

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN  
Department of History

Semester II Year 1980-81

<u>COURSE NO.</u>	<u>COURSE TITLE</u>	<u>INSTRUCTOR</u>
300	Art and Science of History	T. Archdeacon

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Art and Science of History has three instructional goals. It will introduce students to various contemporary trends in historical research. It will present to them the principles for evaluating literary and quantitative evidence. It will help them learn how to select topics for investigation, to uncover information about their subjects, and to present their findings clearly and cogently.

I plan to build this course around the examination of three problems that will provide the raw material for the study of historical styles and methods. The three are witchcraft in colonial America, the economics of slavery, and the melting pot thesis. All make it possible to show how historians often seek the answers to sharply focused questions in the hope of developing insights into broader, more subtle phenomena and how they constantly strive to understand the particular in the context of the general.

I hope also in this course to teach the students about the principles behind and the procedures involved in routine statistical analyses of the kind they will encounter in many recent historical works and even in an increasing number of newspaper and news magazine articles. In conjunction with this segment of the course, I shall introduce the students to the use of computers in historical research. The instruction will be painless -- I hope that it will make computers less intimidating to our humanities and social LECTURES sciences students as well as broaden their interests and even their "marketable" skills.

Tu Th + Discussion Section

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS and EXAMINATIONS

Students will take three exams in History 300. The subject matter for the tests will not be cumulative. Those taking the course for four credits must also write a ten page term paper.

GRADING SYSTEM

For three credit students, each exam will count for one-third of the grade. For four credit students, each exam will count for one-quarter of the grade and the term paper will make up the remaining one-quarter.

REQUIRED READINGS

Marian L. Starkey, Devil in Massachusetts  
Robert Fogel & Stanley Engerman, Time on the Cross, Vol. I  
Stephan Thernstrom, The Other Bostonians