

Spring 2014 | University of North Carolina, Greensboro
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Office Hours: Mondays, 11:00 - 12:00, Wednesdays, 3:30 - 4:30, and by appointment

HIS 709: Introductory Research Seminar 19th-Century American South Course Syllabus

Although the nineteenth-century American South has often been portrayed as a place stuck in time, the reality, as scholars have increasingly come to see, was far more complex and dynamic. Over the course of this transformative century, the region experienced the forced expulsion of the Native American population, the arrival of hundreds of thousands of white migrants and enslaved black laborers, the westward expansion of slavery, the Civil War and emancipation, Reconstruction, and the rise of the New South and Jim Crow. The political, social, and economic trends and controversies that emerged during this time had a profound impact not only on the region but on the nation as a whole. In this course, students will write an article-length paper that examines a problem of their choosing from this critical period in American history.

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Apply standards of historical scholarship.
- Interpret primary sources in their historical context with an attention to issues of perspective and reliability.
- Analyze secondary sources in terms of arguments, assumptions, methods, and sources.
- Formulate historical questions and arguments, support historical arguments with credible evidence, and communicate the results of historical research.

Calculation of Grade

- Participation (25%): Students should be prepared to discuss the readings and the coursework on the day that they are assigned. Attendance alone is not sufficient for full participation credit; students must actively participate in discussions and peer review. Students will also serve as peer reviewers.
- Preliminary Assignments for Research Paper (25%): Students are required to complete preliminary assignments related to the research paper.
- Research Paper (50%): Students are required to complete a 25- to 30-page research paper on a significant historical topic based upon primary source research.

Required Readings

All of the assigned readings will be available on Blackboard. Although it is not required for this course, I strongly recommend that all students purchase a copy of 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), or a more recent edition of the volume.

Class Schedule

The schedule is subject to change with appropriate notice.

01: Wednesday, January 15: Introduction

02: Wednesday, January 22: Historical Method

Reading Assignment:

- American Historical Association, sects. 1-4 in "Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct," <http://www.historians.org/pubs/Free/ProfessionalStandards.cfm>
- Edward L. Ayers, "What We Talk About When We Talk About the South," in *All Over the Map: Rethinking American Regions* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 62-82
- Claudio Saunt, "Telling Stories: The Political Uses of Myth and History in the Cherokee and Creek Nation," *Journal of American History* 93, no. 3 (December 2006): 673-697
- Joshua D. Rothman, "The Hazards of Flush Times: Gambling, Mob Violence, and the Anxieties of America's Market Revolution," *Journal of American History* 95, no. 3 (December 2008): 651-677

03: Wednesday, January 29: Evidence

Reading Assignment:

- Stephanie McCurry, "Two Faces of Republicanism: Gender and Proslavery Politics in Antebellum South Carolina," *Journal of American History* 78, no. 4 (March 1992): 1245-1264
- Anthony Kaye, "Neighborhoods and Solidarity in the Natchez District of Mississippi: Rethinking the Antebellum Slave Community," *Slavery & Abolition: A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies* 23, no. 1 (April 2002): 1-24
- Suzanne Lebsock, *The Free Women of Petersburg: Status and Culture in a Southern Town, 1784-1860* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1984), 54-86

04: Wednesday, February 5: Annotated Bibliography of Primary Sources (No Class)

Writing Assignment:

- Research Paper - Annotated Bibliography of Primary Sources (minimum of two pages and target range of two to three pages; email to the professor by class time): Compiling an annotated bibliography of relevant primary

sources facilitates the identification of gaps in your research. Annotate your sources by including for each entry a brief description of the set of sources as well as a brief explanation of the relevance of the set of sources to your historical interests and questions.

05: Wednesday, February 12: Historiography

Reading Assignment:

- W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880* (New York: Atheneum, 1992 reprint), 711-729
- "Forum: The Future of Civil War Era Studies," <http://journalofthecivilwarera.com/forum-the-future-of-civil-war-era-studies/> (read the introduction by Stephen Berry as well as the contributions by the other eight scholars)

Writing Assignment:

- Research Paper - Topic (target range of 1 to 2 pages; submit one copy in class): Detail your main topic of study, main historical question(s), main historical actor(s) under study, time frame of your proposed paper, and general primary source evidence base.

06: Wednesday, February 19: Research (No Class)

Friday, February 21: Proposals

Reading Assignment:

- Kate L. Turabian, "Planning Your Argument" and "Planning a First Draft," *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 48-70.
- John M. Swales and Christine B. Feak, "Constructing a Research Paper II," in *Academic Writing for Graduate Students: Essential Tasks and Skills*, 2nd ed. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 242-286.

Writing Assignment:

- Research Paper - Proposal (minimum of five pages and target range of five to seven pages; email to professor by noon): Your proposal must lay out the parameters of your paper in three sections that address the following questions: [1] Topic: What is your main topic of study? Why is your topic significant? What is/are the main historical question(s) that you will explore in your paper? Who is/are the main historical actor(s) under study? What is the time frame of your proposed paper? [2] Historiography: What arguments do other historians make about your topic? How do you position yourself within this debate? [3] Primary Sources: What specific primary

source evidence will you employ to support your argument? How might your primary source evidence be biased or limited?

