

Course Syllabus

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HIST 713:001: Historical Research Methods

Spring 2021

Meeting: Tuesdays, 3:00 to 5:40 Online (Collaborate Ultra)

Instructor: Thomas Haigh, Holton Hall 349. Office Hours (virtual only) 10:00 to 12:00 on Monday and by appointment. Thomas.haigh@gmail.com

Textbook: Nothing to purchase. All required readings will be made available via Canvas.

Description: Helps graduate students become savvy consumers and effective producers of historical research. The class begins with a look at changing understandings of who writes history and how, before surveying a range of historical narratives telling the stories of different kinds of protagonist, from individuals and ideas to diseases and machines. The middle part of the semester will be spent exploring the production of various kinds of historical writing, from book reviews to digital history projects. Then we turn to the selection and interpretation of historical sources, including digital resources, objects, and images as well as archival collections. Students will put these skills into action in a term project negotiated with the instructor to support their personal development as historians.

Format: This course is essentially a seminar, in that there are no lectures. Students will come to class having done the assigned reading and completed any preparatory assignments. Most of the class time will be spent discussing readings, or sharing things the students have found out or prepared for class.

Learning Goals: History 713 will prepare students to

- Analyze and interpret a variety of historical sources, including texts, images, and data.
- Read and use primary and secondary sources critically and effectively
- Understand history both as a body of knowledge and as an intellectual and social process.
- Use evidence and citations effectively to construct a larger argument.
- Critically read and produce different kinds of historical research products
- Craft historical narratives with different kinds of protagonist
- Plan and execute a historical research project

Assignment of Credit: You are expected to attend and participate fully in each class meeting, having read and analyzed the assigned materials. You will demonstrate your understanding of these readings in two take-home essays, in your participation in discussion sections, and through your performance in two examinations. These items are weighted as follows:

- Four short written assignments submitted through the semester. 10% each (40% total)
- Major assignment for the class – due in exam week. 30%

- Discussion participation (includes preparatory assignments presented in class for some weeks). 30%

Short Written Assignments: The four short assignments will be:

- An "autopsy" report on a book of your choice
- A publishable book review of a scholarly historical work
- An essay evaluating a primary source
- A report identifying one or more archival collections suitable for a specific research project

Major Assignment: Students are taking the course at different stages in their studies and with different kinds of research in mind. The assignment that makes sense for a Ph.D. student already planning a dissertation would be different from an M.A. student with no plans to write a thesis. Some students may already have gathered data and want to produce a draft journal article or chapter during the semester, while others may be at the stage where a literature review and archival research plan would be a more appropriate product. Archival and library closures due to the pandemic complicate things further. So each student will negotiate an assignment with me to best suit their needs. Some possibilities:

- A draft research paper
- A draft thesis or dissertation proposal (in a short format suitable for fellowship applications)
- A literature review and plan of archival research for a new project
- A public or digital history project to present the results of original research
- A grant or fellowship proposal

Letter Grades Assignment: I will use the weightings given above to turn your performance in each area of the course into a numerical average. This will translate to your overall course grade as follows:

Grade	Lower bound	Upper bound
A	94.00%	N/A
A-	91.00%	93.99%
B+	88.00%	90.99%
B	85%	87.99%
B-	82%	84.99%
C+	79.00%	81.99%

C	76.00%	78.99%
C-	73.00%	75.99%
D+	70.00%	72.99%
D	67.00%	69.99%
D-	64.00%	66.99%
F	N/A	63.99%

Course Specific Policies

- **Attendance:** Attendance will be taken at each class meeting. Everyone is allowed to miss one discussion section. You will be penalized by 3% on your **overall course grade** for your second unexcused absence, and by another 3% for each additional unexcused absence after that. If the absence occurs for reasons outside your control, such as a medical or family emergency, please get in touch with me.
- **Late Work:** All work will be penalized by 5% for each day or part day after the deadline it is received. The maximum reduction will be to a score of 50%. Extensions require a good reason and must be arranged in advance.
- **Academic Misconduct:** This course is subject to the University's Academic Misconduct policy, which can be found on the web here (Links to an external site.). Please read it carefully. Any evidence of plagiarism on the assignments or cheating on the examinations will be punished with a grade of 'F' for the **entire course**. This includes handing in work for which you have received credit in another course (even if it is your work), handing in someone else's work or a portion of their work, cheating on examinations, or failing to acknowledge (cite) your sources. Directly quoted material not placed within quotation marks or indented is also plagiarism, even if you do include a citation.
- **Participation by Students with Disabilities:** If you need special accommodations in order to meet any of the requirements of this course, please contact me as soon as possible.

