

History 680/690
Senior Thesis/Honors Thesis Colloquium
Spring 2018

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Office hours: Tuesdays, 3:30-5pm, or by appointment
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The Basics

Writing an original research paper is both challenging and rewarding. It requires that you master many parts of the so-called Historian's Craft—creating a research question, surveying a field of secondary literature, working out the kinds of conversations that historians are having, finding appropriate primary sources, crafting an argument using those sources, inserting yourself into a conversation, and coming up with an answer to the dreaded “So What?” question. This colloquium is designed to help guide you as you plan, write, edit, and submit your senior thesis. The work we'll do in this colloquium is less about *content* and more about *process*. You'll each already be working with a faculty adviser, and our class will supplement this work, rather than replace it. First-semester writers (FSW) and second-semester writers (SSW) will meet jointly, but will work on different assignments (I will discuss the plans for a separate set of assignments with the first-semester writers). By the end of the semester, first semester writers will produce a complete research proposal, while second semester writers will complete the undergraduate thesis.

Course Expectations

The credit standard for this course is met by an expectation of a total of 90 hours of student engagement with the courses learning activities (at least 45 hours per credit), which include regularly scheduled instructor-student meeting times, reading, writing, and other student work as described in the syllabus.

My Approach

There are **four** parts to my approach to research and writing, which are reflected in the syllabus.

Research and writing:

1. Is a *process*. It does not happen in a linear fashion. This means that while the class is designed to provide a forum for students working through the various stages of research and writing, there will be lots of back-and-forth between questions, sources, and historiography. In particular, I believe that the “research phase” and the “writing phase” should not be artificially separated out—in fact, they are deeply entwined. The upshot: you should begin writing sooner rather than later.

2. Involves *collaboration*. I am here to provide advice, guidance, and support; you are here to help one another through peer review exercises and by creating a supportive community of scholars.
3. Involves *self-reflection*. As part of the colloquium, we'll do some in-class journaling. I also recommend that you keep a note of your thoughts as you work through the research process. This is separate from note-taking or formal writing and is instead an opportunity to think about what is going right and what is going less well (and how you can change things). It also allows you to gain some well-needed emotional distance from your project.
4. Involves learning the *rules of the game*. Writing a successful thesis means adhering to professional standards—from footnoting properly to using evidence judiciously. These are issues that we'll talk about throughout the semester.

Course Mechanics:

- Please find the weekly schedule below. You should note that the schedule is not set in stone and may change as we work through the semester, based on your needs as a group.
- There is no course reader for the class, but I may post some short readings up on our Learn@UW site when I think they will be helpful. I'll let you know more about these occasional readings in class.
- Please review the syllabus carefully to see what you need to submit on Dropbox at Learn@UW and/or bring to class. Unless otherwise instructed, you should bring hard copies of the assignments to class so that they can be annotated by hand.
- Any assignments that are due on Learn@UW must be submitted at least 48 hours prior to the class (i.e. by 1:20pm the preceding Tuesday). Assignments must be submitted as Word documents. Further particulars for each assignment will be explained in class.
- All assignments should have at least 1-inch side margins, use 12-pt. font (Times New Roman), and be double-spaced.
- If you need a deadline extension, you must get in touch with me ASAP.
- Attendance to **all** meetings is mandatory. Unaccounted absences will severely impact your final grade. If you repeatedly skip class, you will simply fail the course. The grade for second semester thesis writers can only be submitted once an electronic copy of the thesis has been received.
- It is your responsibility to meet with your faculty advisor regularly.
- We will schedule a Senior Thesis presentation in Week 14. This is a fantastic opportunity for you to present your findings to a broader audience of students, faculty, and friends and to showcase all of the hard work that you have done.

