



History 680 | Honors Thesis Colloquium

Instructor: Daniel Williford

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Class Hours: Wednesday, 3:30 to 5:25 pm, Humanities 5255

Canvas Course URL: <https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/264491>

Office Hours: Thursday 2-4 pm, On Zoom

<https://uwmadison.zoom.us/j/97607658612>

Students **are required to meet with me at least once** by the end of the third week of the semester and again in early November.

CATALOG DETAILS

Course Description

Colloquium for Honors thesis writers.

Requisites

Declared in Honors program.

Course Designations and Attributes

This is an Honors class.

Instructional Modality: In person

Credit Hours: This 2-credit course has 2 hours of group meetings per week (each seminar counts as two hours according to UW-Madison's credit hour policy). The course also carries the expectation that you will spend an average of at least 2 hours outside of class for every hour in the classroom. In other words, in addition to class time, plan to allot an average of at least 4 hours per week for reading, writing, preparing for discussions, and/or studying for quizzes and exams for this class.

Regular and Substantive Interaction

This course provides for regular and substantive interaction between students and the instructor through participation in regularly scheduled discussions lead by the instructor and personalized comments on students' assignments.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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:

- a. Finding a good research question.
- b. Finding the right sources.
- c. Using and analyzing sources.
- d. Organizing the thesis.
- e. Finding a balance between evidence and analysis.

In other words, we will address the generic dimensions of writing a thesis. **Throughout the semester, you must also consult closely with your thesis advisor about issues specific to your particular topic and about your schedule for finalizing the thesis.**

Second, the goal is professionalization. The colloquium will enhance your skills at:

1. Presenting your own work in a professional manner
2. Critiquing others' work constructively
3. Receiving critical feedback in a professional manner
4. Listening to oral presentations and responding to them intelligently quickly

These are skills that will stand you in good stead, regardless whether you pursue graduate work in history or some other avenue in life.

Third, the colloquium also has a social dimension that will enhance your thesis: 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 to the colloquium; at other times, you may have valuable suggestions or insights to offer others.

It is my job as your instructor to keep you on track so that you are well-positioned to begin drafting your thesis by the end of the semester.

Maintain Contact with your Advisor

It is crucial that you remain in regular contact with your thesis advisor throughout the semester. Set up regular appointment times with your advisor as well as a timeline for completion of your senior thesis. Please respect foremost the deadlines that your thesis advisor and you have come up with for drafts, draft revisions, and for the final write-up. You are more than welcome to share with your advisor the time frame established in this course.

Support Outside of Class Meetings

While your advisor is best qualified to help you with questions related to your project, its sources, possible approaches, and the like, I am here to help you as well. If at any point and for whatever reason you feel like you need more guidance and one-on-one time, please do come see me during office hours or e-mail me for an appointment.

GRADING

Course Requirements for First-Semester Writers

1.	Attendance and Participation	50 points
2.	Preliminary Project Prospectus (Sept. 22)	5 points
3.	Preliminary Bibliography (Oct. 13)	5 points
4.	Research Question, Outline, and Bibliography (Oct. 27)	10 points
5.	Annotated Bibliography (Nov. 17)	10 points
6.	Draft prospectus (Nov. 24)	10 points
7.	Revised Prospectus & Presentation (Dec. 15)	10 points

TOTAL:

100 points

Grading Scale

A 93 to 100	B 83 to 87.9	C 70 to 77.9	F Fewer than 60
AB 88 to 92.9	BC 78 to 82.9	D 60 to 69.9	

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

Required reading:

1. Please read and familiarize yourselves with the guidelines and advice for writing an honors thesis on the History Department's website by the second week of class:

<https://history.wisc.edu/undergraduate-program/undergraduate-declaring/honors-in-the-history-major/writing-a-senior-honors-thesis-first-semester/>

2. We will read excerpts from two award-winning History undergraduate theses. Both are uploaded to Canvas files:

a. Alyssa Hamrick – *From Katyn to “Katynism”: The U.S. Congressional Investigation of the Katyan Massacre, 1951-1952* (2021 Iwanter Prize for Undergraduate Research from the Center for the Humanities)

b. Sebastian van Bastelaer. “*Paroisses Indociles*” (*Unruly Parishes*): *Habitant Loyalties and the Historiography of the American Revolution in Canada, 1774-1776*. Conclusion, Pgs. 33-41. (published as an article in the *Journal of the American Revolution*)

Optional Reading:

You may also want to consult a guide such as: William Kelleher Storey, *Writing History: A Guide for Students* (Oxford University Press, 2020). (Several editions are available through the library, unfortunately, none online.)

