

Carolina Patriot, Greensborough, NC, April 13, 1838

Historical Skills and Methods

COURSE GUIDE*

HIS 391/WI/RI

Spring 2017

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Hours: by appointment gladly given

**Note that this syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Any necessary changes in the syllabus or course schedule will prioritize effectiveness for student learning.*

Course Overview and Learning Outcomes

This course is about the thrill of discovery—asking questions, figuring out what happened, making a case about what it means. You will learn firsthand how history is constructed by doing it! Along the way we will use a variety of research resources including manuscripts, reference sources, monographs, scholarly journals, the internet, and repositories such as the Library of Congress. This semester you will develop a case study project based on runaway slave ads in nineteenth-century North Carolina newspapers. The ultimate goal of the course is to develop skills and knowledge about the historical research process that you can apply in new situations to evaluate new kinds of historical content. By the time you finish this course you will be well-prepared to be successful in History 511. You will practice all of the steps of historical research from beginning to end, including—asking good research questions, locating appropriate resources for addressing your questions, designing a manageable topic focus that is historically significant, practicing accurate citation methods, and analysis and synthesis of historical evidence in a mini-research paper that will give you experience in disciplinary standards for reporting original research findings.

This course may be about how we know what happened in the past, but it is also directly relevant to what is going on in the world you live in today. You will learn how a historical research database is created from identifying the original sources to presenting them on a website. Your research this semester will empower you to navigate the increasing challenges of evaluating sources of information in the digital age.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to demonstrate the following knowledge, skills, and habits of mind:

1. Inquiry and Creativity: Think creatively about different kinds of research questions inspired by primary source documents.
2. Courage and Historical Thinking: Ask interesting questions whose answers you don't know and recognize the kinds of questions that can be addressed by historical research.
3. Analysis: Contextualize primary source documents in different ways; interpret different types of primary sources.
4. Research: Identify and evaluate appropriate scholarship and primary sources for investigating different kinds of research questions. Use research results to improve your questions.
5. Synthesis and communication: Present research findings in a variety of professional formats that offer audiences a clear understanding of the complexity of the topic, and recognize how writing is integral to the research process.
6. Professional Ethics: Practice history with integrity based on the American Historical Association Standards of Professional Conduct:
<http://www.historians.org/pubs/Free/ProfessionalStandards.cfm>
7. Critical Thinking: Use peer review, instructor feedback, self-analysis, and research findings to effectively revise research design and written communication.
8. Collaboration: Work effectively in collaborative teams for peer review to improve research design and communication of research findings at different stages in the research process.

Writing and the Historical Research Process

It is appropriate that you will be earning writing intensive credit for this course. Not because of the sheer volume of writing you will be doing. But because writing is so integral to the research and discovery process in the discipline of history. From the skills of effective note-taking and accurate transcription in the initial data collection process, to the first stages of analysis when you begin to identify patterns in what your evidence shows, to the ultimate interpretation of what the evidence means, different kinds of writing are essential for every stage of the research process. You will practice all of these forms of writing as your research develops. Along the way you will be learning to engage in peer review of writing as an important tool for sharpening your thinking about what your evidence means. Look for all of the different ways that writing works in the research process so that you can use those strategies in your research later in the history major.



Assignments

Unit 1 Assignment (15%): Collecting Data

Scan and Transcribe Runaway Slave Ads

Unit 2 Assignment (25%): Preliminary analysis of patterns in the data

Evaluate Authority of runaway ads as historical evidence (consider history of newspapers, authorship)

of ads, impact of digitization); Data Collection Sheet with Transcriptions

Unit 3 Assignment (30%): Research Design

Annotated Bibliography: design a research focus for contextualizing runaway slave ads.

(must include 2 different kinds of primary sources besides the ads; and about 7-10 secondary sources; at least one book; at least one journal article)

Unit 4 Assignment (30%): Historical Interpretation

Write a 1500 word analysis of your runaway slave ads using at least 2 secondary sources and one primary source from your bib.

Discussion Board assignments are “graded” as complete/incomplete. They are designed to practice the kind of informal writing that is an important part of the research process.

