

**HIST 300: Methods and Skills of History**  
**Fall 2017, Section 1**  
**T/TH 11:00am-12:15pm**  
**CCC 231**

Dr. Sarah Scripps

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Office Hours: T/TH 12:30-2:00pm and by appointment

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**Course Summary**

This course is designed to teach students the essential skills of history. Through writing a 10-15 page research paper, students will choose a topic of historical significance, conduct research using both primary and secondary sources, and analyze those sources to develop an original argument. In the process, students will learn how to become historians in their own right.

**Learning Outcomes**

Students taking “Methods and Skills of History” develop skills for researching, writing, and presenting history. Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Distinguish between primary and secondary sources and qualify these sources’ value to the historical record
- Locate and synthesize source materials, including written texts, audio/visual materials, and/or objects by working with the University Archives
- Analyze the work of other historians through writing a historiographical essay
- Create a series of compelling questions about a specific research topic and develop an argument based on those questions
- Write a 10-15 page essay grounded in original research
- Communicate the findings of their research through an oral presentation

**Required Texts**

Conal Foray and Michael J. Salevouris, *The Methods and Skills of History: A Practical Guide* (available in the bookstore)

Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (available in the bookstore)

Other assigned readings will be posted on D2L.

**Assignments**

**Attendance and Participation:** Class participation consists of more than just regular attendance. It also involves coming to class prepared and engaged, bringing assigned readings, listening to fellow classmates, and actively contributing to class discussions. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. Students may miss three classes before their final grade begins to drop 2% for each additional absence. It is not wise to use all of your absences early in the term in case you have legitimate reasons for missing class later. Arriving late or leaving early from class will be counted as one-half an

absence. Students facing extenuating circumstances affecting their attendance (such as serious health issues, UWSP athletics, the birth of a child, military service, etc.) are encouraged to talk to me.

**Assignment Submissions:** Most major assignments have draft versions as well as final versions due. This process provides you an opportunity to receive peer review of your work through class workshops before you submit your final drafts to me. All assignments are due at the beginning of class on their assigned due date.

**Short Assignments:** Throughout the semester, students will complete a series of short assignments in preparation for class workshops. These assignments may include doing workbook exercises, completing research-based tasks, and providing feedback on fellow students' work. In order to stay on top of the material in this class, it is critical that students show up to class prepared and ready to discuss the assigned activities.

**Prospectus:** The prospectus provides a roadmap for your research plans- your proposed topic, research question(s), the importance of this topic to the field of history, and a tentative list of sources. Details will be provided on a separate handout.

**Primary Source Essay:** Students will write a 4-page review of the primary sources they are using for their papers and how these sources inform and/or challenge their original research questions. Details will be provided on a separate handout.

**Historiographical Essay:** Students will write a 4-page historiographical essay analyzing what other historians have written about themes related to their research topic. A portion of this essay will be modified and incorporated into the final research paper. Details will be provided on a separate handout.

**Rough Draft:** Students will submit a complete (10-15 page) draft of their research paper that presents a clear argument, evidence based on at least 10 primary sources (**two of these sources must be archival sources from the ARC Network**), a historiographical review, the significance of your research findings, and properly cited sources and bibliography using the Turabian format. Details will be provided on a separate handout.

**Final Research Paper:** The final paper will serve as a revised and complete version of the research essay and it will be evaluated based on the same criteria as the draft. Details will be provided on a separate handout.

**Research Presentation:** In order to fulfill the requirements for Oral Communication in the Major, students will prepare a formal presentation of their research delivered at the end of the semester. As part of the presentation, students will provide at least one visual aide in the form of a PowerPoint slideshow, poster, handout, etc.