General UWM Course Policies

All standard UWM course policies apply. These are available at <http://uwm.edu/secu/wp-content/uploads/sites/122/2016/12/Syllabus-Links.pdf>. Do not be fooled by the "2016" in the URL -- this is the latest version (revised 2019 or later).

Week by Week

1. So, What Is History Anyway? (Jan 26)
 - H. Carr "The Historian and His Facts," ch, 1 of *What Is History?* (Macmillan, 1961).
 - "Richard J. Evans. "Prologue: What is History? - Now" in *What is History Now?* Richard J. Evans (Palgrave, 2002):1-18.

- Alice Kessler Harris. "What is Gender History Now?" in *What is History Now?* Richard J. Evans (Palgrave, 2002):95-112.
- "Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt & Margaret Jacob. *Telling the Truth about History* (Norton, 1994). Ch. 4 only ("Competing Histories of America").
- Rebecca Onion, "Trump's '1776 Report' Would Be Funny if It Weren't So Dangerous," Slate.com, Jan 19 2021. (Links to an external site.)

PART 1: Historical Protagonists

2. Histories of people and peoples (Feb 2)
 - Ulrich, Laurel Thatcher. *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812*. (Knopf, 1990). Intro & ch. 1 only.
 - Smith, Sidonie & Julia Watson. *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2nd 2010). Ch. 9 ("A Tool Kit: Twenty-four Strategies for Reading Life Narratives") only.
 - Foner, Eric. *Who Owns History: Rethinking the Past in a Changing World* (Hill & Wang, 2002). Ch. 7 ("Who Is an American") only.
 - Baptist, Edward. *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism*. New York: Basic Books, 2014. Intro & 215-297 only.
3. Histories of ideas, cultures and practices (Feb 9)
 - Darnton, Robert. *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History*. (Basic Books, 1984). Chapter 2 ("Workers Revolt: The Great Cat Massacre of the Rue Saint-Severin") only.
 - Willentz, Sean. *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850*. (Oxford University Press, 1984). Intro & ch. 5 ("The Rise and Fall of the Working Men") only.
 - Faust, Drew Gilpin. *This Republic of Suffering*. (Knopf, 2008). Chapters 3 & 8 only.
4. Histories of places, landscapes and diseases (Feb 16)
 - Cronon, William. *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (Hill & Wang, 1983). Chs. 1, 7 & 8 only.
 - White, Richard. *The Organic Machine: The Remaking of the Columbia River* (Hill & Wang, 1995). Chs. 1. & 2 only.
 - Wailoo, Keith. *How Cancer Crossed the Color Line* (Oxford University Press, 2011). Introduction & ch. 1 ("Primitive's Progress") only.
(Feb 19 - Book "Autopsy" Short Assignment Due)
5. Histories of technologies, institutions and professions (Feb 23)
 - Monfort, Nick & Ian Bogost. *Racing the Beam: The Atari Video Computer System* (MIT Press, 2009). Chs. 1&2 only.
 - Cowan, Ruth Schwartz. "How the Refrigerator Got Its Hum." In *the Social Shaping of Technology*, ed. Donald A. MacKenzie & Judy Wajcman (Open University Press, 1985).
 - Friedman, Walter A. "John H. Paterson and the Sales Strategy of the National Cash Register Company, 1884 to 1922." *Business History Review* 72:4 (Winter, 1998): 552-582.
 - Numbers, Ronald L. "The Fall and Rise of the American Medical Profession," in Judith Walzer Leavitt & Ronald L. Numbers (eds.) *Sickness & Health in America* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1997): 225-237.

PART 2: Types of Historical Writing

6. Making a book review or review essay (Mar 2)
 - Edwards, Paul N. "How to Read a Book". <http://pne.people.si.umich.edu/PDF/howtoread.pdf> (Links to an external site.)
 - Blackey, Robert. "Words to the Whys: Crafting Critical Book Reviews." *The History Teacher* 27:2 (Feb 1994): 159-166.
 - Further readings TBA.
7. Making a journal article or conference paper (Mar 9)
 - Haigh, Thomas & Mark Priestley. "Contextualizing Colossus: Codebreaking Technology and Institutional Capabilities" *Technology & Culture* 61:3 (July, 2020): 871-900.
 - Mary Lynn Rampola, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History* (Bedford/St Martin's, 2021). Ch 5 ("Writing a Research Paper") only.
 - Edwards, Paul N. "How to Give an Academic Talk." <http://pne.people.si.umich.edu/PDF/howtotalk.pdf> (Links to an external site.)
 - Further readings TBA.
(Mar 12 - Book Review Short Assignment Due)
8. Making a thesis or a book (Mar 16)
 - Haigh, Thomas. *Finding a Story for the History of Computing* (Siegen University working paper, 2018). <https://www001.zimt.uni-siegen.de/ojs/index.php/wps1187/article/view/20/21> (Links to an external site.)
 - Other readings TBA
(Agree final projects with instructor)

