

Senior Thesis/Honors Thesis Colloquium

History 680/690 – Department of History, UW-Madison – Fall 2010



Goals

This course is designed to *enhance and support* your senior thesis work in three ways. First, it offers a forum in which you and your fellow thesis writers can address collectively the challenges common to writing and research in every historical field: How do I find a good research question? How do I find the right sources? Now that I've found good sources, what do I do with them? What's the best way of organizing my thesis? Does my evidence support my argument? Or do I need to present it differently? In other words, we will address the *generic* dimensions of writing a senior thesis. Throughout the semester, you must also consult closely with your senior thesis advisor about issues specific to your particular topic and about your schedule for the remainder of the semester.

The second goal is professionalization. The colloquium will enhance your skills at: a) presenting your own work in a professional manner, b) critiquing others' work constructively, and c) listening to oral presentations and responding to them intelligently on the fly. These are skills that will stand you in good stead, regardless whether you pursue graduate work in history or some other avenue in life.

The colloquium also has a social dimension that will enhance your thesis. Together, we will function as your support group. At each step in the process of writing a senior thesis—from your initial attempts to put thoughts on paper through final revisions of the thesis—you will share your work with your peers in brain-storming sessions. At times you may have specific issues to bring before the colloquium for our collective advice; at other times, you may have valuable suggestions or insights to offer others.

Rhythm and requirements

The rhythm of the semester will be geared to the steps that the writing process entails. You may rest assured that the pace will intensify as the end of the semester draws near! A big part of my job is to keep you on track so that those of you who are first-semester students are well-positioned to begin drafting your thesis by the end of the semester and those who are in their second semester will be able to complete the thesis in a timely fashion.

First-semester students will have a series of assignments as they move through the initial stages of formulating a coherent project and searching out appropriate sources.

For **second-semester students**, the principal requirements are faithful attendance and engaged participation when we do meet plus hard work on your own project at all other times. The schedule includes several suggested target dates by which to submit your polished draft and revised draft to your advisor (and to me), but firm deadlines should be set in close consultation with your faculty advisor. Please note that the History Department now requires thesis writers to submit an electronic copy of their thesis. Your grade for History 680/690 will be submitted only after this has been received.

Meetings: Mondays, 1:20-3:20 pm, 2111 Humanities – Prof. D.'s office: 5109 Humanities

Tel. 608.263.1854; email: cdunlavy@wisc.edu

Office hours: Tues. and Thurs., 5:30-6:30 p.m. (some T, 6:00-6:30 only), or by appt. (email me).

Required reading: Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th ed. (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2007) – this edition only! Keep this close at hand and consult it frequently. At appropriate moments during the semester, we will discuss some of the chapters in the book.

Attendance – need I say? – is mandatory. If urgent circumstances require you to miss a meeting, please be sure to let me know.

Your **grade** will be based 100% on participation (attendance, preparation, discussion, and submission of assignments).

For all students – Historical Research Workshops

This year the History Department, in collaboration with staff at Memorial Library, has organized a Historical Research Workshop for its students. **Attendance at one of the workshops is required** if you are in your first semester of thesis work and strongly recommended if you are in your second semester. The workshops will be held on three dates – September 21, September 22, and September 30 – 6:00 to 7:15 p.m. in Room 231 at Memorial Library. Advance registration is required. Go to: http://www.ohrd.wisc.edu/reg/catalog_course.aspx?groupcoursekey=31638.

Recommended reading

If you should occasionally feel the need for *inspiration*, I would recommend Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft* (New York: Vintage Books, 1953) or later edition. Multiple copies are available in the library.

If you need to *improve your writing style* (and who doesn't!), this old standby is indispensable: William Strunk, Jr., and E. G. White, *The Elements of Style*. 4th ed. New York: Longman, 2000. (The original edition is also available online at <http://www.bartleby.com/141/>.) Also, be sure to consult the resources offered on campus by the UW Writing Center (see links on our Learn@UW website).

Need to *hone your analytical skills*? Consult M. Neil Browne and Stuart M. Keeley, *Asking the Right Questions: A Guide to Critical Thinking* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 200x – any recent edition); or the classic by David Hackett Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970).

All of these books are available in UW libraries.



Warning – do your own work!

Plagiarism will not be tolerated and is grounds for failing the course. If you need a refresher on what exactly constitutes plagiarism, including inadvertent plagiarism, consult *A Manual for Writers*, pp. 77-80, and <http://www.plagiarism.org>.

Semester schedule- see next page

Meetings: Mondays, 1:20-3:20 pm, 2111 Humanities – Prof. D.'s office: 5109 Humanities

Tel. 608.263.1854; email: cdunlavy@wisc.edu

Office hours: Tues. and Thurs., 5:30-6:30 p.m. (some T, 6:00-6:30 only), or by appt. (email me).

Semester schedule

Note that the details are subject to change, as circumstance warrant—though always after collective discussion. Since the colloquium includes first- as well as second-semester students, our schedule will be rather complex. Some weeks we will meet jointly, and in other weeks I'll meet separately with one group or the other or in individual consultations. All students are welcome, however, at all colloquium meetings.

