

History 391-02: Historical Skills and Methods



Course Information:

History 391-01, Spring 2019 (CRN: 10119). Time: MW 2:00-3:15. Room: MHRA 1206

Professor's Information:

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Course Description

Doing history is an exciting process of discovery, analysis, and presentation. In this course we will develop the skills necessary for identifying research topics, locating appropriate sources, evaluating those sources, and organizing materials into a presentable format. Our canvas will be Europe in the long twelfth century (c. 1050-1215), a period that witnessed tremendous change in every aspect of society and a huge outpouring of written and visual material documenting those changes. This means that as we think about the process of doing history, most of our examples will be drawn from the classes of sources produced by medieval people during this period. Still, since not all history is

medieval history, we will also spend some time learning to locate and evaluate other types of source material, including digital resources, websites, and films.

Student Learning Objectives

1. Analyze historical duration, succession, and change in terms of human agency and larger systems or structures in a wide variety of places and periods.
2. Use historical thinking to contextualize and analyze primary and secondary sources representing different points of view.
3. Locate and evaluate appropriate scholarly materials to our subject matter.
4. Use evidence-based reasoning to interpret the past coherently while developing and presenting an original written argument

Teaching Strategies

This is a seminar, which means that our time will mostly be spent in group work and in discussion of readings.

Required Texts:

1. Michael Salevouris with Conal Furay, *The Method and Skills of History: a Practical Guide*, 4th edition (Wiley-Blackwell, 2015). ISBN: 9781118745441
2. R.N. Swanson, *The Twelfth-Century Renaissance* (Manchester University Press, 1999) ISBN: 9780719042560
3. *The Twelfth-Century Renaissance: A Reader*, ed. Alex Novikoff (Univ. of Toronto Press, 2016). ISBN: 9781442605466

Course Requirements

Attendance	see below
Class participation	10%
Exercises: In Class and Homework	15%
C.R.A.A.P. Test of Websites	10%
Film Analysis	5%
Essay on Swanson	10%
Secondary Source Critique and Revision	15%
Primary Source Criticism and revision	15%
Final Project	20%



Explanation of Assignments

1. Attendance

I expect regular attendance. You are allowed to miss two class meetings without penalty. For every absence beyond the first, I will reduce your cumulative course grade by 2 points (e.g., from 90 to 88). If you miss more than 6 classes, you earn an F for the class. Only in rare cases will I allow additional excused absences beyond the initial two: this includes flat tires, unexpected doctor's visits, a family member's unexpected illness, etc. Simply emailing me to tell me that you can't make class (even if for a good reason) doesn't excuse the absence; I will count it towards one of your two freebies. If something serious and lasting occurs, please come and speak with me and we will decide together how to proceed. Of course religious observances and official university business/obligations do count as exceptions.

2. Participation (SLOs 2, 4)

This is not a lecture course. You must come prepared to class, since class time will be devoted to small- and large-group discussion of readings and completion of exercises. Those who don't say much, either in the full-group setting or in small groups, will get Cs for this portion of the grade. To get a B means participating regularly (but not in a dominating way), with useful and constructive things to say. To get an A requires regular participation, constructive response to others, and other leadership qualities.

3. Exercises (SLOs 1, 2, 3, 4)

You'll notice that the Salevouris book has exercises (like a workbook) at the end of each chapter. Some of these exercises are pretty simplistic, while others are quite thoughtful. We will sometimes spend a portion of class time completing one of the Salevouris exercises (you may do it in the detachable worksheets, or write it out on a separate sheet of paper). Many weeks I'll also have a short assignment (a paragraph of writing, occasionally a page) for you to produce at home. All these exercises will be averaged (dropping the 1 or 2 lowest) for this portion of the grade.

4. C.R.A.A.P. Test Evaluation of Websites (SLOs, 3 and 4)

Using the C.R.A.A.P. test, students will evaluate a handful of websites that purport to provide historical information about the Middle Ages. You will apply the components of the test to the websites and write a one-page report about the historical value of these sites.

5. Film Analysis (SLOs 3, 4)

You will watch a documentary about some aspect of the Middle Ages and write a one- to two-page analysis of it. The analysis will be based on a set of criteria I will provide.

6. Essay on Swanson

Students will write a 2-3 page assessment of the concept of a Twelfth-Century Renaissance.

