

HISTORY 100: HISTORICAL THINKING

UW-Stevens Point
Spring 2021
Professor Brett Barker, Ph.D.

M and W 9:30-10:45

Virtual Classroom via Zoom

Contact Information:

E-mail: bbarker@uwsp.edu

Virtual Office Hours: M 11-12, T 1-2 and by appointment

Course Objectives:

This course is an introduction to the way historians think about and analyze the past and the world around them. It chooses a historical topic to study in depth—this semester we will be examining Wisconsin and the Civil War. We will be focusing on critical thinking skills, analysis of sources, historical interpretation, and the ways in which historians disagree about the past.

Knowledge: a demonstrated understanding of the following:

- the way historians think and write about the past
- the way historians use and analyze sources in order to understand and interpret the past
- the way historians disagree about the past and their interpretation of it
- Wisconsin during the 1860s
- the military contributions of Wisconsin to the Union war effort
- the lives of ordinary soldiers during the Civil War
- the role Wisconsin civilians played in the Union war effort
- political debates in Wisconsin during the Civil War era
- the impact of the Civil War on Wisconsin
- the ways in which Wisconsin's role in the Civil War has been remembered from 1865 to the present

Skills: success in this course will also require demonstration of the following:

- the ability to read and listen with critical perception
- the ability to analyze and synthesize course materials
- the ability to distinguish between knowledge, values, beliefs, and opinions
- the ability to use evidence to support assertions about the past

Attendance:

You must attend class. Past experience indicates that students who attend irregularly always do poorly in the course. As a courtesy to the instructor and other students, **please arrive on time.** Although the Zoom sessions will be recorded and you can watch them if you miss class, this should only be done if compelling reasons such as illness or a personal emergency make attendance impossible.

Text (required):

Ronald Larson, *Wisconsin and the Civil War*. ISBN: 9781467137195

Note: There will be numerous other readings for this class posted to Canvas. You are expected to read these as they are considered integral and required components of the course.

Course Calendar:

Unit 1: What Is History and How Do Historians Study the Past?

Weeks 1-2: Jan. 25- Feb. 3

Unit 2: Wisconsin Before the Civil War

Weeks 3-4: Feb. 8-17

Unit 3: Badgers in Blue: The Soldiers

Weeks 5-8: Feb. 25- Mar. 17

Spring Break: March 20-28 NO CLASSES

Unit 4: The Home Front

Weeks 9-12: Mar. 29- Apr. 21

Unit 5: The End of the War and Its Toll

Weeks 13-14: Apr. 28- May 5

Unit 6: History and Memory

Week 15: May 10-12

Note: Each week will have its own module in Canvas. The first file in each module will be titled "Overview for Week [#]" and it will contain a list of readings and assignments. You should always pay close attention to that file, as it will guide you through each week and its classes.

Grading: Course grades will be based on the following:

20% Class Citizenship: Not only must you attend class with your webcam on, but you are also expected to participate in discussions. In evaluating your participation grade I will consider your attendance, the quantity and quality of your contributions, and your willingness to listen and interact with other students while integrating your comments into the flow of discussion. Repeated absences or habitual tardiness will significantly lower your grade. Anyone unable to attend every class in its entirety should speak with the instructor at the beginning of the semester.

20% Discussion Posts and Short Writing Assignments: Most weeks, you will be asked to make a discussion post or complete a short writing assignment about the assigned readings. These will be turned in via Canvas.

50% Unit Assignments: At the end of Units 1 through 5, you will turn in a project assignment. Details on each of these assignments will be provided in the weekly overviews and will be discussed in class.

10% Final: due May 19 in Canvas.

Grading Scale:

90-92	A-	93-100	A		
80-82	B-	83-86	B	87-89	B+
70-72	C-	73-76	C	77-79	C+
		60-66	D	67-69	D+
				0-59	F

General Education Learning Outcomes:

This course satisfies the GEP categories Historical Perspectives (HP) Here is its learning outcomes:

Historical Perspectives:

1. Use primary sources as evidence to answer questions about historical change.
2. Describe differences among interpretations of the past.
3. Analyze institutional and cultural changes in one or more human societies over time.

Two Important Notes about the Course:

1. Weekly assignments are due on the dates specified, unless you make prior arrangement with the instructor. Late work will be penalized.
2. Academic Honesty and Classroom Behavior: This course is part of the UW-Stevens Point academic community, an academic community that is bound together by the traditions and practice of scholarship. Honest intellectual work – on examinations and on written assignments—is essential to the success of this community of scholars. Using classmates’ responses to answer exam questions or disguising words written by others as your own undermines the trust and respect on which our course depends. The work in this course is challenging and will demand a good deal of each of you. I have every confidence that each of you can succeed. Doing your own work will enhance your sense of accomplishment when the semester comes to a close.

