

## History 400: Seminar Project: Wisconsin Places

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UWSP – History Department  
Dr. Neil Prendergast  
[nprender@uwsp.edu](mailto:nprender@uwsp.edu)

**Welcome!** This course is the capstone for the History major and will therefore utilize much of what you've learned in the program—and put it to use. Our project is to create an online encyclopedia for central Wisconsin. More accurately, our project is to begin one. This semester is the first in what will hopefully become a longstanding project that will benefit our part of the state.

Why this project for the capstone to the major? There are actually many reasons for it, so let me share some of the more important ones:

- Allows for independent work within a community of fellow collaborators
- Draws upon research methods learned in History 300 and other courses
- Turns student work toward the public

I am particularly excited for this project because it will show that historical research can contribute to public discussion. In the 2020's, we face a gaping hole in local media. Few genuinely local newspapers exist anywhere in the country, central Wisconsin included. The number of journalists who are actually experts on our region's culture and history is dwindling by the year. As a public, we face a genuine need for easily accessible, well researched information that can be drawn upon by anyone writing about the region. This course can help fill that need.

Let me say at the outset: this course will be different than your previous courses. Whereas you might be used to taking lecture notes during class time, in this course you will be giving your fellow students information and getting information from them. In other words, our class meetings will be much more like a professional meeting.

### The Model:

- If you want to start getting an idea of our goals, then take a look at the *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee*, which we will be emulating in our course: <https://emke.uwm.edu>

**Course Structure:** In the first few weeks, our work will be getting familiar with the genre of encyclopedia writing, with a special emphasis on the types of primary sources we'll be using. In the middle weeks, we will write a handful of short entries. Up through these weeks, all work will be Team Assignments and graded primarily for effort and professionalism. In the last weeks of the semester, we will turn our focus to Long Entries, which will be graded according to their qualities as research papers.

**Group Work:** While our work is collaborative, each assignment has only one name on it. Students will be graded for the work they do, not for what our entire group creates as a whole. The collaborative aspects of the course are structured into the semester as peer review, the details of which will become apparent with assignment descriptions. In short, if you dislike group work for all the reasons students typically do, then I think you will appreciate and enjoy the structure of this course.

**Dr. Prendergast's Office Hours:** This semester, I will not be seeing students in person. However, I will be available to speak one-on-one via phone on Thursdays from 5-7pm. Email me to set up a call. Other times will work, too, as my schedule allows.

**Email:** [nprender@uwsp.edu](mailto:nprender@uwsp.edu) Email is a great way to get a hold of me.

(If you're uncertain about how to write an email to a professor, then this is a great template:  
<https://medium.com/@portwoodstacer/how-to-email-your-professor-without-being-annoying-af-cf64ae0e4087> )

**Canvas:** Relevant readings will be linked or posted with each Assignment in Canvas.

**Assignments and Grading:** There are twenty Topic Assignments, three Unit Papers and one Final Paper.

40 points for **Team Assignments**

20 points for **Long Entry #1**

20 points for **Long Entry #2**

20 points for **Long Entry #3**

100 points total

We will use the following grade schedule:

A 93-100	B+ 87-89.99	C+ 77-79.99	D+ 67-69.99	F 59.99 and below
A- 90-92.99	B 83-86.99	C 73-76.99	D 60-66.99	
	B- 80-82.99	C- 70-72.99		

**Course Policies:** For information on plagiarism, consult <http://www.uwsp.edu/centers/rights>.

See Chapter 14, *Student Academic Standards and Disciplinary Procedures*, pages 5 -10, for the disciplinary possibilities if you are caught cheating. As an instructor deeply concerned with fairness in the classroom, I pursue each and every case of plagiarism and cheating. Please note that turnitin.com is used for the essay assignments.

**Equity of Educational Access:** If you have a learning or physical challenge which requires classroom accommodation, please contact the UWSP Disability Services office with your documentation as early as possible in the semester. They will then notify me, in a confidential memo, of the accommodations that will facilitate your success in the course. Disability Services Office, 103 Student Services Center, Voice: (715) 346-3365, TTY: (715) 346-3362, <http://www.uwsp.edu/special/disability/studentinfo.htm>

**Note:** *The syllabus is a general plan for the course. Deviations announced via email, or on Canvas may be necessary.*

**How Online Works in This Course:** Our course is “synchronous,” which means we have specific time allotted for learning each week, just as in a face to face course. There will be regular course meetings on Tuesday and Thursday. I appreciate attendance to these meetings but realize that during the pandemic I cannot hold students to that schedule. I will record our course meetings and post them or notes about them to Canvas. To make up a missed meeting, contact me and we will arrange a substitute exercise.

Our discussions will be via Zoom. For our small class (just eight of us!), I believe the platform will work very well. On most days, I will begin class with my own comments on the day, then turn over the discussion to students. I expect that we will not need the entire time those two tasks, which will leave us with time for guided research. This third task will be similar to a visit to the archive where the professor walks from table to table answering questions and checking in with students. For us, however, we’ll simply be on our Zoom call and reading through digital sources with the professor available for questions and holding some one-one-one conversations, all very similar to guided research in the actual archive.

