

History 900
An Introduction to History for Historians of the United States

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Fall Semester 2008
Time: Monday 9-12
Location: 5257 Humanities
Office Hours: Th. 1-3 & by appt.

This seminar is designed to introduce incoming graduate students to the study and practice of the history of the United States. A relatively new addition to the graduate catalogue here at Madison, it grew out of the recognition that academic training requires more than the critical reading and research that you will do in other courses.¹ While we will do some of that this semester, we will also step back to take a broader look at the historical profession and how it has changed over time. We will examine the evolution of graduate training and how it has affected the intellectual and demographic nature of the profession. We will also review some of the “nuts-and-bolts” of historical scholarship, including research, writing and peer evaluation. Finally, we will introduce ourselves to each other and to other members of Madison’s large community of historians. Over the course of the semester, participants should develop an idea of what kind of historians they want to be, a sense of what will be required to reach that goal, and a cohort of friends, colleagues and mentors who can help them as they proceed through graduate school.

Course Requirements

- 1. The Seminar:** Attendance at all scheduled meetings is required and absolutely necessary to the success of this seminar. All participants should come to class prepared for critical and intelligent discussion of the assigned readings, and for active and respectful engagement with their colleagues and professors. Be sure to complete all assignments well in advance of the seminar meeting, and take time to gather your thoughts and prepare questions and comments for discussion. Please inform me in advance if you need to miss a class meeting.
- 2. Reading:** Copies of the following books are available for purchase at Rainbow Books, 426 W Gilman St:

Bonnie G. Smith, *The Gender of History: Men, Women and Historical Practice*
(Harvard University Press, 2001)

Ian Tyrrell, *Historians in Public: The Practice of American History, 1890-1970*
(University of Chicago Press, 2005)

¹ This syllabus is based on courses designed by Bill Cronon, Nan Enstad, Jeremi Suri, Steve Kantrowitz and Susan Johnson.

Thomas Bender, Philip M. Katz, Colin A. Palmer, and the Committee on Graduate Education of the American Historical Association, *The Education of Historians for the Twenty-First Century* (University of Illinois Press, 2004)

Kate L. Turabian, Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (University of Chicago Press, 2007)

All other readings are posted on the seminar website at Learn@UW.

3. Collective Work: These assignments are designed to develop supportive relationships with peers that you can turn to for feedback on your reading, research and writing. You should approach them in a spirit of collegiality and respect and your comments should be both constructive and critical.

Learn@UW discussions: These are designed to initiate discussions that we will continue in class on 9/15, 9/22 and 12/1. You will need to complete the assigned readings and make two contributions to the discussion before noon, the Sunday before class. This will work best if you post your first comment early in the week.

Working Groups: Before class on 10/13, you will need to form a group with 1-2 classmates. They should be people whose research interests are similar to yours and who you feel comfortable sharing your work with. You will rely on this group for feedback on your writing during the rest of the semester.

4. Written Work: All written assignments should be typed in 12-point font, double-spaced with standard 1-inch margins. They should be free of grammatical and typographical errors and formatted according to the *Chicago Manual of Style*. When in doubt, please consult the required text, Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers*.

Calendar and Assignments:

September 8

9-10:30 Introduction

10:30-12 How to Succeed in Graduate School

Guests: Keith Woodhouse, Jen Holland, Kori Graves, Michel Hogue

September 15

What is a Historian?

Reading: Smith, *Gender of History*

Assignment: Contribute at least two comments to a Learn@UW discussion of Bonnie Smith's *The Gender of History*. How did the book make you think differently about the kind of historian you want to be? Complete your comments before noon on Sunday, Sept. 14, and review the discussion before class on Monday.

September 22

What is U.S. History?

Reading: Tyrell, *Historians in Public*

Assignment: Contribute at least two comments to a Learn@UW discussion of Ian Tyrell's *Historians in Public*. How did the book make you think differently about what historians do and how they relate to a broader public. Complete your comments before noon on Sunday, Sept. 21, and review the discussion before class on Monday.