(No class Mar 23 – Spring Break)

9. Making an online exhibition or popular history (Mar 30)
 - Maza, Sarah. *Thinking About History* (University of Chicago Press, 2017). Ch. 4 ("How History is Produced") only.
 - Haigh, Thomas. "Hey Google, What's a Moonshot? How Silicon Valley Mocks Apollo" *Communications of the ACM* 62:1 (January 2019): 24-30. <https://cacm.acm.org/magazines/2019/1/233518-hey-google-whats-a-moonshot/fulltext> (Links to an external site.)
 - Other readings TBA

PART 3: Historical Sources

10. Using Archives (Apr-6)
 - Poole, Alex H. "The Strange Career of Jim Crow Archives: Race, Space, and History in the Mid-Twentieth-Century American South." *The American Archivist* 77:1 (Spring/Summer 2014): 23-63.
 - Paul, Herman. "The Heroic Study of Records: The Contested Persona of the Archival Historian." *History of the Human Sciences* 26:4 (2013): 67-83.
 - Robertson, Stephen. "What's Law Got to Do with It? Legal Records and Sexual Histories." *Journal of Human Sexuality* 14:1/2 (Jan/Apr 2005):161-185.

- Maza, Sarah. *Thinking About History* (University of Chicago Press, 2017). Ch. 6 (“Facts or Fictions”) only.
- Additional reading or activity TBA.
(Apr 9 - Archive Report Due)
- 11. Using oral and video history (Apr 13)
 - Portelli, Alessandro. “What Makes Oral History Different,” in Robert Perks & Alistair Thomson (eds.) *The Oral History Reader* (Routledge, 1998): 63-74.
 - Ritchie, Donald A. *Doing Oral History: A Practical Guide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). Ch. 3 (“Conducting Interviews”) only.
 - Thomson, Alistair. “Four Paradigm Transformations in Oral History.” *Oral History Review* 34:1 (2006): 49-70.
 - Examples and preparation TBA.
- 12. Using organizational and official documents (Apr 20)
 - Dublin, Thomas. *Transforming Women's Work: New England Lives in the Industrial Revolution*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994. Ch. 3 only.
 - Moran, James. “A Tale of Two Bureaucracies: Asylum and Lunacy Law Paperwork” *Rethinking History* 22:3 (2018): 419-436.
 - Further readings TBA,
- 13. Using objects and images (Apr 27)
 - Miller, Bonnie A. “A Primer for Using Historical Images in Research.” *American Periodicals* 27:1 (2017): 73-94.
 - Saffell, Cameron L. “An Alternative Means of Field Research: Extending Material Culture Analysis to Farm Implements.” *Agricultural History* 88:4 (Fall 2014): 517-537.
 - Further readings TBA
(Apr 30 - Source Report Due)
- 14. Using digital resources (May 4)
 - Atkinson, Paul and Ian N. Gregory. “Child Welfare in Victorian Newspapers: Corpus-Based Discourse Analysis.” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 19:2 (Autumn 2017): 159-186.
 - Rockwell, Geoffrey and Stefan Sinclair, *Hermeneutica: Computer-Assisted Interpretation in the Humanities* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016), chs. TBC.
 - Blevins, Cameron. "Topic Modeling Martha Ballard's Diary," *Cameron Blevins* blog, Part 1 (Links to an external site.) and Part 2. (Links to an external site.)
 - Frederick W. Gibbs, "New Forms of History: Critiquing Data and its Representations," *The American Historian* (Feb. 2016): <http://tah.oah.org/february-2016/new-forms-of-history-critiquing-data-and-its-representations/>.
- 15. Wrap up and presentation of projects (May 11)
 - Activities TBA
 - Project draft due May 10, to give me a chance to look at it before class.

Final project version due May 22 (During exam week, no class meeting).