

History 709-02 (Spring 2012)
Introductory Research Seminar in US History
“Public Culture in Twentieth-Century America”

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And by appointment

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MHRA 3208
W, 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 first weeks, you will each report on a piece of scholarship that you judge represents some “best practices” of your chosen sub-field. I have strengths in political history, cultural history, social movement history, and the history of the African American freedom movement. By early February, students will be in possession of an important question and a body of sources likely to yield answers. Some of you may already have projects in mind. Others should be willing to be guided by me to a researchable problem that will draw upon rich primary source materials available through Jackson library, local collections, oral histories, or the Internet.

You will each learn how to select a topic, turn that topic into a focused research problem that is compelling to readers, identify pertinent secondary and primary sources, present your hypotheses and findings both orally and in writing, and constructively criticize the work of your peers.

I have scheduled a step-by-step process: choosing a topic; learning relevant historiography; identifying primary sources; compiling a bibliography; formulating working hypotheses; drawing up an early draft; peer-reviewing; and revising the final draft. Paper topics may vary widely, but you all face similar challenges of researching and writing a piece of original scholarship, so the effort will also be collaborative.

Course Student 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 research orally as well as in written form.

Constructively criticize the work of your 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:

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.

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 on Amazon.com. (Also MUS 333 in the bookstore may have extras). I also placed an order with the bookstore.

Assessment and Evaluation

Process: 25%

This includes the quality and timeliness of your interim exercises toward production of the final draft: Blackboard posts on assigned readings; preliminary statement of topic interests; proposal with annotated bibliography with working hypotheses; early write-up, and first draft. These all incorporate proven principles into your research process: write, write, and write. Writing is not something you reserve for the end of "research," but is integral to the process of discovery, your 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 (which should be thorough and mix positive and critical assessment). By no means should you miss a class unless in the most dire emergencies.

Each of you will give a 5 minute presentation of an article-length scholarly work that you would use as a model for your own (I will stop you at 5 minutes because we will want some discussion). 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 Chicago Manual of Style, 15e. This is due electronically and in hard copy the department on May1 at 5:00 PM.

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 major 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? Give one example. What analytical terms frame the analysis? What are the main sources yielding evidence?

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 (Or, The Scholastic Fishing Trip)

1/11: Introductions

Assignment, in the next 2 days: Informal Intellectual Autobiography on the Blackboard Discussion Board

On Blackboard please write 300-400 words about how you got here, what kind of history and scholars and history writers inspired you, and general or specific interests and topics you imagine you might like to focus on.

Source Tutorial: Jackson Library: Subject Guides-> History->Jackson 340, 332, 511A

1/18: Charting the Warmer Currents – From Interests to Topics to Problems and Questions

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

Common Readings: Individual Lives--Contesting Accepted Narratives (Or, Biography Can Be Your Friend)

Assignment: Read two out of the three paired sets of articles that follow. (all on Blackboard under “Course Documents”). In each case be prepared to talk about the “accepted narratives” (popular or historiographical) that these pieces of scholarship are challenging. Post on Blackboard your 400 word reflections on how historians reinterpret the past in light of new or reconsidered evidence.

1. 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.

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)

2. 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).

Nasstrom, Kathryn. "Beginnings and Endings: Life Stories and the Periodization of the Civil Rights Movement." *Journal of American History* 86, no. sept (1999): 700-11.

3. Jackson, Thomas F. *From Civil Rights to Human Rights : Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Struggle for Economic Justice*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007, selections from chs. 1 and 2.

Robin D.G. Kelley, “The Riddle of the Zoot: Malcolm Little and Black Cultural Politics during World War II,” in *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class* (New York, 1994), 161-181, notes 275-281.

Recommended:

Daniel Matlin, "'Lift Up Yr Self!' Reinterpreting Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones), Black Power, and the Uplift Tradition," *Journal of American History* 93.1 (June 2006) 91-116.