A note on gauging your mid-semester grade status: I will submit regular reports through Starfish. Almost half of the grade for this course will be completed before spring break. The assignments are designed to foster steady development of your research process throughout the semester. There will be regular opportunities for peer review and instructor feedback on your written work.



Course Policies

Participation and Attendance Policy

1. Consistent attendance— Attendance is mandatory. This is a seminar, 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. I will take attendance at the beginning of every class. You must attend at least one hour of the class period to be counted for full attendance for the class. If the University is closed for inclement weather 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. In the event that I am unable to attend class due to unforeseen circumstances I will distribute an email message and post an announcement to Canvas at least two hours (if possible) before class is scheduled to begin. Documentation for absences will not be collected except in cases where an extended absence may be necessary (for example, hospitalization). **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 class preparation risks failing the course. If you are experiencing a personal crisis that requires you to miss more than 2 classes, please let me know *at that time* (not afterwards). Practice the kind of responsible communication and professional behavior you will be expected to demonstrate as a teacher.
2. Thorough preparation for class— readings must be completed before class and assignments must be turned in on time, including ungraded Discussion Board postings. **Failure to submit Discussion Board postings by the deadline will result in 2 points subtracted from your Unit Assignment for each**

skipped Discussion Board assignment. Postings must be complete and must fully address the question for credit.

3. Regular contributions to class discussions— participation is not formally graded as a specific percentage of the final grade but the success of this course for your learning depends on active intellectual engagement with your peers. Peer review will be integral to development of your archive project.

Academic Integrity

UNCG considers academic dishonesty to be a serious offense. Dishonest behavior in any form, including cheating, plagiarism, deception of effort, and unauthorized assistance, may result in such sanctions as a failing grade on an assignment or failure in the course depending on the nature of the offense. Students must follow the guidelines of the University Policy on Academic Integrity: <http://sa.uncg.edu/handbook/academic-integrity-policy/>

Electronic Communication

Students are responsible for checking UNCG email on a regular basis to keep up with communications sent outside of class time. Students are encouraged to utilize email and other forms of digital communication when interacting with the instructor (lctolber@uncg.edu). When using email, students are to be professional and courteous. Students should also remember email is an asynchronous form of communication. Thus, while a prompt response may be desired, it may not always be possible (especially late at night and on weekends). Students should allow at least 24 hours (48 hours on weekends) for a response. That said, the instructor answers emails in the timeliest fashion possible.

Late Assignment Penalty

Meeting deadlines is an essential element of professional behavior. Please note that *unless arrangements have been made well in advance of due dates*, graded assignments will be penalized by a **3% reduction in the final assignment grade for every day the assignment is late**. Graded assignments later than one week will not be accepted for credit without an extremely impressive explanation. Using effective quantitative reasoning, your grade average can recover from an F on an individual assignment more successfully than it can recover from a "0". It is better to turn in an incomplete assignment on time than to turn in nothing at all. As explained in the participation policy above, late Discussion Board assignments will not receive credit.



Readings:

Historical Research Methods:

Presnell, Jenny L. *The Information-Literate Historian: A Guide to Research for History Students*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. Please bring this book to class every day. We will consult it regularly.

Rampolla, Mary Lynn. *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*. NY: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2012. This book will serve as the style standard for the final paper. It is based on Turabian style.

Historical Contexts:

Blackwood, Sarah. "Fugitive Obscura: Runaway Slave Portraiture and Early Photographic Technology."

American Literature. Vol. 81, No. 1 (March 2009): 93-125.