I also recommend Professor William Cronon’s Website on [Learning to Do Historical Research](#) – lots of helpful ideas!

Library Resources:

The UW-Madison Libraries provide a lot of support to our undergraduate students for Research and Writing. Please familiarize yourself with their resources, which will help you conduct research and write your thesis in a far more timely and organized manner:

1. <https://www.library.wisc.edu/research-support/>
2. Using Zotero: <http://today.wisc.edu/events/view/139373>
3. Tutorials on citation management:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7kw2t3UpI7o&feature=youtu.be>
4. Please find out the Subject Librarian who would be able to help you with your research and set up an appointment with them to find out what the UW-Madison Libraries hold in terms of source material for your research. You should also talk to your Advisor and ask for their advice: <https://www.library.wisc.edu/research-support/subject-librarians/>

COURSE POLICIES

LATE WORK POLICY

It is in your own interest to keep up with weekly assignments for this course, since writing a senior thesis is not something you can cram into the final weeks of class. So please turn in

assignments on time, which means either submit them on Canvas before class on the due date, add them to the appropriate shared Google doc, or 'bring' them to class. Consistently late work will cause you to lose points, but I am inclined to be flexible with extensions.

Attendance in seminars and participation is mandatory. You must have a valid excuse for missing a meeting and notification must be given in advance for any absence not due to health problems. I am grading your participation, but as with late work, I understand that there may be circumstances beyond your control. If at all possible, email me to let me know what's going on before class starts and I will work with you to cover what you missed.

An Anti-Racist Class

We live in a society with profound political divisions and histories of injustice. As a course community, I ask that you each contribute to making our class a space of collaborative, supportive learning for everyone. I won't tolerate racism, and hope that you will not either. I ask that you commit to calling out injustice when you see it, and working to do better ourselves. None of us are perfect. What I ask is that you—and I—commit to acting against racism and to listening to feedback asking us to change our actions with patience and humility.

HOW TO SUCCEED IN THIS COURSE

- *Keep up with weekly assignments*
- *Find a way to organize your sources and your notes and actually use it*
- *Communicate with me and with your peers when you run into challenges*
- *Know that research is an iterative process and progress is rarely ever made in straight lines*
- *When stuck, talk out your ideas with friends, family, classmates, anyone who will listen, even record yourself talking to your phone – it is often the best way to get clarity on what you are trying to say, and figure out how to say it so it makes sense to others*

Warning – Do Your Own Work!

Historical scholarship may seem at times to have sprung singlehandedly from sole scholars poring over their sources and perhaps breaking occasionally for some dry crackers. Yet every great work of scholarship results from discussion and the exchange of ideas. Our work would not be as rich without sharing and debating it with our peers, advisers, and faculty members. Indeed, the thesis seminar requires you to share your work with your fellow students for peer review. We encourage you to consult your classmates and fellow students for advice on sources and secondary literature as well as for feedback on your chapters. However, your senior thesis must be the result of your own research and writing. You must also follow historians' standard citation practices and properly cite any books, articles, lectures, websites, archival sources, etc. that you have quoted or drawn from.

I have a zero-tolerance policy on plagiarism and **it is grounds for failing the course**, since it constitutes a [serious breach of academic integrity](#). If you need a refresher on what exactly constitutes plagiarism, including inadvertent plagiarism, consult:

http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html

<http://www.plagiarism.org/>

Assumptions

I assume that, since you have already taken History 201 and your History 600 seminar, you are familiar with bibliographies, research questions, outlines, library databases, citation formats, and the like. However, I am very aware that new challenges arise with each new research project we undertake. Therefore, do not hesitate to ask about something that does not seem clear to you.

SEMESTER SCHEDULE

Subject to Change | This syllabus is subject to revision. The current version is a collective product that has been developed and modified over the last several years by faculty of the UW-Madison History Department, including myself, Elizabeth Hennessy, Mou Banerjee, Cindy Cheng, Pernille Ipsen, Colleen Dunlavy, Louise Young, Brett Sheehan, Michael Chamberlain and Sarah Thal.