#### **Assessment Breakdown**

Attendance and Participation: 20%

Short Assignments: 10%

Prospectus: 10%

Historiographical Essay: 10%  
Primary Source Essay: 10%  
Rough Draft: 15%  
Final Research Paper: 20%  
Research Presentation: 5%

### **Grading Scale**

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

### **Classroom Policies**

**A note about working in the archives:** At this university, we are very fortunate to house a repository on campus that is part of the Area Research Center (ARC) Network. This affiliation allows students to request items from around the state, including the Wisconsin Historical Society as well as other universities. **Due to the fact that students must use at least two primary sources from the ARC Network, this course requires working closely with the staff at the UWSP Archives.** Given that they are generously taking the time to assist each project, you are expected to adhere to the policies of the archives and to treat the staff with respect. Here are some general guidelines:

- 1) After completing your prospectus, you are required to set up a meeting with Professor Watcher-Nelson. To make an appointment, please email her at [rwachter@uwsp.edu](mailto:rwachter@uwsp.edu) with HIST 300 in the subject line. The email should include an attachment of your prospectus, summary of your project, list of potential sources you plan to consult, and 3-4 proposed meeting times. At your meeting, please bring a copy of your prospectus and be on time. I will be checking with Professor Watcher-Nelson regularly to make sure students are arriving to their meetings prepared and on time.
- 2) Transferring materials from other repositories in the ARC System can take several weeks. Make sure to request the items as early as possible.
- 3) The Reading Room of the Archives maintains several rules to protect archival materials: no food or drinks, no large personal belongings (like backpacks or coats) by the research tables (you can use free lockers to store these items), no pens or highlighters (PENCILS ONLY for writing- you may also use laptops), and make sure to sign in when you arrive.

- 4) Unlike the open shelves of the library, the stacks of the archives are closed. You will need to submit your requests to the archives staff and they will retrieve the items for you. Make sure to handle all materials with care.

Students are expected to arrive on time and to be attentive and engaged during class. This means you are not sleeping, reading/working on other materials, using electronic devices, talking to your neighbor, or disrupting class in any way. Students will raise their hands for questions and be respectful of fellow students and the professor. You may disagree with another person's comment or position, but do so with courtesy and respect. For more information on classroom expectations, see: <http://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Pages/Academic-Misconduct.aspx>

All forms of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fraud, and unauthorized access to tests and assignments are strictly prohibited. Any words or ideas borrowed from another person or source, whether through a direct quotation or through paraphrasing, must be cited properly to avoid plagiarism. Please familiarize yourself with what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it. Violations of the university's code of conduct are subject to sanctions ranging from a failing grade for an assignment to disciplinary hearings or potential failure of the course. For more information on academic dishonesty, see: <http://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Documents/CommunityRights.pdf>

If you have a learning or physical challenge that requires accommodation, please contact the Disability and Assistive Technology Center as early as possible. They will then notify me privately of the accommodations that will facilitate your success in the course. Their office is located on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor the LRC, Voice: 715-346-3365, TTY: 715-346-3362.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law requiring educational institutions to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information about UWSP's policies, see: <http://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Pages/ADA.aspx>

Computers and other electronic devices are not allowed in class without getting permission from me in advance. Studies have shown that students learn more and perform better by writing down the main ideas of lecture versus typing them. For more information, see the article in *Scientific American* entitled "A Learning Secret: Don't Take Notes with a Laptop" (<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-learning-secret-don-t-take-notes-with-a-laptop/>).

I hold regular office hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:30-2:00pm (461 CCC). During this time, my priority is to talk to students about any questions or concerns they may have. I truly enjoy meeting with you to hear about how things are going. If you are struggling, stop by and let's chat. If you are unable to meet during office hours, email me and we will set up an alternative time.

## **Schedule**

*Please note that the syllabus is subject to change and assignments may be added.*

### **UNIT I: INTRODUCTION TO HISTORICAL RESEARCH**

#### **Week 1**

September 5: Course Introduction

September 7: Introduction to the Archives

**Meet at 520 Albertson Hall**

Readings: Review the HIST 300 Library Research Guide:

<http://libraryguides.uwsp.edu/c.php?g=359758&p=2430285>

#### **Week 2**

September 12: What is History?