- Cordell, Ryan. "Reprinting, Circulation, and the Network Author in Antebellum Newspapers," *American Literary History*, vol. 27, no. 3 (Fall 2015): pp. 417-445.
- Costa, Tom. "What Can We Learn from a Digital Database of Runaway Slave Advertisements?" *International Social Science Review* Vol. 76, Nos. 1 & 2 (January 2001): 36-43.
- Franklin, John Hope and Loren Schweninger. "Profile of a Runaway." In *Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation*, pp. 209-233. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Gordon, Asa H. "The Struggle of the Negro Slaves for Physical Freedom." *Journal of Negro History* 13 (January 1928): 22-35.
- Greer, Matthew C. "Bundles, Passes, and Stolen Watches: Interpreting the Role of Material Culture in Escape." *Southern Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal of the South* 21 (1) Spring/Summer 2014: 87-96.
- Parker, Freddie L. "Slaveowners, Runaways, and the Law." In *Running for Freedom: Slave Runaways in North Carolina, 1775-1840*, pp. 29-64.. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc. 1993.
- White, Shane and Graham White. "Slave Clothing and African-American Culture in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries." *Past & Present*, No. 148 (August 1995): 149-186.

Internet Resources:

UNCG Runaway Slave Ad Database: <http://libcdm1.uncg.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/RAS>



RUN away from the subscriber
in *Albemarle*, a Mulatto slave called *Sandy*,
about 35 years of age, his stature is rather low,
inclining to corpulence, and his complexion light;
he is a shoemaker by trade, in which he uses his
left hand principally, can do coarse carpenters
work, and is something of a horse jockey; he is
greatly addicted to drink, and when drunk is info-
lent and disorderly, in his conversation he swears
much, and in his behaviour is artful and knavish. He took with
him a white horse, much scarred with traces, of which it is ex-
pected he will endeavour to dispose; he also carried his shoe-
makers tools, and will probably endeavour to get employment that
way. Whoever conveys the said slave to me, in *Albemarle*, shall
have 40 s. reward, if taken up within the county, 4 l. if elsewhere
within the colony, and 10 l. if in any other colony, from
THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Virginia Gazette, Williamsburg, September 14, 1769



Schedule

January 17 Introductions

Unit 1: Data Collection

Objectives:

- Introduction to the research methodology and aims of professional historians.
- Evaluating how primary source databases are constructed—what decisions are made when primary sources are digitized? How do those decisions affect interpretation of the sources?
- Handwriting and newsprint: challenges of reading and transcribing original documents.
- Language: changes in meaning of words and phrases; slang, resources for deciphering cryptic language.
- Extracting Information and Evidence from the records: understanding differences in information and evidence; inferring evidence and drawing conclusions; defining historical significance.
- Following the Leads: uncovering the clues in documents that lead to other sources; creative thinking for moving to the next phase of research.
- Differences between primary and secondary sources; varieties of primary and secondary source materials

Date	Topic	Reading Assignment
1/19	Introduction to the Runaway Slave Ad Project	Presnell, 1. Historians and the Research Process: Getting Started UNCG Runaway Slave Ad Database: http://libcdm1.uncg.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/RAS
1/24	Text, Context, and Subtext: The Nature of Historical Evidence	Presnell, 6. The Thrill of Discovery: Primary Sources How to read a runaway slave ad Asking research questions
1/26	Library Workshop: Intro to the data collection process	Meet in the Library CitiLab (led by David Gwynn and Richard Cox)
1/30	Discussion Board: Post your discussion board assignment by noon on 1/30. Late assignments cannot be accepted for credit. Compare the following runaway slave ad sites: How are the slave ads presented? What date range is included? What geographic area is covered? Are some of these databases more reliable than the others? Why or why not?	