6. Secondary Source Critique (SLOs 2, 4)

Students will write a 2-3 page evaluation of a scholarly article, using the criteria we establish and discuss in class (and that are explained in Salevouris). You have one week after the return of your

first draft to turn in a revised draft. The first draft will have a suggested grade but the final grade will take into account revisions.

7. Primary Source Critique (SLOs 2, 4)

Students will write formal analyses of a single primary source that we read in Novikoff (or of a handful of related sources). Each critique will be at least 2 pages long. The process of revision is identical to that for the secondary source critiques.

7. Final Project (SLOs 1, 2, 3, 4)

In lieu of a final exam, students will produce a 5-6 page paper that identifies a viable research topic concerning some aspect of medieval history between 1050 and 1250. You must turn in a proposed topic, question, and bibliography several weeks before the actual paper is due. The final paper must state a feasible research project, one that meets the criteria we have identified in class discussion; it must explain WHY it is indeed a good and feasible project; it must suggest a thesis or argument for a longer paper that one might write about the topic; it must discuss the primary and secondary sources that one would use to conduct the research.

Grading Standards

A = fulfills assignment entirely while demonstrating original insight and reflection

B = fulfills assignment entirely and thoughtfully

C = mostly fulfills assignment, but without originality or analysis, or with serious problems of presentation (e.g., writing)

D = partially incomplete, perfunctory, or displays fundamental lack of comprehension

F = mostly incomplete, plagiarized, never turned in

A	93-100%	B	83-86%	C	73-76%	D	63-66%
A-	90-92%	B-	80-82%	C-	70-72%	D-	60-62%
B+	87-89%	C+	77-79%	D+	67-69%	F	59% or lower

Attendance Policy

See above.

Academic Honor Code

Each student is bound by the UNCG the Academic Integrity Policy on all major work submitted for the course. Refer to this address on the UNCG website for more details:

<http://studentconduct.uncg.edu/policy/academicintegrity/complete/>.

Plagiarism, cheating, or other infractions will be reported to the Dean of Students; they will entail a significant penalty in the course and may carry implications for continued presence in the university.

Additional Requirements and Advice

1. In case later consultation should prove necessary, students are asked to keep copies of all graded assignments until at least the end of the semester.

2. All course requirements must be completed to receive a grade for the class.
 3. **Late work** will be penalized by 1/3 of a letter grade (ie., A to A-) per day it is late unless previous arrangements have been made with the instructor.
 4. **Plagiarism** is a serious academic offense that occurs when someone - whether knowingly or not - uses the words or ideas of someone else without giving that person credit for those words or ideas with a formal citation. I therefore expect that all written (and oral) work will be your own. Should I find evidence to the contrary, I will consider any and/or all of the punitive sanctions made available to me by the university. When in doubt, cite your source. If you are unclear about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me in private - I'm happy to discuss it.
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Schedule of Readings and Assignments

<u>Week</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Readings</u>	<u>Assignments</u>
<u>1</u>			
Week 1	January 14: Course Introduction		
	January 16: A Quick Introduction to the Middle Ages	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Canvas: William Chester Jordan, <i>Europe in the High Middle Ages</i>, p. 1-19 2. Canvas: Political and Social Institutions in France, c.1080-1242 	
Week 2	January 21: NO CLASS (MLK Jr. Day)		
	January 23: Historical Thinking and other Unnatural Acts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Salevouris, 1-8 2. Canvas: Jenny Presnell, <i>The Information-Literate Historian</i>, 2nd edition (Oxford, 2007), 4-10 3. Canvas: Sam Wineburg, "Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts," <i>The Phi-Delta Kappan</i> 80:7 (1999), 488-499. 4. Swanson, vii-viii 	
Week 3	January 28: History as Reconstruction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Salevouris, 13-20 2. Swanson, 1-39 	
	January 30: Continuity and Change	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Salevouris, 27-35 2. Swanson, 40-65 	

