

History 300: Methods and Skills of History

Fall 2016

Tuesday and Thursday, 9:35-10:50 pm, 231 CCC

“Each age writes the history of the past anew.” —Frederick Jackson Turner, 1891.

“Whatever may be the limitations which trammel inquiry elsewhere we believe the great state University of Wisconsin should ever encourage that continual and fearless sifting and winnowing by which alone the truth can be found.” —UW Board of Regents, 1894.

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Office Hours: Monday 3:00-4:00, Tuesday 2:00-4:00, and by appointment.

Course Description and Objectives

In History 300 you will begin to master the art of “doing history”: asking thought-provoking questions about the past, seeking out evidence in a variety of sources, and using that evidence to build authoritative answers to your questions. You will practice this art by completing a semester-long research project culminating in a polished paper and in-class presentation.

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Conduct self-directed historical research.
- Write an effective original research paper.
- Deliver a professional oral presentation describing historical research.
- Constructively review the research and writing of others.

Required Texts

- Furay and Salevouris, *Methods and Skills of History*, 4th ed., required for purchase (MSH)
- Turabian, *Manual for the Writers of Term Papers*, 8th ed., required for purchase

Contacting Me

*Helping you learn is the **most important** and **most rewarding** part of my job.* If you have questions or concerns about the course, either visit me during office hours or contact me to make an appointment. I receive and reply to email more quickly than voice mail. Please put “History 300” in the subject line.

Assignments and Workload

As with any other three-credit course, you should expect to spend 6-9 hours each week on out-of-class work. Because this is a writing-intensive class, you will probably find yourself closer to nine.

You will devote most of those out-of-class hours to your research project, which will require steady work throughout the semester. You will choose your research question individually, subject to my approval, but it must be possible to answer your question with available primary sources. To meet project deadlines you will need to work steadily each week, even if nothing is due at the next class period. Some courses allow students to “catch up” late in the semester after falling behind: not History 300. Most students who miss deadlines have to withdraw from the course. Don’t let that be you. If you are worried about your progress, contact me ASAP.

Paper Requirements

Both your first draft and final draft will be graded according to the following criteria:

- Articulates a clear and persuasive argument, summarized in a thesis statement of one or two sentences, underlined.
- Supports that argument effectively with evidence from at least 10 primary sources, including at least two archival sources.
- Critically evaluates relevant historiography: at least four scholarly publications by historians (published by peer-reviewed journals or scholarly presses).
- Presents material in a well-organized and well-written paper of 10-15 pages, with a distinct introduction, historiography section, historical background, narrative sections, and conclusion.
- Explains the significance of your research findings (i.e., so what?)
- Cites all sources in footnotes, using Turabian note format, clearly indicating both the specific documents being cited and their source.
- Includes a full bibliography, in Turabian bibliographic format, listing primary and secondary sources separately.
- Articulates your ideas in clear, effective prose: using active language, effective topic sentences and transitions; quoting minimally; and using standard grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- Submits the document in MS Word format, including your name, a title, page numbers, and normal fonts and margins.
- Responds effectively to peer and instructor feedback on earlier work.

Collaborative Learning

In History 300, each member of the class (including me) shares responsibility for the learning of every other member of the class. Throughout the semester, you will regularly exchange constructive feedback with your classmates both in and out of class. You will regularly complete in-class group activities. Helping others with their projects will help you improve your own. It is the most important thing you will do in this class.

Attendance

Success in this course depends heavily on regular attendance and active participation. Multiple absences (either physical or mental) will make it difficult or impossible to complete the course, whatever the reason. If you have to miss class, please notify me ASAP so we can explore your options.

Feeling Overwhelmed

If you are a human being, you will probably find yourself getting overwhelmed at times during this course. I recommend the following, in any order:

- Find a quiet place to sit and breathe deeply. Rinse and repeat.
- Know that everyone who has ever pursued a major research project has felt the same way, including your professor. Of course, that doesn't make the feeling go away, but at least it isn't just you. See "Manage Moments of Normal Panic," Turabian 4.6.
- Shift gears. Spend time doing something completely different. Preferably outside.
- Break your project down into bite-sized pieces. Identify small tasks that you can do relatively quickly ("read that source"). Focus on one task at a time.
- Step away from your computer—far away if necessary—take out a pad of paper, and start writing whatever comes into your head.
- See me. Email me with the subject heading "help!" to schedule an urgent appointment.
- Reward yourself for making progress. Ice cream and chocolate work well.

Grading

Short assignments:	10%
Attendance and participation:	10%
Workshops:	10%
Research prospectus:	5%
Annotated bibliography:	10%
Narrative outline:	10%
First draft of paper:	20%
Research presentation:	5%
Final draft of paper:	20%

Use of Student Work

Students often benefit from seeing examples of strong work completed by other students. For that reason, I may distribute exemplary student work, after removing all identifying information. If you object to my using your work in this way, please notify me and I will respect your wishes.

Students with Disabilities

I will make every reasonable effort to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities. Any student requesting accommodation must meet with UWSP Disability Services staff as early in the semester as possible. No accommodation will be granted until I receive and agree to a formal plan approved by Disability Services.

Academic Integrity

Cases of academic misconduct, including plagiarism, will be formally reported following the policies laid out in UWSP's Student Academic Disciplinary Procedures. Plagiarism consists of submitting work created by someone else as your own. To learn more about academic integrity, please ask me or consult <<http://library.uwsp.edu/Guides/VRD/plagiarism.htm>>. Students found to have committed academic misconduct will receive an F for the course.

