

History 293
MW 11:00-12:15 Holton 341 or TBD pending pandemic guidelines!
Prof. Christine Evans
Office hours: HLT 329, Tuesdays 1-3 and by appointment
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Seminar on Historical Method, Theory, and Approach

This class will prepare you to navigate growing uncertainty about how we establish truth by focusing on the careful production and wise consumption of historical arguments. Students will learn how to find and interpret primary and secondary sources, from archival documents to photographs, newspaper articles, maps, documentary films, and museum exhibitions. Rather than reading these sources for “the facts,” we will examine how different people, writing in different times and places, can represent the same set of events in strikingly different ways. At the same time, we will practice using the powerful tools that history gives us for uncovering, documenting, and communicating credible and important stories about the past. By the end of the class you should be well prepared to research and write a historical essay, but you should also be better equipped to notice and interrogate the many historical claims and assumptions that surround us in our everyday lives.

Course Objectives:

- Understand what history is, why it matters, and how historians produce and secure knowledge—how we know what we know.
- Have a basic knowledge of historiography, i.e. “the study of the writing of history” and be able to effectively argue that history is an interpretive discipline.
- Be able to employ the tools history gives us (the “discipline” part) to uncover, document, and share stories about the past, including being able to:
- Conduct effective research in both primary and secondary sources and develop research procedures.
- Analyze primary and secondary sources
- Formulate good historical questions from encounters with sources. Students should be able to support interpretations with evidence.
- Be able to use appropriate citation formats
- Develop and use the skills to properly document their research and correctly attribute the sources of quotations, paraphrases, arguments, and specific references used.
- Be able to create a useful, broad-based bibliography.
- Develop effective communication skills both written and oral

Required Readings:

Sarah Maza, *Thinking About History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017)
ISBN: 9780226109336

- Please plan to purchase (e-book or used is fine) Sarah Maza's *Thinking about History*, or borrow it from another UW-system library or a public library. Assuming course reserves are available to us in the fall, this book will also be on reserve for you to access for free. If purchasing this book OR accessing it via a library is not an option, contact me and we will figure something out!
- All other assigned readings will be available for free online, via the UWM library's electronic reserves and the course Canvas site. Please plan to either bring a device to class on which you can view the readings, or print them out for each class meeting. We will be analyzing the readings in some detail, and you will need to be able to refer to the texts during our discussions. Failure to bring the readings to class will lower your grade for participation.