HISTORY 710: Dissertation Writing Workshop

Thursday 11-1
Office hours: Tues. 5:15-6pm.; Thurs. 3:45-5pm
Office hours link: https://us.bbcollab.com/guest/4b709fe0bfb84c4eb389f4154967c408

History 710 functions as a writing workshop for dissertators. The course will focus on practical writing issues, including questions of style, structure, narrative, and argument. We will examine how to structure a chapter effectively; how to compose efficient and powerful introductions; how to fashion narrative that marshals evidence and analysis in an approachable and convincing way; how to apply for post-docs; and how to compose and submit an article. We will also share information on how to develop effective writing habits and practices. Finally, about half of our sessions will be devoted to peer review so that you will receive direct feedback from your fellow students and me. **NB this syllabus is a work in progress. I will change the dates and topics according to student demand, after our discussion in the first class-session on Sept. 3.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Participants can be at any stage in the dissertation-writing process, but must commit to presenting at least one chapter for peer review at some point during the semester. We will divide the course into groups for peer reviews so that each dissertator also reads 4 chapters by his or her fellow students. Chapters certainly do not have to be perfect(!), but they should be complete, ready to present, and less than fifty pages long, including notes.

READING falls into four categories: 1/ sample dissertation chapters, articles, or proposals by former UW grad students (who are all now successful professors); 2/ excerpts from writing manuals; 3/ sample articles; 4/ each other's dissertation chapters. I am posting readings on Canvas unless people want Copy Center coursepack. For the peer review chapters, we will most likely exchange via email.

I attach a list of books on writing at the end of the syllabus.

Credit Hours and Work Load: The credit standard for this 3-credit course is met by an expectation of a total of 135 hours of student engagement with the course’s learning activities (at least 45 hours per credit or 9 hours per week), which include regularly scheduled meeting times (group seminar meetings of 115 minutes per week); dedicated time reading; writing your dissertation; individual consultations with the instructor; and other student work as described in the syllabus. You will spend most of these 135 hours working on your own dissertation.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes:

Immediate goal: Write and, if possible, revise a dissertation chapter
Longer term and broader goals: Improve personal writing practices; Develop a stronger and more powerful writing style; Acquire command of various narrative and analytical techniques for history writing; Improve oral communications skills in critiquing others’ work; Think about range of structural choices for writing a long project; Build on your existing grant-writing skills; Broaden your historical knowledge and exposure to diverse methodologies from reading fellow students’ work.
Instruction during Covid-19:
Students’ Rules Rights, & Responsibilities

During the global Covid-19 pandemic, we must prioritize our collective health and safety to keep ourselves, our campus, and our community safe. As a university community, we must work together to prevent the spread of the virus and to promote the collective health and welfare of our campus and surrounding community.

To protect ourselves, students and professor all agree to the UW-Madison Badger Pledge and to UW-Madison Face Covering Guidelines: While on campus all employees and students are required to wear appropriate and properly fitting face coverings while present in any campus building unless working alone in a laboratory or office space.

Face Coverings During In-person Instruction Statement (COVID-19):
Individuals are expected to wear a face covering while inside any university building. Face coverings must be worn correctly (i.e., covering both your mouth and nose) in the building if you are attending class in person. If any student is unable to wear a face-covering, an accommodation may be provided due to disability, medical condition, or other legitimate reason.

Students with disabilities or medical conditions who are unable to wear a face covering should contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center or their Access Consultant if they are already affiliated. Students requesting an accommodation unrelated to disability or medical condition, should contact the Dean of Students Office.

Students who choose not to wear a face covering may not attend in-person classes, unless they are approved for an accommodation or exemption. All other students not wearing a face covering will be asked to put one on or leave the classroom. Students who refuse to wear face coverings appropriately or adhere to other stated requirements will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards and will not be allowed to return to the classroom until they agree to comply with the face covering policy. An instructor may cancel or suspend a course in-person meeting if a person is in the classroom without an approved face covering in position over their nose and mouth and refuses to immediately comply.

Quarantine or Isolation Due to COVID-19
Students should continually monitor themselves for COVID-19 symptoms and get tested for the virus if they have symptoms or have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19. Students should reach out to instructors as soon as possible if they become ill or need to isolate or quarantine, in order to make alternate plans for how to proceed with the course. Students are strongly encouraged to communicate with their instructor concerning their illness and the anticipated extent of their absence from the course (either in-person or remote). The instructor will work with the student to provide alternative ways to complete the course work.