Additionally, the classroom environment is a unique opportunity for students to share ideas, opinions, discuss classroom and course content. As each student is entitled to contribute in class, specific expectations are necessary to ensure a thriving classroom environment. Expectations include: arriving to class on time, being prepared for class, no electronic devices, unless authorized to do so, any loud shouting, excessive side conversations, arriving to class under the influence of any alcohol or drugs, profane language, and verbal or physical threats, intimidation of any kind, or any other behavior that may be disruptive to the professor or other students. If any of this behavior is exhibited, you may be asked to leave the class for the day. Any continued disruptive behavior may result in a referral to the Dean of Students Office.

Proper Use of Class Materials:

Lecture materials and recordings for HIST 100 are protected intellectual property at UW-Stevens Point. Students in this course may use the materials and recordings for their personal use related to participation in this class. Students may also take notes solely for their personal use. If a lecture is not already recorded, you are not authorized to record my lectures without my permission unless you are considered by the university to be a qualified student with a disability requiring accommodation. [Regent Policy Document 4-1] Students may not copy or share lecture materials and recordings outside of class, including posting on internet sites or selling to commercial entities. Students are also prohibited from providing or selling their personal notes to anyone else or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the instructor's express written permission. Unauthorized use of these copyrighted lecture materials and recordings constitutes copyright infringement and may be addressed under the university's policies, UWS Chapters 14 and 17, governing student academic and non-academic misconduct.

Students with Disabilities:

The University has a legal responsibility to provide accommodations and program access as mandated by Section 54 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The university's philosophy is to not only provide what is mandated but also convey its genuine concern for one's total well-being. If accommodations are needed, please contact the instructor as well as the Disability and Assistive Technology Center (DATC), located on the Stevens Point campus. Students can also pick up an application for accommodations packet in the Solution Center.

DATC contact information:

(715) 346-3365 (Voice)

(715) 346-3362 (TDD only)

or via email at datctr@uwsp.edu

Changes to the Syllabus:

I have tried to make this syllabus as accurate, complete, and helpful as possible. I do not anticipate changing any elements of this course, but I reserve the right to do so. Any changes will be announced in class with as much advance notice as possible.

A Brief Guide to Succeeding in this Course

1. Reading: There is a lot of reading in this course, and to do well **you must start reading right away and keep up with the reading.** You must complete the week's reading **before** class and you will have an assignment due most Mondays before class to make sure that you have. The text contains a lot of detail, and you should take notes, which will prove invaluable on later assignments. See me if you'd like more guidance in how to do this.

One other piece of advice about reading: many students believe that they can "multi-task," meaning they can read the textbook while watching TV, watching TikTok, or talking with friends. I am convinced that this is not true. If you are struggling with the reading, try this experiment: for one week, read the text in an absolutely quiet room (without music) and take notes. You may be surprised how much your comprehension improves. This is the environment in which I do all my reading. It might take a little getting used to, but it might also be just what you need to succeed.

2. Class Meetings: most classes will consist of both lecture and discussion. Here's what I intend you to get out of each: **Lecture:** My lectures are not just simple restatement of the text—that's why it's **important for you to both read the text and attend class**. The **lectures** are really interpretive narratives, or stories, meant to provide a coherent view of the week's materials. I will offer this content in a way I think makes sense, and I will challenge you to show that you understand the material. As you listen, take notes, especially of dates, names, and statistics. But also listen to the analysis of the past offered: note events and people you recognize from the text that are also mentioned in lecture, but pay special attention to the explanation of why things happened, and the analysis of cause and effect.

In the end, success in this course requires that you be able to explain the American past (analysis) and you provide evidence for your explanations (content). It is critical that you are an active participant and this course will be strengthened if during lecture and discussion you tell me the ideas, concepts, and interpretations with which you are struggling. I am willing to take the time to do whatever you need to understand the material.

Discussion is a chance for you to practice analyzing course materials and a chance for me to better understand what you understand and what is still unclear to you and your classmates. This course will be **much more rewarding** if you, and your classmates, come to class prepared and willing to talk.

3. Unit Assignments: These assignments both test your comprehension of what we've done in class **and** allow you to explore Wisconsin and the Civil War more deeply, in some cases in a more personalized way. To do well on these, you cannot put them off until the last minute—procrastination is the enemy of truly outstanding work.

4. Office Hours and Appointments: *Every one of you should come visit me during my office hours this semester.* My office hours are time set aside for students, and successful students take advantage of them. Whether it's a simple question or a serious problem in the course, you should never hesitate to drop in or make an appointment if my office hours do not fit your schedule.