Grade:

Active participation and attendance (including group activities and peer feedback):	60%
Satisfactory completion of all written assignments:	40%

Weekly Schedule

Week 1 (Jan 25): Introductions

Submit on Learn@UW:

- For SSW: your research prospectus, which you submitted at the end of last semester
- For FSW: a brief paragraph summarizing your plans for the Senior Thesis

Week 2 (Feb 1): Expectations/How to Read Efficiently

Bring to class ONLY:

- the sample senior theses with your annotations
- a completed “feedback” worksheet for each thesis

Week 3 (Feb 8): No Class Meeting

Please visit Prof. Ciancia's office hours on Tuesday and/or check in with your advisor instead

Week 4 (Feb 15): Historiography I: Reviewing the Field

Submit on Learn@UW AND bring to class:

- an annotated bibliography of secondary works
- a literature review of at least 2-3 paragraphs in which you put the historians into conversation with one another (rather than simply summarizing them). Use phrases like, “While X says this, Y says this....” You should be sure to include properly formatted footnotes.

Bring to class ONLY:

- a physical copy of the most important monograph related to your research

Week 5 (Feb 22): Historiography II: Inserting Yourself in the Conversation

Submit on Learn@UW AND bring to class:

- a revised version of the “literature paragraphs” assignment from last week with an added paragraph in which you insert yourself into the historiography. Make it clear HOW you aim to do this. For instance, are you using different sources/methodologies? Are you changing the fundamental questions themselves? Craft a thesis statement based on the following: “In this thesis, I argue that....”

Week 6 (March 1): Connecting Primary Sources to *Your* Question I

Bring to class:

- a physical copy of one of your primary sources

Submit on Learn@UW AND bring to class:

- a paragraph explaining how you plan to use the source to make the argument that you laid out in last week's thesis statement (or a revised version of that thesis statement). Provide details of any potential problems that you might have with using the source. If you feel that people might criticize you for using this source to make your argument, explain how you might respond to such criticism.

Week 7 (March 8): Connecting Primary Sources to *Your* Question II

Submit on Learn@UW AND bring to class:

- two paragraphs in which you use **at least TWO** sources to make the argument that you laid out in last week's thesis statement
- a paragraph in which you reflect on any problems that you had with this assignment

Week 8 (March 15): Planning and Drafting

Submit on Learn@UW AND bring to class:

- a revised plan of your paper, with a short description and explanation of how the plan has changed from the prospectus you submitted in Week 1
- a short paragraph in which you reflect on any particular difficulties you are having—or envisage having—as you structure the argument and begin to write the paper

Week 9 (March 22): Drafting an Introduction

Submit on Learn@UW AND bring to class:

- a draft introduction

SPRING BREAK

Week 10 (April 5): Drafting the Body of the Paper

Submit on Learn@UW AND bring to class:

- a draft of around 5-10 pages of your paper (or more if you are further along in the process!)

Week 11 (April 12): Draft of Paper

Submit on Learn@UW AND bring to class:

- a first draft of your paper
- a paragraph describing the problems that you are having with the drafting process

Week 12 (April 19): Revising Your Paper

Submit on Learn@UW AND bring to class:

- a paragraph describing the overall areas that you are revising, what you are prioritizing, and what you are particularly concerned about as you begin the process of revisions

Week 13 (April 26): Final Drafts Workshop/Presenting Your Research Orally

Submit on Learn@UW AND bring to class:

- the latest draft of your paper
- a paragraph on what you have changed and what you still need to work on

Bring to class ONLY:

- a draft plan for presenting your research

Week 14 (May 3): Meetings with Prof. Ciancia during class time (if needed)

****We'll do final presentations this week****

Class Policies and Further Resources

Office Hours

My office hours are posted at the top of the syllabus. Please come by! These hours are set-aside specifically for students. If you are unable to make these times, please send me an email so that we can set up a mutually convenient appointment time.

Class Etiquette

There is no laptop use in class and you must make sure that all devices with a screen are switched off or put on silent for the duration. Come and speak with me if you are concerned about this policy.

We will begin class on time, so please make sure that you arrive a few minutes early. Persistent tardiness (as well as going AWOL) leads to a lower participation grade.

Academic Honesty

There is information about what constitutes plagiarism here (http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html), but please come and speak with Professor Ciancia during office hours if you have questions or concerns.

Disabilities

Disability guidelines for course accommodations may be found at the UW McBurney Disability Resource Center site: <http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/> Please come and see Professor Ciancia if you would like to talk further about disability issues.

Religious Observance Policy

Students must notify Professor Ciancia within the first two weeks of class of the specific days or dates on which they request relief.