Week 1 | Sept. 8 – Introductions

Please come prepared to introduce yourself, and having watched the Video of Last Years “[Senior Thesis Q&As](#)” available on Canvas:

Be prepared to talk about:

- What struck you in the video responses of last years thesis writers?
- What you think you might write about for your thesis (vague ideas are OK)
- How you came to this idea (ie, a class? Something you read? Something in the news?)
- Any apprehensions you want to share about this semester, either as they relate to campus (or off-campus) life, etc.
- (If you have any concerns you’d rather not share with everyone, I am more than happy to talk – send me an email and we can chat that way or find a time to meet online one-on-one)

Please also give some thought to this question: What is the purpose of doing history?

AND, I want to know: How are you feeling about the return to in-person instruction? Are there particular things you are concerned about this semester?

Week 2 | Sept. 15 – Reviewing Sample Theses

Please come prepared having read the **Introduction and Literature Review** to Sebastian van Bastelaer’s thesis “*Paroisses Indociles*” (*Unruly Parishes*)” (pgs. 3-10)

and the **Introduction and Conclusion** of Alyssa Hamricks *From Katyan to “Katyanism”* (pgs. 3-6; 39-43). Then look over the bodies of both theses paying particular attention to the structure and sources. We will discuss as a group what you find interesting or useful about these works by two of your peers.

Week 3 | Sept. 22 – Preliminary Project Prospectus

- In one or two paragraphs, please describe (as best you can) what your project is about. What do you want to argue in this senior thesis? What do you find most interesting about the topic that you have selected? Conclude with a paragraph outlining your next steps. (So two to three total paragraphs)
- Be ready to present this during class.
- Familiarize yourself with the History Department’s webpage on writing a senior thesis, especially [the page on the first semester](#). We will refer back to this throughout the semester.

Week 4 | Sept. 29 – Primary and Secondary Sources

- Library Visit: We will meet in **Memorial Library Room 231**
- Come prepared to talk about 3 internet databases or search strategies you have found helpful

Week 5 | October 6 – Primary Source Presentations

- Before class: Post in the Discussions Tab on Canvas a copy (jpeg, screen shot, etc.) of a page of your most interesting primary source.
- In class, share how you will work with this source and how it fits in your larger project.

Week 6 | Oct. 13 – Preliminary bibliography

Preliminary bibliography due: provide a properly formatted list, separated into primary and secondary sources (at least 8 of each)

If you have not been meeting regularly already, **make an appointment with your thesis advisor for the week of October 20th.** (See assignment for October 20th.)

*By this week, you should have read and analyzed at least five primary sources.

Week 7 | Oct 20 – Research Question and Outline

- Read “[How to Frame a Researchable Question](#)” from William Cronon’s *Learning to Do Historical Research: A Primer* [45 minutes reading + several hours to brainstorm and draft your questions]

Then:

- On a single sheet of paper, write your research question at the top. Then make an outline of the argument you would need to make to answer that question.
- Upload your sheet to the Discussion Tab on Canvas
- Come prepared to discuss it with the class.

Check in with your thesis advisor. Establish your goal for November 10th with your thesis advisor.

Week 8 | Oct. 27 – Modified Research Question, Outline and Bibliography

Submit to [Google Doc](#) and the Canvas Week 8 Assignment a write-up that includes:

- your (modified) research question,
- tentative answer (if you have one), and
- an outline of your argument/paper with sources you will use for each section listed in the appropriate place. (ie, a bibliography, organized within the outline instead of at the end)
- On the last page of the write-up, note:
 - The date of your last meeting with your advisor
 - The goal you and your advisor agreed on for November 10th

Week 9 | Nov. 3 – Individual meetings

No regular class this week, but schedule a one-on-one meeting with me either during office hours or class time. AND, if you have not been meeting regularly with your advisor, schedule an appointment for the week of November 15th-19rd about your draft prospectus.

Week 10 | Nov. 10 – Check-In and Trouble-shooting

- Brief individual presentation of your project, its status, and your research priorities.
- Bring any questions or problems you are encountering. We will brainstorm solutions together.

Week 11 | Nov. 17 – Secondary Literature

- **Annotated bibliography of (at least 8) secondary works due.**

How have other people answered your research question (or similar questions)? Identify three conversations to which your work can contribute. Then, grouping your secondary works by conversation, provide annotated citations that highlight the conversation to

which you are contributing. In each section, write a sentence explaining how your work relates to the works you list.

