18, 1979](#); 2) [Informant Report on the Soviet-Afghan War](#)

Wednesday, September 30. Primary Source Analysis (cont'd): Discussion of Readings

- Assignment for Monday, October 5: Per the directions above write a **Primary Source Analysis** (due in class) for these two documents: 1) [KGB Report on Discos in Kiev in 1980](#); 2) [KGB Report on Cafes and Restaurants in Kiev in 1980](#)

Monday, October 5. Primary Source Analysis (cont'd): Discussion of Readings

- Assignment for Wednesday, October 7: write up a 1-2 page preliminary proposal for the topic you want to pursue in HIS-511 and identify several secondary sources and at least some of the *primary sources* you plan to use for the topic.

Wednesday, October 7. Preparing for HIS-511: Discussion of Possible Topics

- Assignment for Wednesday, October 14: Read the library tutorial modules 2, 4 and 6 <http://library.uncg.edu/tutorials/> and do the quizzes at the end of each module.

Wednesday, October 14. Library Day with Kathy Crowe: Locating Secondary Sources. Meet in the UNCG Library in the CITI lab across from the Check-Out Desk on the First Floor.

- Assignment for Monday, October 19: Read the library tutorial [primary vs secondary sources](#).

Monday, October 19. Library Day with Kathy Crowe: Locating Primary Sources. Meet in the UNCG Library in the CITI lab across from the Check-Out Desk on the First Floor.

Wednesday, October 21. (If Necessary) Signing up for HIS-511: Advising Center

Monday, October 26. Film as a Historical Source: "Cargo 200"

Wednesday, October 28. Film as a Historical Source: "Cargo 200" (cont'd)

Monday, November 2. Film as a Historical Source: “The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman”

Wednesday, November 4. Film as a Historical Source: “The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman” (cont’d)

Monday, November 9. Film as a Historical Source: “Europa/Zentropa”

Wednesday, November 11. Film as a Historical Source: “Europa/Zentropa” (cont’d)

Monday, November 16. TBD

Wednesday, November 18. Oral Reports on Research Proposals

Monday, November 23. Oral Reports on Research Proposals

Monday, November 30. Oral Reports on Research Proposals

Monday, December 7 3:30-6:30 Oral Reports on Research Proposals

- **Final Research Proposals for HIS-511 project due in class**