**Our Digital Sources:** Our research this semester will focus on one collection, the Downtown Action Committee Administrative Papers, which UWSP Archivist Kyle O’Neill has graciously digitized for us over the summer. It’s an excellent collection for our encyclopedia project. The committee was charged with assessing options for downtown redevelopment in the 1970s and 1980s, which meant they studied the downtown of Stevens Point extensively. We will be able to use their work to craft entries for our encyclopedia. Beyond the DAC collection, we will also utilize the Stevens Point Journal, which has a long run that has been digitized, and also Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, also digitized. Information on accessing these sources will be available within each Assignment.

## **Online Course FAQ’s**

Can I work at my own pace? To some extent, yes. You can research ahead, since you do have all of the sources digitized. However, assignments will be rolled out as the semester progresses, so there is a real limit in completing actual assignments in advance.

What if I just don’t understand something? Then send me an email right away! The best part of my job is communicating with students. Sometimes students don’t even have a specific question, they just “don’t get it.” I know that can make it hard to email, but just say “Dear Dr. P., I’m not getting this.” We can sort it out via email or phone.

How do I know what I should be doing? I’m not that comfortable with online. You can always email me or call me, both of which I welcome. If you are the sort of student who does not like online instruction, then I actually think you will do fine in this course, since our regular schedule of course meetings is the heart of the semester, just as in a normal face-to-face course.

<b>Schedule:</b>			
Week 1	Thursday, Sept 3	Introduction	Syllabus Made Available on Canvas Zoom Meeting
Week 2	Tuesday, Sept 8	<b>Topic 1: Good Qualities of an Encyclopedia</b>	<b>Zoom Meeting</b>
	Thursday, Sept 10	<b>Topic 2: Getting to Know the DAC Collection</b>	<b>Zoom Meeting</b>
Week 3	Tuesday, Sept 15	<b>Topic 3: Getting to Know Sanborn Maps</b>	<b>Zoom Meeting</b>
	Thursday, Sept 17	<b>Topic 4: Getting to Know the Stevens Point Journal</b>	<b>Zoom Meeting</b>
Week 4	Tuesday, Sept 22	<b>Topic 5: Selecting Entries</b>	<b>Zoom Meeting</b>
	Thursday, Sept 24	<b>Topic 6: Writing Entries – Building Best Practices</b>	<b>Zoom Meeting</b>
Week 5	Tuesday Sept 29	<b>Topic 7: Draft for Entry “A”</b>	<b>Zoom Meeting</b>
	Thursday, Oct 1	<b>Topic 8: Draft for Entry “B”</b>	<b>Zoom Meeting</b>
Week 6	Tuesday, Oct 6	<b>Topic 9: Peer Review “A”</b>	<b>Zoom Meeting</b>
	Thursday, Oct 8	<b>Topic 10: Peer Review “B”</b>	<b>Zoom Meeting</b>
Week 7	Tuesday, Oct 13	<b>Topic 11: Draft for Entry “C”</b>	<b>Zoom Meeting</b>
	Thursday, Oct 15	<b>Topic 12: Draft for Entry “D”</b>	<b>Zoom Meeting</b>
Week 8	Tuesday, Oct 20	<b>Topic 13: Peer Review “C”</b>	<b>Zoom Meeting</b>

	Thursday, Oct 22	<b>Topic 14: Peer Review “D”</b>	<b>Zoom Meeting</b>
Week 9	Tuesday, Oct 27	<b>Topic 15: Revise “A” and “B”</b>	<b>Zoom Meeting</b>
	Thursday, Oct 29	<b>Topic 16: Revise “C” and “D”</b>	<b>Zoom Meeting</b>
Week 10	Tuesday, Nov 3	<b>Discuss Long Entries</b>	<b>Zoom Meeting</b>
	Thursday, Nov 5	<b>Discuss Long Entries</b>	<b>Zoom Meeting</b>
Week 11	Tuesday, Nov 10	<b>Long Entry #1 Due</b>	<b>Zoom Meeting</b>
	Thursday, Nov 12	<b>Discuss Long Entries</b>	<b>Zoom Meeting</b>
Week 12	Tuesday, Nov 17	<b>Topic 17 Peer Review</b>	<b>Zoom Meeting</b>
	Thursday, Nov 19	<b>Discuss Long Entries</b>	<b>Zoom Meeting</b>
Week 13	Tuesday, Nov 24	<b>Long Entry #2 Due</b>	<b>Zoom Meeting</b>
	THANKSGIVING		
Week 14	Tuesday, Dec 1	<b>Topic 18 Peer Review</b>	<b>Zoom Meeting</b>
	Thursday, Dec 3	<b>Discuss Long Entries</b>	<b>Zoom Meeting</b>
Week 15	Tuesday, Dec 8	<b>Discuss Long Entries</b>	<b>Zoom Meeting</b>
	Thursday, Dec 10	<b>Long Entry #3 Due</b>	<b>Zoom Meeting</b>

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Topic 19 Peer Review and Topic 20: Letter to the Next Cohort due at end of Final Exam time. See AccessPoint for Final Exam time.