Date	First-semester students	Second-semester students		
September 13	Joint meeting –orientation, introductions			
September 20	<p>Joint meeting: 1:20 p.m. to approx. 2:20 p.m.</p> <p>Roundtable by second-semester students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your most important advice for the first-semester students, based on your experience last semester? • Bibliographies and note-taking: How do you keep track of all that information? <p>Approx. 2:20-3:20 p.m.</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">First-semester students: Attendance for this part is optional, but strongly recommended.</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Discussion of drafting issues: Read (or review) Turabian, <i>A Manual for Writers</i>, chapters 4-8.</td> </tr> </table>		First-semester students: Attendance for this part is optional, but strongly recommended.	Discussion of drafting issues: Read (or review) Turabian, <i>A Manual for Writers</i> , chapters 4-8.
First-semester students: Attendance for this part is optional, but strongly recommended.	Discussion of drafting issues: Read (or review) Turabian, <i>A Manual for Writers</i> , chapters 4-8.			
September 27	<p>Question: <i>What do historians do, how do they do it, and why?</i></p> <p>Assigned reading for discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ John H. Arnold, <i>History: A Very Short Introduction</i>, ch. 1 (1-14) and chs. 3-7 (35-123) – on Learn@UW ○ Turabian, <i>A Manual for Writers</i>, chs. 1-4 and 14-16. 	<p>No meeting. Email me the schedule that you have agreed upon with your advisor.</p>		
October 4	<p>Joint meeting, 1:20 p.m. to 3:20 p.m.</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Read all second-semester students' materials (pdf on Learn@UW, available Wed. evening, Sept. 29). ○ Prepare questions (constructively critical) to ask of each author. </td> <td style="width: 50%;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Upload your abstract, thesis outline, and a small section (2-3 pp.) of your thesis draft by <u>noon on Wed., Sept. 29</u>, to the Learn@UW dropbox. ○ I will collate them and post them on Learn@UW as a pdf. ○ Read the entire pdf and prepare (constructively critical) questions for each author. </td> </tr> </table>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Read all second-semester students' materials (pdf on Learn@UW, available Wed. evening, Sept. 29). ○ Prepare questions (constructively critical) to ask of each author. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Upload your abstract, thesis outline, and a small section (2-3 pp.) of your thesis draft by <u>noon on Wed., Sept. 29</u>, to the Learn@UW dropbox. ○ I will collate them and post them on Learn@UW as a pdf. ○ Read the entire pdf and prepare (constructively critical) questions for each author.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Read all second-semester students' materials (pdf on Learn@UW, available Wed. evening, Sept. 29). ○ Prepare questions (constructively critical) to ask of each author. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Upload your abstract, thesis outline, and a small section (2-3 pp.) of your thesis draft by <u>noon on Wed., Sept. 29</u>, to the Learn@UW dropbox. ○ I will collate them and post them on Learn@UW as a pdf. ○ Read the entire pdf and prepare (constructively critical) questions for each author. 			

October 11	Brief individual presentations of your project, its status, and your research priorities. Read Turabian, §§ 13.1-13.2 as you prepare for this.	No meeting
October 18	1:20 p.m. to 2:20 p.m.	
	No meeting	Updates and discussion
	2:20 p.m. to 3:20 p.m.	
	Prospectus-writing workshop	No meeting
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Read Turabian, ch. 5, Planning Your Argument 	
	Brainstorming on the search for sources	
October 25	First-semester: your prospectus is due today (upload to dropbox).	
	No colloquium meeting today – Prof. D. will have office hours for one-on-one consultations.	
November 1	1:20 p.m. to 2:50 p.m. (note change of meeting time)	
	Read each other's prospectuses on Learn@UW for collective discussion.	No meeting
	2:50 p.m. to 4:20 p.m. (note extended meeting time)	
	No meeting	Prof. D. will be available for individual consultations.
		TARGET DATE: Submit completed draft of thesis, with biblio and notes, to your advisor.
November 8	No meeting today—work hard on your bibliography	Updates and discussion – review Part III of <i>A Manual of Style</i>
November 15	Joint meeting, 1:20 p.m. to 3:20 p.m.	
	Detailed bibliography due (2-3 pp., properly formatted). Bring 24 photocopies to colloquium for collective discussion.	Give the first-semester students the benefit of your experience as we discuss their bibliographies.

November 22	Bring photocopies (1-2 pp.) of your best primary source for collective discussion.	No colloquium meeting. TARGET DATE: Thesis advisor returns your thesis draft for revisions. Be sure to have read chs. 11-12 of <i>A Manual for Writer</i> so you are ready to begin revisions.
November 29		
		1:20 p.m. to 2:20 p.m.
	No meeting	Discussion of advisor comments and revision issues
		2:20 p.m. to 3:20 p.m.
	Detailed outline and revised bibliography due.	No meeting
December 6		
		1:20 p.m. to 2:20 p.m.
	No meeting	Optional problem-solving session
		2:20 p.m. to 4:20 p.m. – note extended meeting time
	Individual meetings w/Prof. D.	No meeting – work like mad on your revisions
December 13	Individual presentations	No meeting TARGET DATE: Submit finished thesis to your advisor now, if you have not already done so.
December 20 (exam week)	Thesis presentations by second-semester students – open to the “public”	
December 23 (last exam day)		TARGET DATE: last day for advisor’s final approval of thesis