	<p>UNCG Runaway Slave Ad Database: http://libcdm1.uncg.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/RAS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freedom on the Move: http://freedomonthemove.org/ • The Geography of Slavery: http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/gos/browse/browse_main.php • Texas Runaway Slave Project: http://digital.sfasu.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/RSP • Runaway Slave Advertisements: http://americato1877.blogspot.com/p/runaway-slave-advertisements.html • Documenting Runaway Slaves: http://aquila.usm.edu/drs/ • Southern US Slave Advertisements: http://www.accessible-archives.com/2011/05/10-southern-us-slave-advertisements/ 	
1/31	Deadline for signing up for Microfilm Orientation	
Date	Topic	Reading Assignment
1/31	Evaluating Primary Source Databases	Costa, Tom. "What Can We Learn from a Digital Database of Runaway Slave Advertisements?" <i>International Social Science Review</i> Vol. 76, Nos. 1 & 2 (January 2001): 36-43.
2/1	<p style="text-align: center;">Post your response to the Discussion Board by noon on 2/1.</p> <p>What can you learn about the history of Runaway Slaves from reference sources? Evaluate the relative authority of these two reference sources by explaining which source is more reliable and why. In your Discussion Board posting list the specific criteria you used to evaluate the relative authority of these two reference sources. Use the assigned reading to identify appropriate criteria.</p> <p>Fugitive slaves in the United States: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fugitive_slaves_in_the_United_States</p> <p>http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Runaway_Slaves_and_Servants_in_Colonial_Virginia#start_entry</p>	
2/2	Wikipedia and Beyond: The Value and Limits of Reference Resources	<p>Presnell, 2. Reference Resources</p> <p>Rosenzweig, Roy. "Can History be Open Source? Wikipedia and the Future of the Past." http://chnm.gmu.edu/essays-on-history-new-media/essays/?essayid=42. This article was originally published in <i>The Journal of American History</i> Volume 93, Number 1 (June, 2006): 117-46 and is reprinted by the Center for History and New Media with permission.</p>
2/17	Unit 1 Assignment due. This assignment is worth 15% of the final grade.	Data collection sheet due with transcriptions. Your scanning and transcription work should be completed in time to make this deadline.

Unit 2: Data Analysis

Objectives:

- Context and Authority: evaluating the context in which a source was created — who, what, why, how, and when; questioning the creator’s motives, biases, and reliability as a source.
- Close Reading.
- Developing effective research questions. Revising your questions based on research results.
- Delineating the project’s scope; defining topic; and outlining sources needed for project
- Effective notetaking strategies.
- Historiography: assessing historians’ agreements and disagreements about what the evidence means.

Date	Topic	Reading Assignment
2/7	Nineteenth-century newspapers as evidence	Cordell, Ryan. “Reprinting, Circulation, and the Network Author in Antebellum Newspapers,” <i>American Literary History</i> , vol. 27, no. 3 (Fall 2015): pp. 417-445. Blackwood, Sarah. “Fugitive Obscura: Runaway Slave Portraiture and Early Photographic Technology.” <i>American Literature</i> . Vol. 81, No. 1 (March 2009): 93-125.
2/8	Discussion Board Assignment Use the Cordell and Blackwood readings to write a paragraph evaluating the authority of a runaway slave ad example. Post your paragraph to the Discussion Board by noon on 2/8.	
2/9	Sourcing Newspapers: Evaluating the Authority of Runaway Slave Ads	Peer Review of Discussion Board drafts.
2/14	Scales of Historical Context: Runaway Slaves in the South	Franklin, John Hope and Loren Schweninger. “Profile of a Runaway.” In <i>Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation</i> , pp. 209-233. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
2/16	Scales of Historical Context: Runaway Slaves in North Carolina	Parker, Freddie L. “Slaveowners, Runaways, and the Law.” In <i>Running for Freedom: Slave Runaways in North Carolina, 1775-1840</i> , pp. 29-64.. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc. 1993. Presnell, 10. Statistics: Quantifying History
2/17	Unit 1 Assignment due. This assignment is worth 15% of the final grade.	Data collection sheet due with transcriptions. Your scanning and transcription work should be completed in time to make this deadline.
Date	Topic	Reading Assignment
2/21	Historiography How have historians’ interpretations of runaway slaves changed over time? Why should we care?	Gordon, Asa H. "The Struggle of the Negro Slaves for Physical Freedom." <i>Journal of Negro History</i> 13 (January 1928): 22-35.
2/22	Discussion Board draft due by noon on 2/22. Instructions TBA. This assignment will be a draft of some part of your Unit 2 assignment.	

