Principles and Practices of Teaching History

COURSE GUIDE

History 440          Spring 2010
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Scope of the Course

According to the American Historical Association (AHA), we face a challenge and a responsibility as history educators in contemporary society. “The history taught in classrooms and presented in books and articles too often lacks energy and imagination. As a consequence, many students not only fail to gain a sense of history, they come to dislike it.” The AHA has issued a call to action: “As educational institutions share responsibility for devaluing the past, so also do they have it in their power to restore its value by educating those in their charge to think historically and to use knowledge and understanding of the past to challenge the present and the future.” (See Liberal Learning and the History Major http://www.historians.org/pubs/Free/LiberalLearning.htm)

This course is especially designed for students who are concentrating in social studies and plan to engage in teaching as a career. As an aspiring educator, how will you instill in your students a sense of the value and relevance of thinking historically in the 21st century? How do people learn history? Is there something distinctive about learning history compared to learning other academic subjects? This course will introduce you to the growing scholarship that addresses the distinctive challenges of teaching and learning history as both a subject and a discipline.
Learning Objectives

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

- Explain the importance of historical reasoning for 21st century learners.
- Use research and theory to evaluate how people learn history.
- Design effective learning experiences for history courses paying particular attention to using different types of primary sources, developing information literacy and communication skills, and promoting analytical reading.
- Design assessment strategies to evaluate the effectiveness of student learning based on specific learning objectives.
- Produce a professional portfolio that documents how you conceptualize and operationalize student learning in the subject of history, supported by the scholarship of teaching and learning.

Required Readings

Books: (available at UNCG Bookstore)


Journal Articles and Book Chapters: (available on Bb ereserves, JSTOR, or other journal databases. Use Journal Finder to locate articles not posted on Bb ereserves.)


Evaluation

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit 1: Essay</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 2: Lesson Plans and Learning Experiences</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 3 Assessment Approaches</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation and Teaching Demonstrations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Portfolio</td>
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**Unit Assignments (30%, 10% each)**

You will produce assignments during each unit that essentially represent drafts of elements of the Final Portfolio. You will revise these assignments based on my comments as well as peer review and include your improved work in the Final Portfolio. The Unit 1 essay will evaluate the scholarship about how people learn history and why historical thinking is important. In Unit 2 you will use materials provided on the website Historical Thinking Matters [http://historicalthinkingmatters.org/](http://historicalthinkingmatters.org/) [HTM] to design lesson plans for a US history class. The learning experiences and lesson plans that you develop in Unit 2 will identify student learning objectives and address primary source analysis, information literacy skills, and teaching with historic places. In Unit 3 you will develop assessment strategies to evaluate student learning for the objectives you identified in learning experiences you developed in Unit 2.

**Final Portfolio (60%)**

In addition to revised versions of your unit assignments the Final Portfolio will also contain at least one new lesson plan focusing on primary sources from a site other than Historical Thinking Matters. The overall purpose of the Portfolio is to document how you conceptualize and operationalize student learning in the subject of history, supported by the scholarship of teaching and learning.

**Participation and Teaching Demonstrations (10%)**

This element of the final grade will be assessed based on the following criteria:

1. **Consistent attendance**—This class will operate as a seminar and workshop, not a traditional lecture course. We will be critically evaluating the content of the readings and practicing the application of analytical skills during each class period. You will not be able to make up for your absences by copying someone else’s notes. For this reason, consistent attendance is essential to your learning in this course. **Attendance policy:** there will be a 3% reduction of the student’s final grade for each absence after the first 3. Beyond even this penalty, a student who seriously neglects attendance and preparation risks failing the course. I will take attendance at the beginning of every class. If the
University is closed for snow you will not, of course, be counted absent. If it snows and the University is open, class will be held as scheduled and attendance counts.

2. Thorough preparation for class—Readings must be completed before class and assignments must be turned in on time. Late assignments will be penalized by a 3% reduction in the final assignment grade for every day the assignment is late. Assignments later than one week will not be accepted for credit. It is very important that you make arrangements with me in advance of the due date if you will not be able to meet an assignment deadline in the course.

3. Regular contributions to class discussions—The success of this course for your learning depends on active intellectual engagement with your peers. Discussions will take place during every class meeting in both small group exercises and as a whole class and you will have opportunities throughout the semester to develop your oral communication skills.

4. Team Teaching Demonstration—During Unit 2 you will work as a member of a teaching team to implement two different lessons from the HTM website.

5. Individual Teaching Demonstration—At the end of the semester you will present an overview of your original lesson plan to the class and implement one element of your lesson plan for peer review.

Course Schedule

January 19  Introductions

Unit 1: What Is Historical Thinking and Why Does It Matter?

January 21  Introduction to Historical Thinking Matters
Read:

View Why Historical Thinking Matters: http://historicalthinkingmatters.org/

January 26  History and 21st Century Skills
Read:
AHA, Liberal Learning and the History Major http://www.historians.org/pubs/Free/LiberalLearning.htm

History and 21st Century Skills
http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=254&Itemid=119

January 28  Content vs. Skills
Read:

February 2  How Students Learn History
Read:

February 4  How Students Learn History
Read:

February 9  Essay 1 due.

Unit 2: Designing Effective Learning Experiences to Teach Historical Thinking

February 11  Teaching Historical Thinking
Read:


February 16  Teaching Historical Thinking
Read:

February 18  Challenges for the Teacher
Read:

February 23  Popular Culture and Historical Thinking
Read:
February 25  Demonstration Lesson: Team A. Opening Up the Textbook
Read: http://historicalthinkingmatters.org/ted/lessons/opening/

March 2   Demonstration Lesson: Team B. Making Thinking Visible
Read: http://historicalthinkingmatters.org/ted/lessons/making/

March 4   Information Literacy
AHA Information Literacy Standards posted to Bb.

March 9-11 Spring Break

March 16  HTM: Research Exercises for Broadening and Deepening Student Learning

March 18  Field Trips
Percoco, James A. “Tramping Through History: Crafting Individualized Field Trips
http://teachinghistory.org/teaching-materials/teaching-guides/23480
Teaching with Historic Places: http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/twhp/

March 23  Unit 2 lesson plans due

Unit 3: Assessing Learning

March 25  Multiple Choice vs. Critical Thinking
March 30  Assessing 21st Century Skills  
Read:  
http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/images/stories/otherdocs/Assessment_Landscape.pdf

April 1  Historical Thinking Assessment Case Study  
Read:  
Seixas, Peter. “Benchmarks of Historical Thinking: A Framework for Assessment in Canada.” Centre for 
the Study of Historical Consciousness, UBC, 2006.

April 6  Unit 3 Assessment Approaches due.

The Portfolio

April 8  Portfolio Workshop  
April 13  Portfolio Workshop  
April 15  Presentations  
April 20  Presentations  
April 22  Presentations  
April 27  Presentations  
April 29  Summations and evaluations