Course Schedule

All class meetings will take place in the regular classroom unless otherwise announced. The following schedule is subject to change: I will announce changes in class and on D2L, <http://www.uwsp.edu/d2l>.

Tuesday, Sept. 6: Take the red pill.

Thursday, Sept. 8: Welcome to Wonderland!

Meet in the archives (506 LRC)

- > Read the syllabus; purchase required texts

Tuesday, Sept. 13: What is historical thinking?

- > Read "The Strange Death of Silas Deane."
- > Read MSH 13-20, 27-35. How would you describe your "stage of historical consciousness"?

Thursday, Sept. 15: What is historical writing?

- > Read MSH 83-90 and 93-97 (don't write the paper: just read the pages)
- > Read Turabian 1.1-1.2

Tuesday, Sept. 20: What did you find in the archives?

Meet in the archives (506 LRC)

- > Optional: meet with UWSP Archivist Ruth Wachter-Nelson, rwachter@uwsp.edu
- > Complete "Historian in Wonderland" assignment (see handout)

Thursday, Sept. 22: How can you find secondary sources?

- > Read Turabian chs. 3.3-3.4, 4.2-4.6; and MSH 120-23 (exercises optional)
- > Try out the following research tools. Look for sources relevant to your topic. Look for, and experiment with using, LOC subject headings and keywords. Take notes on your finds. Be ready to discuss them in class.
 - Google Scholar: <https://scholar.google.com/>
 - Jstor (use advanced search, and filter for history journals): <http://www.jstor.org/> (on campus) or <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.uwsp.edu/>
 - America: History & Life: <http://tinyurl.com/ahl-uwsp>
 - UWSP catalog (use advanced search): <http://www.uwsp.edu/library/Pages/default.aspx>

Tuesday, Sept. 27: How can you find more primary sources?

- > Play with the historical newspapers databases. Look for sources relevant to your topic. Experiment with different filters and ways of searching:
 - <http://libraryguides.uwsp.edu/historicalnewspapers>

Thursday, Sept. 29: How can you find government documents?

- > Play with government document databases. Look for sources relevant to your topic, etc.
 - Congressional publications: <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.uwsp.edu/congressional>
 - US Government publications: <http://libraryguides.uwsp.edu/go.php?c=14751030>
 - Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau Digital Collections:
<http://lrbdigital.legis.wisconsin.gov/>
 - UWSP catalog (use advanced search): <http://www.uwsp.edu/library/Pages/default.aspx>
 - Digital Sanborn Maps, 1867-1970: <http://sanborn.umi.com.ezproxy.uwsp.edu/>

Tuesday, Oct. 4: What frames of reference do historians bring to their work?

- > **Research Prospectus due on D2L**
- > In class: MSH 58-63

Thursday, Oct. 6: Prospectus Workshop

- > Complete prospectus peer review
- > Schedule individual research conference with instructor

Tuesday, Oct. 11: How can you use primary sources?

- > Read Turabian ch. 3.1 and MSH 167-77
- > Complete set A exercises 4-5 (MSH 185-88). Print out your answers (both the document analyses—2-3 sentences each—and the paragraph), double spaced, and bring them to class.

Thursday, Oct. 13: What can you learn from your primary sources?

- > Choose two or three primary sources you have found for your project. Analyze the sources and write a paragraph interpreting them, following the format on MSH 185-88.

Tuesday, Oct. 18: How can you most effectively read secondary sources?

- > Read MSH 223-26 and 131-39.
- > Complete MSH ch. 8, exercises 2 and 3, pp. 144-48. Print out your answers (including the précis), double spaced, and bring them to class.

Thursday, Oct. 20: What can you learn from your secondary sources?

- > Choose two secondary sources you have found for your project. For each, complete an analysis and précis following the format on MSH 147-48.

Tuesday, Oct. 25: How will you organize your evidence?

- > Read Turabian ch. 5

Thursday, Oct. 27: Take 75 minutes and do something relaxing. Then go back to your project.

Tuesday, Nov. 1: Annotated Bibliography due on D2L

Thursday, Nov. 3: How will you structure your paper?

- > Read Turabian ch. 6

Tuesday, Nov. 8: Narrative Outline due on D2L

Thursday, Nov. 10: Narrative Outline Workshop

- > Complete narrative outline peer review

Tuesday, Nov. 15: How will you write this thing?

- > Read Turabian ch. 7 and MSH 241-48.
- > Draft a paragraph for the body of your paper, based on evidence in your primary sources. Print it out and bring it to class (include your thesis statement on the printout).

Thursday, Nov. 17: What is a historiography section?

- > Draft a paragraph for your historiography section, explaining and evaluating the arguments of secondary sources. Print it out and bring it to class (include your thesis statement).

Tuesday, Nov. 22: Take a deep breath.

- > **First Draft due on D2L**
- > Schedule revision conference with instructor

Thursday, Nov. 24: Give thanks.

Tuesday, Nov. 29: Draft Workshop

- > Complete first draft peer review

Thursday, Dec. 1: What will you do with the feedback on your work?

- > Read Turabian chs. 9, 11, 12. Key question: which suggestions are most helpful for you?

Dec. 6-15: Research Presentations

Final paper due at end of official exam period: Friday, Dec. 16, 10:00 am