07: Wednesday, February 26: Feedback on Proposals (Individual Meetings)

Monday, March 3: Primary Source Analysis

Writing Assignment:

- Research Paper - Primary Source Analysis (minimum of one page and target range of one to two pages; deliver one copy to 2143 MHRA by noon): Prepare a brief excerpt from a primary source related to the research paper. The primary source must be interpretively rich, meaning that it must contain historically significant themes, perspectives, arguments, and/or debates. Write a paragraph that analyzes the primary source and specifically advances an argument related to the research paper. Attach a copy of the primary source to the primary source analysis.

08: Wednesday, March 5: Feedback on Primary Source Analysis (Individual Meetings)

09: Wednesday, March 12: Spring Break (No Class)

10: Wednesday, March 19: Narrative Outlines (No Class)

Writing Assignment:

- Research Paper - Narrative Outline (minimum of seven pages and target range of seven to ten pages; deliver one copy to 2143 MHRA by noon): The narrative outline should include drafts of the introduction (including paragraphs that present the historiographical intervention) as well as paragraphs explaining your main arguments in the main sections. The narrative outline should reflect the logic of the argument. The sections of the narrative outline should clearly relate and each section should advance the argument. For each section and/or sub-section, identify the relevant primary and secondary sources. In creating the outline, students should think about holes in the argument and how they might address them. Consider counterarguments that could possibly undermine the argument. Refine the narrative outline to take these counterarguments into account, either by countering the counterargument preemptively or by refining the argument.

11: Wednesday, March 26: Feedback on Narrative Outlines (Individual Meetings)

Reading Assignment:

- Kate L. Turabian, "Drafting Your Report," *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 71-81.

Monday, March 31: Drafts, Group 1

Writing Assignment:

- Research Paper - Draft (minimum of twenty pages and target range of twenty-five to thirty pages; post on Blackboard by noon): Consult instructions for paper requirements for class 16. Students should strive to submit as complete a draft as possible, but they are not required to submit a full draft. The draft must address a non-specialist audience of educated adults and present necessary background information where relevant to make the paper relatively self-contained and comprehensible; include an introduction which lays out the relevant scholarship and situates the approach, topic, and argument within the existing scholarship; present the results of the primary source research; and if incomplete, provide a clear sense of the future direction of your paper with an outline and description of future sections. Keep in mind: the more complete your draft, the better the feedback and the better the final product.

12: Wednesday, April 2: Peer Review of Drafts, Group 1

Writing Assignment:

- Research Paper - Two Reviews of Drafts (minimum of one page each and target range of one to two pages each; submit one copy to the professor and one copy to the author in class): You will review your own draft as well as two others. In your review, consider the following questions: On argument: What is the author's main argument? What paragraph best encapsulates the author's argument? (Highlight this passage in the draft.) What are the strengths and weaknesses of the author's argument? Does the author's argument seem too simplistic, obvious, or ahistorical? Does the author make a case for the originality of his or her work? Does the author lay out the relevant historiography? Does the author situate himself or herself within the relevant historiography? On evidence: What are the strengths and weaknesses of the author's evidence base? What points need additional evidence? How original are the author's interpretations? To what extent does the author rely upon secondary sources? To what extent does the author rely on primary sources? On organization and clarity: Is the paper well organized? What is the organizational strategy? What are the main sections and section arguments? Does the author adopt the best organization for his or her argument? What points need clarification? Are all portions of the paper relevant to the author's main argument? On grammar and style: Are there any recurring grammatical or stylistic problems? (Identify recurring grammatical and stylistic problems, but DO NOT correct

every grammatical and stylistic mistake.) Offer additional comments and suggestions concerning argument, organization, sources, grammar, and style where relevant. Note on the paper any passage, concept, argument, or organization that does not make sense to you as a reader. These are peer reviews, so the tone of your review should indicate that you regard the author as an equal. Be critical, but constructive. Most important, be HONEST.

Monday, April 7: Drafts, Group 2

Writing Assignment:

- See instructions above.

13: Wednesday, April 9: Peer Review of Drafts, Group 2

Writing Assignment:

- See instructions above.

14: Wednesday, April 16: Revisions (Individual Meetings)

Reading Assignment:

- Kate L. Turabian, "Revising Your Draft," "Writing Your Final Introduction and Conclusion," and "Revising Sentences," *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 102-119.

15: Wednesday, April 23: Presentations

Presentation Assignment:

- Research Paper - Presentation (minimum of 5 minutes and target range of 5 to 7): Your presentation should convey to your audience the main points of your paper, including your argument and your main evidence. Your presentation should last no more than 7 minutes. Write out and rehearse your presentation beforehand to stay within this time limit. Your presentation will be graded according to the following criteria: adherence to presentation requirements, preparedness and preparation, the content of the presentation, and the clarity of the presentation.

16: Wednesday, April 30: Final Paper

Writing Assignment:

- Research Paper - Final (minimum of twenty-five pages and target range of twenty-five to thirty pages, excluding notes; submit one copy in class): The research paper must meet the following requirements: address a significant question related to nineteenth-century southern history; follow historical

methodologies and adhere to standards of historical scholarship; engage concepts, arguments, and information from secondary sources; identify, analyze, and assess the relevant historiography and advance a historiographical argument; be an original research paper on a significant historical question, relying on primary sources as the main evidence base and not simply summarizing known facts or interpretations; be properly footnoted and include an updated bibliography of all consulted resources.