

# HISTORY 100: HISTORICAL THINKING

UW-Stevens Point  
Spring 2024  
Professor Brett Barker, Ph.D.

Section 3      M and W 10:30-11:45      Course ID: 40763      CCC 303

## Contact Information:

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## 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. Your phone should be put away during class—failure to do so will result in a reduced course grade.**

**Text** (required):

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

Note: There will be 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. 22- 31

**Unit 2: Wisconsin Before the Civil War**

Weeks 3-4: Feb. 5-14

**Unit 3: Badgers in Blue: The Soldiers**

Weeks 5-8: Feb. 19-Mar. 13

**Spring Break: March 15-24 NO CLASSES**

**Unit 4: The Home Front**

Weeks 9-12: Mar. 25- Apr. 17

**Unit 5: The End of the War and Its Toll**

Weeks 13-14: Apr. 24- May 1

**Unit 6: History and Memory**

Week 15: May 6-8

Note: Every Wednesday, you will receive a “prep sheet” that explains what you will be expected to do in the coming week (readings, written assignments, unit projects, in-class work). If you are not in class on Wednesday, it is your responsibility to get that sheet. It will usually be posted to Canvas, but if you don’t find it there, email Prof. Barker for a copy.

**Email Communications:** I want to help you in this course and I am happy to respond to questions or concerns sent by email. You can help me by doing the following in all of your emails to me:

1. State your full name and say that you’re in HIST 100, Section 3.
2. Be very clear in your question. Remember that I teach multiple classes with multiple assignments, so being specific really helps me.
3. Expect that I will get back to you within 24 hours during the week or on Monday if you email Friday afternoon or on the weekend.
4. There is no need to inform me that you will be missing a single class. Informing me does not excuse you from attendance. If you’re going to be gone for multiple classes, it is useful to let me know what the situation is. Regularly scheduled medical and dental appointments, advisor meetings, vacations, and work conflicts are not excused absences, regardless of whether you inform me of the reason for your absence.

**Grading:** Course grades will be based on the following:

**20% Class Citizenship:** Not only must you attend class, 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 or at the beginning of class, as directed in the prep sheet.

**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 prep sheets and will be discussed in class.

**10% Final:** due Thursday, May 16 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 are its learning outcomes:

**Historical Perspectives (HP):**

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.

**Three 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. ***Any use of AI tools (such as Chat GPT) constitutes academic misconduct and will result in serious consequences under [UWS Ch. 14](#).***

3. 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.

**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](mailto: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. Work Outside the Classroom:** 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.

**The expectation is that you will spend at least two hours working on HIST 100 outside of class for each hour we meet; so an average of 5 hours per week.**

**One other piece of advice about reading out-of-class work:** many students believe that they can “multi-task,” meaning they can read the textbook while watching TV, watching TikTok videos, or talking with friends. I am convinced that this is not true. If you are struggling with the readings, 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:** This class will not consist primarily of lectures—it is an interactive course where students are expected to be constant and reliable participants. That's why it's **important for you to both read the text and attend class.** I will challenge you to show that you understand the material on a deep level. Skimming readings briefly will not be enough. You will need to read (and reread) assignments carefully and take notes so that you can recall and use details to inform our discussions. **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.

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.

**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.