David Brion Davis, "World War II and Memory," *Journal of American History* 77: 2 (Sep. 1990), pp. 580-587.

Student Best Practices Reports, 1-4

1/25: Sounding the Depths and Casting the Nets -- Finding Sources and Imagining Results

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

Common Readings: Varieties of Public Culture

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.

Glassberg, David. *Sense of History: The Place of the Past in American Life*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001. Ch. 2 "Remembering a War," 25-57. Ereserves*

Assignment: Pick 2 of the above and comment in 300-400 words on Blackboard regarding how their methodology connects individual experience and collective cultural change. Crucially, how did they find the sources that informed their insights, and turn them into evidence?

Recommended:

Roeder, George H. "Filling in the Picture: Visual Culture." *Reviews in American History* 26, no. 1, Special Issue: The Challenge of American History (1998): 275-93.

Roeder, George H. "Censoring Disorder: American Visual Imagery of World War II." In *The War in American Culture: Society and Consciousness During World War II*, edited by Lewis A. Erenberg and Susan E. Hirsch, 46-70. Chicago, 1996.

Student Best Practice Reports, 5-8

1/27, Friday: Historiographical Review Assignment –Read one of the many historiographical articles I listed in a bibliography of historiographical essays posted on Blackboard. Write and post on Blackboard 300 words regarding 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. I'm hoping these help you find best practices. Remember: usually if someone has written a well-received book, there is a scholarly article that preceded it, as a kind of "warm up."

2/1: Assaying the Shipwrecks and Avoiding the Sharks

Come prepared to discuss your progress toward identifying a topic and problem, 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.

Media and History: Race and Poverty 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.

Mantler, Gordon. "'The Press Did You In': The Poor People's Campaign and the Mass Media." *The Sixties* 3, no. 1 (2010): 33-54.

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.

Post a 300 word commentary on how historians can use the media in analyzing history as well as analyze media as a powerful social and cultural institution.

Student Best Practice Reports, 9-12

2/3: Friday: "A Bite"!

Assignment: Preliminary Topic Description. Each of you should write up and post on Blackboard a brief description of a possible (non-binding) topic (300 words) with the following information: a) Tentative title of the proposed study. b) A brief description of the topic including its significance and a justification for the beginning and ending dates of your study. c) Briefly list or describe several *accessible* primary sources that might be relevant for your study—e.g. newspapers, memoirs, archival material, oral histories, online sources. d) Identify any influential secondary works on your topic and suggest how this study might 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.

2/8: Trawling Together -- An Abundance of Marine Life

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

Assignment TBA, will depend on class needs and interests.

Student Best Practice Reports, 13-16.

Formation of Teams of 3-4 People with Common Interests

2/13, Monday: The Proposal! With Annotated Bibliography and Working Hypotheses. Pose a focused, researchable, and significant question. 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 sources (only those findings pertinent to your questions, not a complete overview). 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. (Don't list individual news articles however, just the range of newspapers and magazines consulted). **Formulate some working hypotheses that will help you gather relevant research notes.**

2/15: Snagged Line and Beached Boats—Getting Unstuck and Back into the Deep Waters

Discussions and Peer Reviews in Groups

2/22: On Our Own -- Navigating the Depths -- Conferences with Professor and Teammates

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

Class will meet only if needed.

2/27 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) A survey of the evidence you are using to research and solve your historical problem, with some discussion of on piece of key evidence.
- c) A brief summary of the most important scholarly literature on your topic with a clear indication of how that literature helped you pose your question.

2/29: 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.

3/14: No Class -- Conferences

3/21: No Class -- Conferences

3/28: No Class -- Conferences

4/2, Monday: FIRST DRAFTS DUE! Four 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.

4/4: 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.

4/11: 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.

4/18: Diving Trophies -- Presentation of Key Findings

Believe it or not, the last class.

Tuesday May 1: 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!