Readings: Methods and Skills of History (hereafter MSH) 13-20; 27-35,  
“The Strange Death of Silas Deane” (D2L)

September 14: Archival Investigations

**Meet at 520 Albertson Hall**

DUE: Archival Investigations Assignment

#### **Week 3**

September 19: Formulating Research Topics and Questions

Readings: Turabian Chs. 2 and 3.1-3.2; MSH 169-177

DUE: Write 2-3 potential research questions and identify sources that might address those questions

September 21: Taking Notes

Readings: Turabian Ch. 4.2-4.6; MSH 103-114 and complete exercises on pp. 120-123

### **UNIT II: PRIMARY SOURCES**

#### **Week 4**

September 26: Primary Sources Beyond the Archives

Readings: Review the primary source resource guide posted on D2L

DUE: Locate at least one primary source relevant to your potential topic based on the databases listed on the primary source resource guide

September 28: No Class- Individual meetings with instructor to discuss prospectus

DUE: Research Prospectus (D2L)

Set up meeting with Prof. Wachter-Nelson (meetings must take place before October 12)

#### **Week 5**

October 3: Primary Source Analysis: Part 1

Readings: Complete the exercise on DSH 185-188

DUE: Address/apply the questions on pg. 185 to two of your own primary sources (D2L)

October 5: Primary Source Analysis: Part 2  
Readings: Complete exercise on MSH pp. 193-196 and bring answers to class.

**Week 6**

October 10: Citations  
Readings: Turabian Chs. 15-17  
DUE: Draft of Primary Source Essay (D2L)

October 12: No class- use this time to write peer reviews and continue your research

**UNIT III: SECONDARY SOURCES**

**Week 7**

October 17: Primary Source Essay Workshop  
DUE: Peer Reviews of Primary Source Essays (D2L and in class)

October 19: Finding Secondary Sources  
Readings: Turabian Chs. 3.3-3.4  
Review the secondary source resource guide posted on D2L  
DUE: Final Primary Source Essay (D2L)

**Week 8**

October 24: Secondary Source Analysis  
Readings: MSH 131-139 and complete exercises on pp. 144-148, including a typed précis to turn in  
DUE: Type up separate précis for two secondary sources based on the parameters listed in MSH pp. 147-148

October 26: Historical Interpretations  
Readings: MSH 217-26 and complete exercise on pp. 232-234

**Week 9**

October 31: Writing about Secondary Sources  
Readings: Davidson and Lytle, "Jackson's Frontier—and Turner's" (D2L);  
DUE: Bring citations for two secondary sources with differing interpretations on your topic (D2L and in class)

November 2: No class- use this time to draft your historiographical essay

**Week 10**

November 7: The Ethics of History  
Readings: Peter Charles Hoffer, "Falsification: The Case of Michael Bellesiles" (D2L)  
DUE: Draft of Historiographical Essay (D2L)

November 9: Historiographical Essay Workshop  
DUE: Peer Reviews of Historiographical Essays (D2L and in class)

## **UNIT IV: WRITING THE ESSAY**

### **Week 11**

November 14: Composition

Readings: Brundage, "Some Elements of Effective Writing" (D2L); Strunk and White, "Elementary Principles of Composition" (D2L); MSH 241-248

DUE: Final Historiographical Essay (D2L)

November 16: Structuring Your Draft

Readings: Turabian Ch. 6

DUE: Bring to class a 2-page outline of your paper, including a thesis statement and overview of each section (D2L)

### **Week 12**

November 21: Writing the Essay

Readings: Turabian Ch. 7

DUE: Bring to class a draft of your introduction (D2L)

November 23: Fall Break

### **Week 13**

November 28: Oral Presentation Workshop

Readings: Turabian Ch. 13

November 30: Revising Your Work

Readings: Turabian Chs. 9-12

DUE: 1<sup>st</sup> Draft of Paper (D2L and 5 copies for in-class)

## **UNIT V: SHARING YOUR WORK**

### **Week 14**

December 5: Class workshop to discuss drafts

DUE: Peer reviews of drafts

December 7: No Class- Individual meetings with instructor to discuss drafts

### **Week 15**

December 12: Oral presentations

December 14: Oral presentations

**FINAL EXAM:** Thursday, December 21, 10:15am-12:15pm, CCC 231

DUE: Final Essays