2/23	Writing Workshop: Close Reading, Patterns in the Slave Ads Developing Research Questions Anatomy of a Research Paper	(use the data collection results to generate research questions and sort them by type and purpose) Presnell, pp. 308-318, Case Study—A Student Paper: 'Americans and the Bomb'
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3/3 **Unit 2. Preliminary Data Analysis due. This assignment is worth 25% of the final grade.**

Unit 3: Research Design/Contextualizing Runaway Slave Ads

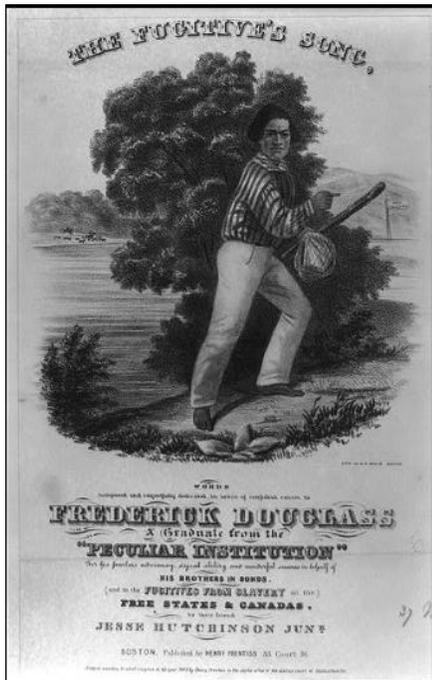
Objectives:

- Constructing historical context using primary and secondary sources.
- Locating appropriate resources:
 - Search strategies: listing terms, continuous refinement of topic and search strategies, using online catalogs and search engines.
 - Using finding aids: navigating the description and arrangement of a collection.
 - Evaluating the authority of sources including scholarly sources and the provenance of primary sources.
- Using a variety of primary sources to develop historical perspective:
 - Listening: effective use of oral history and other sound recordings; understanding the significant insights gained from hearing rather than reading, including the subtleties of intonation, pitch, volume, pauses, etc.
 - Visual sources: analyzing photographs; recognizing perspective—what images do and do not reveal
 - Digitized primary sources: advantages and disadvantages of armchair research.
 - Historical statistics: challenges of interpreting statistical data including consideration of how the data was collected, for what purpose, and what patterns the data show.

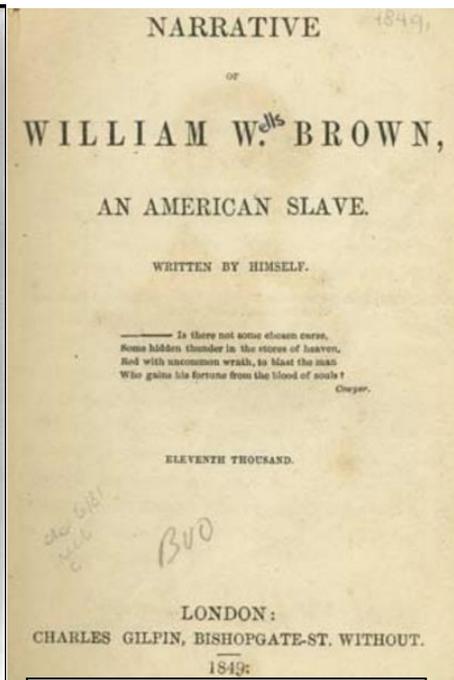
Date	Topic	Reading Assignment
2/28	Historical Interpretation Case Study: Runaway Ads and Objects, an introduction to historiography and methodology	Greer, Matthew C. "Bundles, Passes, and Stolen Watches: Interpreting the Role of Material Culture in Escape." <i>Southern Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal of the South</i> 21 (1) Spring/Summer 2014: 87-96. White, Shane and Graham White. "Slave Clothing and African-American Culture in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries." <i>Past & Present</i> , No. 148 (August 1995): 149-186. Presnell, Chapter 9, Beyond the Written Word
3/2	Library Workshop: Resources for locating secondary sources	Meet in the Library CitiLab (led by Lynda Kellam) Presnell, 3. Finding Monographs and Using Catalogs