Week 4	February 4: Causation	1. Salevouris, 43-54 2. Swanson, 66-102	
	February 6: Context	1. Salevouris, 65-71 2. Swanson, 103-128	
Week 5	February 11: Finding Information: the Library (MEET IN CITI LAB IN JACKSON LIBRARY)	1. Swanson, 128-151	Swanson Essay due
	February 13: Finding Information: the Library (MEET IN JACKSON LIBRARY)	1. Salevouris, 103-109 2. Swanson, 152-187	Complete scavenger hunt sheet (in Library)
Week 6	February 18: Telling a Story	1. Salevouris, 83-97 2. John Gillingham, "Conquering the Barbarians", 67-84	Re-type what you think is Gillingham's main argument; below include a list of difficult/unknown words from the article. Look up at least 3 of these words in the Oxford English Dictionary
	February 20: History Writing: Citing Sources	1. Salevouris, 241-248, 295-298 2. Chicago-Style Citation Quick Guide (online) 3. Canvas: On Footnotes (by REB) 4. Swanson, 188-213	Revision of Swanson essay due
Week 7	February 25: Reading History: Locating Theses	1. Salevouris, 131-139 2. Canvas: Jenny Presnell, <i>The Information-Literate Historian</i> , 2nd edition (Oxford, 2007), 104-111 2. one article on canvas	Identify and retype the article's argument; then paraphrase it in your own words (in 2-3 sentences)
	February 27: Reading History	<u>Reading</u> : three articles on Canvas; you must read one in full, and must look at	Write 100-200 words in which you identify and

		the others to try to spot the thesis (using Salevouris' methods)	explain the author's argument
Week 8	March 4: NO CLASS (Spring Break)		
	March 6: NO CLASS (Spring Break)		
Week 9	March 11: Topics	1. Canvas: Presnell, 12-14 2. Canvas: Richard Marius and Melvin E. Page, <i>A Short Guide to Writing about History</i> , 9th ed. (Pearson, 2015), 8-20 2. Novikoff, 9-18, 28-32, 43-53	Secondary Source Critique due
	March 13: Topics and Questions	1. Canvas: Richard Marius and Melvin E. Page, <i>A Short Guide to Writing about History</i> , 9th ed. (Pearson, 2015), 28-35 2. Novikoff, 59-68, 71-89	Produce three topics, along with an analytical question derived from each
Week 10	March 18: Finding Information: Using Databases	1. Salevouris, 109-114 2. Canvas: Jenny Presnell, <i>The Information-Literate Historian</i> , 2nd edition (Oxford, 2007), 168-188 3. Novikoff, 101-121, 129-133	Choose one of the Library's databases and use it to locate an article on medieval Europe (between 1050 and 1250)
	March 20: Finding Information: Evaluating Web- Sites	1. Canvas: Jenny Presnell, <i>The Information-Literate Historian</i> , 2nd edition (Oxford, 2007), 188-191 2. Novikoff, 147-177	1. Locate three websites that you feel could be useful for students of medieval history 2. Revision of Secondary source Critique Due
Week 11	March 25: Evidence I	1. Salevouris, 170-177, 120-123 2. Canvas: Jenny Presnell, <i>The Information-Literate Historian</i> , 2nd edition (Oxford, 2007), 112-116, 158 (skim over the categories mentioned in pp. 116-157) 3. Novikoff, 205-231	C.R.A.A.P. test of Websites Due
	March 27: Evidence II	1. Novikoff, 233-270	

Week 12	April 1: Evidence III	1. Novikoff, 365-401	Primary Source Critique Due
	April 3: Evidence IV	1. Novikoff, 411-429, 444-448	
Week 13	April 8: Developing Historical Interpretations	1. Salevouris, 217-226 2. Scholarly article	Preliminary Topic and Bibliography (for Final Project) due
	April 10: Historiography I (Schools of History)	1. Salevouris, 255-268 2. Scholarly debate TBA	
Week 14	April 15: Historiography II (Variations around a topic)	1. Scholarly debate TBA	Revision of Primary Source Critique Due
	April 17: Oral and Quantitative History	1. Salevouris, 197-206 2. Canvas: Medieval court roll	
Week 15	April 22: Visual Evidence	1. Salevouris, 207-210 2. Presnell, 215-231 3. Novikoff, 337-353	Revised Topic for Final Project due
	April 24: History and Film	1. Salevouris, 152-163 2. Watch one film on list distributed in advance	
Week 16	April 29: History and Newspapers	1. Presnell, 83, 129-134	Film Analysis Due
	May 1: Doing History	None!	
	May 2 (Thurs): NO CLASS (Reading Day)		
Week 17	May 8 (Wed.): NO CLASS		Final Project Due