September 29

9-10:30 How to become a Historian

Reading: Bender, et al., *Education of Historians*, 1-44
William Cronon, "Getting Ready to Do History"

10:30-12 African American/International History

Guest: Brenda Gayle Plummer

Reading: Plummer, "The Changing Face of Diplomatic History"
Plummer, "Peace was the Glue"

October 6

9-10:30 How to be a Historian

Reading: Bender, et al., *Education of Historians*, 45-138
AHA Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct

10:30-12 Intellectual/Cultural History

Guest: Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen

Reading: "Intellectual History in the Age of Cultural Studies"

SPECIAL EVENT:

"How I Became a Historian" a Schomburg Lecture presented by Dr. Franklin Knight; Leonard and Helen R. Stulman Professor of History - Johns Hopkins University. Monday, October 6, Curti Lounge, 5243 Humanities, 3:30 - 5:30 PM

October 13

9-10:30 Gender and Women's History

Guest: Jeanne Boydston

Reading: TBA

10:30-12 Researching I: Visit to the Wisconsin Historical Society

Guest: Peter Gottlieb

Reading: Cronon et al., "State Budgets and the Crisis of Historical Infrastructure."

Assignment: Working in groups of 2-3 people, identify 2-3 collections of primary sources that are available in the UW Libraries and relevant to your intended field of study.

October 20

9-10:30 Researching II

Reading: Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*, Chapters 1-4

Assignment: Working individually, prepare an annotated bibliography of five individual documents from the primary source collections identified last week. Follow Turabian's guidelines for proper citations and in a few sentences describe how you might use this source to write a scholarly article.

10:30-12 Comparative Race & Nationalisms

Guest: Camille Guérin-Gonzales

Reading: TBA

October 27

9-10:30 Writing I

Reading: Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*, Chapters 5-8

McEvoy, "Writing Heuristics"

"Guidelines for Submitting Manuscripts to the *AHR*"

Assignment: Bring to seminar one short piece of historical writing that you admire. It could be a short article or story, or a section or chapter from a book. Be prepared to explain why you believe the piece is effective and what strategies you might adopt from it for your own writing.

10:30-12 Political History

Guest: John M. Cooper

Reading: TBA

November 3

9-10:30 Writing II

Reading: Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*, 9-12

"Book Reviewing in the *AHR*"

Assignment: Write a 750-word review of any book-length work of historical scholarship. Chose a book that you admire and know well.

10:30-12 History of Foreign Policy

Reading: Suri, "The Rise and Fall of an International Counter-Culture, 1960-1975"

Suri, "Henry Kissinger, the American Dream, and the Jewish Immigrant Experience in the Cold War,"

November 10

9-10:30 Applying for Grants and Getting Published
Reading: Cronon, "Writing a Research Prospectus"
Przeworski and Salomon, "The Art of Writing Proposals"

Assignment: Draft a 5-page research prospectus and bibliography for a scholarly article that could be written based on the primary sources that you identified for Oct. 20. Bring 1-2 copies to exchange with the classmates that you identified primary collections with for Oct. 13.

10:30-12 Histories of Religion and Region
Guests: Charles L. Cohen & Susan Johnson
Reading: TBA

November 17

9-10:30 Attending and Presenting at Conferences
Reading: Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*, 13-14

Assignment: Come to class prepared to give a 5-minute presentation on your research prospectus.

10:30-12 Environmental History
Guests: William Cronon, Nancy Langston, Gregg Mitman
Reading: TBA

November 24

9-10:30 Teaching I
Reading: Bain, "How Do They Conduct Class?"
Frederick, "Four Reflections on Teaching and Learning History"

Assignment: Bring to class a two-page evaluation of your classmate's research proposal. Base your evaluation on pieces by Cronon, Przeworski and Salomon. Give the evaluation to your classmate, along with a proofed draft of hers or his proposal.

10:30-12 Asian American and Jewish History and Culture
Guests: Cindy I-Fen Cheng & Tony Michels
Reading: TBA

December 1

9-10:30 Teaching II
Reading: Nash, et al., "In the Matter of History"
Atkins, "A Teaching Strategy: Teaching U.S. History Backwards"

Assignment: Contribute at least two comments to a Learn@UW discussion of Nash, et al., "In the Matter of History." How did the chapter make you think differently about

your role as an aspiring teacher of U.S. history and your responsibility to your students and society? Complete your comments before noon on Sunday, Nov. 30, and review the discussion before class on Monday.

10:30-12 History of the Progressive Era
Guest: William J. Reese
Reading: Peter G. Feline, "Narrating Progressivism."

December 8 Wrap-up

Assignment: Final paper due: A 5-page research prospectus and bibliography for a scholarly article that could be written based on the primary sources that you identified for Oct. 20