Week 1: (Sept. 3) INTRODUCTION

Week 2: (Sept. 10) DISCUSSION OF A SAMPLE DISSERTATION CHAPTER
We will dissect a sample chapter of a dissertation. As a point of comparison, I have also uploaded the parallel chapter in the book that grew out of the dissertation. Read the dissertation chapter more carefully and skim the book chapter.


Also compare the Table of Contents of his dissertation (in scan with chapter) to the Table of Contents of his book


Week 3: (Sept. 17) DISSERTATION STRUCTURE AND WRITING PRACTICES
Come to class prepared to discuss 1/ your own writing practices; 2/ the outline of your dissertation and any structural issues you are having; 3/ three history books with compelling structures.


Fellow students’ dissertation outlines. No more than 2 pages per outline.

Week 4: (Sept. 24) APPLYING FOR POST-DOCS

Sample 1: Classic post-doc proposal task, including discussing a 2nd project

Sample 2: Two proposals to show evolution from dissertation to post-doc proposal. Also with letter


Sample 3: Post-doc application in letter form [no proposal; more like a job letter]
Honor Sachs, Letter of Application about “Not the Best Poor Man’s Country: The Social World of the Eighteenth-Century West” for the Cassius Marcellus Clay Postdoctoral Fellowship at Yale University.

Sample Spreadsheet by Katie Jarvis, compiling information on post-docs, including application requirements, etc.

Grant Writing Advice:

Advice on Grant writing by emeritus prof. Thomas Spear, 2p. typescript


Week 5: (Oct. 1) FIRST ROUND OF PEER REVIEW
This useful chapter on writing includes a check-list to go over before you submit an article, or in this case, a chapter for review:


Week 6: (Oct. 8) STYLE

We may have a visit from a writing instructor.


Week 7: (Oct. 15) PEER REVIEW
Any individual submitting a chapter should remember to use the Belcher check-list chapter, listed in Week 5 above.

Week 8: (Oct. 22) WRITING INTRODUCTIONS (to whole dissertation and to chapters)
Read these sample introductions:

*Introductions to whole dissertations:*

Erik Jensen, “Images of the Ideal: Sports, Gender, and the Emergence of the Modern Body in Weimar Germany” (UW, 2003), 1-21

*Chapter Introductions*

Ken Jassie, “From Restorer of French Liberties to the King of Conspirators: The Reign of Louis XVI during the Revolution, 1789-1793” (UW, 1994), 232-236
Nancy K. MacLean, “Behind the Mask of Chivalry: Gender, Race, and Class in the Making of the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s in Georgia” (UW, 1989), 263-66


**Week 9: (Oct. 29) PEER REVIEW & CHOOSING ARTICLES**

Any individual submitting a chapter should remember to use the Belcher check-list chapter, listed in Week 5 above.

**Week 10: (Nov. 5) ARTICLE-WRITING**

How to craft and submit an article, choose a journal, etc. In addition to discussing what makes a strong article, based on your readings, we will also examine a dissertation chapter to article in action.

David Ciarlo, the saga of an article from “Consuming Race, Envisioning Empire: Colonialism and German Mass Culture, 1887-1914” (UW, 2003). TBA

Come to class prepared to suggest and describe a well-written article. We can put them all on Canvas if desired.


**Week 11: (Nov. 12) FREE TO WRITE OR PEER REVIEW**

No class

**Week 12: (Nov. 19) PEER REVIEW**

Any individual submitting a chapter should remember to use the Belcher check-list chapter,
listed in Week 5 above.

**Week 13:** THANKSGIVING no class

**Week 14:** (Dec. 3) PEER REVIEWS
Any individual submitting a chapter should remember to use the Belcher check-list chapter, listed in Week 5 above.

**Week 15:** (Dec. 10) PEER REVIEWS
Individuals submitting chapters should remember to use the Belcher check-list chapter, listed in Week 4 above.

**USEFUL BOOKS ON WRITING**

**Dissertation Books**


**General Books on Style or Writing Practice**


Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2007 (7th ed.)


**Beyond the Dissertation**


Rabiner, Susan and Alfred Fortunato, *Thinking Like Your Editor* NY, 1999