		Presnell, 4. Finding Journals, Magazines, and Newspapers: Using Indexes
Discussion Board Assignment due by noon on 3/6: Annotated Bib drafts due – 1 book with citation and annotation; 1 journal article with citation and annotation.		
Date	Topic	Reading Assignment
3/7	Using Book Reviews to Evaluate Scholarship	Presnell, 5. Evaluating Your Sources See book reviews posted to Canvas
<p>Discussion Board. Due by noon on 3/8: Is this an authoritative website for researching the history of fugitive slaves? How do you know?</p> <p>The Art of Absconding: https://earlyamericanists.com/2015/08/24/guest-post-the-art-of-absconding-slave-fugitivity-in-the-early-republic/</p> <p>http://www.accessible-archives.com/2011/05/10-southern-us-slave-advertisements/</p>		
3/9	Digitized Primary Sources. Part 1. Evaluating Websites	<p>Presnell, 7. History and the Internet</p> <p>Schrum, Kelly and T. Mills Kelly. "An Introduction to World History Research Online." New York: Bedford/St. Martin. http://chnm.gmu.edu/essays-on-history-new-media/essays/?essayid=50</p> <p>Schrum, Kelly. "An Introduction to U.S. History Research Online." New York: Bedford/St. Martin. http://chnm.gmu.edu/essays-on-history-new-media/essays/?essayid=51</p>

March 14/16 Spring Break



Sheet Music, Library of Congress
<https://www.loc.gov/resource/cph.3a10460/>



Slave Narrative, Documenting the American South
<http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/brownw/brown.html>



Photographic Portrait, Library of Congress
<https://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3a10453/>

3/21	Library Workshop: Resources for locating primary sources to contextualize ads	Meet in the Library CitiLab (led by Lynda Kellam) Presnell, 6. The Thrill of Discovery: Primary Sources
Date	Topic	Reading Assignment
3/23	What Makes a Mangeable Research Topic?	Revising research focus; Identifying possible types of primary sources appropriate to research focus
3/28	Corroboration workshop	Using slave narratives to contextualize ads
3/29	Discussion Board Assignment due by noon on 4/2. Compare sample slave narrative to sample runaway ads. This is primarily a sourcing activity to develop primary source annotations and a note-taking activity to ensure accurate citation.	
3/30	Corroboration Workshop: Using Slave Narratives to Contextualize Runaway Slave Ads	Peer review of discussion board samples
4/4	Unit 3. Annotated Bib due	This assignment is worth 30% of the final grade. (7-10 scholarly sources; at least 1 book; at least 1 journal article; two different types of primary sources other than the runaway slave ads.)

Unit 4: Historical Interpretation

Objectives:

- Synthesis: drawing of ideas, information and evidence around a thesis
- Presenting an interpretation that demonstrates an understanding of the nature of historical evidence; interpretation does not take evidence at face value.
- Historiography: Your interpretation assesses historians' agreements and disagreements about what the evidence means.
- Effective Quoting and Paraphrasing
- Citation: Efficient methods of tracking sources during research; proper methods of citation; scholarly and ethical responsibilities, avoiding plagiarism.

Date	Topic	Reading Assignment
4/4	Pre-writing workshop	Strategies for producing the first draft
4/6	Writing Workshop:	Introductions
4/11	Writing Workshop: Citations, Varied purposes of footnotes	First Round Peer Review: Draft final interpretation due (1000 words) with footnotes and complete annotated bib. including primary AND secondary sources. Revise based on student comments.
4/14 Revised draft of final interpretation due. (1500 words) with footnotes and complete annotated bib. revise based on instructor comments.		
4/13	Writing Workshop: Analysis of primary sources	Sourcing: how effectively does the paper consider the authority of the primary sources? Are the primary sources appropriate to the research focus?
4/18	Writing Workshop: Historiography and Historical Context	Focusing on the secondary sources <u>Historiography</u> Are all of the sources scholarly? Evaluate the dates of publication—do the sources offer current interpretations and classics in the field? Does the analysis identify specific authors with specific arguments? <u>Historical Context</u> Do the sources offer thorough coverage of the topic? Do they address the research focus?
4/20	Writing Workshop: Citations	Does the paper include 3 types of footnotes? Citation, historiographical, and explanatory Are quotations properly integrated into the text? Is the bibliography properly formatted?
4/25	TBA	
4/27	Summations and Evaluations.	Final interpretation assignment due