- Come prepared to present your findings in class.

Week 12 | Nov. 24 – Draft prospectus

Consult the History Department's webpage on writing a research proposal:

<https://history.wisc.edu/undergraduate-program/undergraduate-declaring/honors-in-the-history-major/writing-a-senior-honors-thesis-first-semester/>

Write a draft prospectus: This will take a while! I would plan for at least two two-to-three-hour writing sessions.

1. In one or two paragraphs, explain what your project is about. What question do you want to answer? Why this question? How do you answer it?
2. In one or two paragraphs, summarize the existing literature. How have other people answered this question (or similar questions)? How is your answer (and/or question) different? Why does this matter?
3. Provide your current version of your research question, answer (thesis statement), and outline (with short references to sources in appropriate locations).
4. Include a timeline specifying how you will complete your thesis by the end of April 2022.
5. Append a properly formatted bibliography listing the sources that you have used or plan to use. (This must include at **least 10 primary and 10 secondary sources**.)
6. This entire document should be no longer than 6 pages (preferably less).

Upload your draft prospectus to the Canvas Assignment. Also be prepared to email it to a peer review partner during class.

Meet with your advisor to discuss your draft prospectus and next steps. (Send your prospectus to your advisor no later than two days before your meeting.)

Week 13 | Dec. 1 -Progress Report

Come ready to give a progress report about the general state of your thesis, revisions you plan to make to your draft prospectus, problems and challenges you are still facing in the project, questions you have.

Week 14 | Dec. 8 – No meeting today – Please read your sources and edit/revise your Prospectus thoroughly. I will also be available for individual meetings during office hours and class time.

Week 15 | Dec. 15 – Revised Prospectus & Presentations

Come prepared to present the chief components of your **Revised Prospectus** to the seminar and to your peers. Each of you will have a maximum of 10 minutes to present and 5 minutes to answer questions from members of the seminar. You may use PPT or images if you want.

Revised prospectus due to Canvas by 11:59pm.

ADDITIONAL POLICIES

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.

Quarantine or Isolation Due to COVID-19

Student 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. Student 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.

Diversity & Inclusion

Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world. (Source: <https://diversity.wisc.edu/>)

Academic Integrity

Instructors should discuss academic integrity with students early and often. For suggested ways to engage students in these discussions, see the College of Letters and Science [Remote Teaching Toolkit](#).

By virtue of enrollment, each student agrees to uphold the high academic standards of the University of Wisconsin-Madison; academic misconduct is behavior that negatively impacts the integrity of the institution. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these previously listed acts are examples of misconduct which may result in disciplinary action. Examples of disciplinary action include, but is not limited to, failure on the assignment/course, written reprimand, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion. (Source:

<https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/syllabus-statement/>

PRIVACY OF STUDENT RECORDS and the USAGE of AUDIO RECORDED LECTURES

See information about [privacy of student records and the usage of audio-recorded lectures](#).

Usage of Audio Recorded Lectures Statement

Lecture materials and recordings for [insert class name] are protected intellectual property at UW-Madison. Students in this course may use the materials and recordings for their personal use related to participation in this class. Students may also take notes solely for their personal use. If a lecture is not already recorded, you are not authorized to record my lectures without my permission unless you are considered by the university to be a qualified student with a disability requiring accommodation. [Regent Policy Document 4-1] Students may not copy or have lecture materials and recordings outside of class, including posting on internet sites or selling to commercial entities. Students are also prohibited from providing or selling their personal notes to anyone else or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the instructor's express written permission. Unauthorized use of these copyrighted lecture materials and recordings constitutes copyright infringement and may be addressed under the university's policies, UWS Chapters 14 and 17, governing student academic and non-academic misconduct.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA. (See: [McBurney Disability Resource Center](#))

Privacy of Student Information

The privacy and security of faculty, staff and students' personal information is a top priority for UW-Madison. The university carefully reviews and vets all campus-supported teaching and learning tools, including proctoring tools and takes necessary steps to ensure that tool providers prioritize proper handling of sensitive data in alignment with FERPA, industry standards and best practices.

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA – which protects the privacy of student education records), student consent is not required for the university to share with Honorlock those student education records necessary for carrying out the proctoring service. 34 CFR 99.31(a)(1)(i)(B). FERPA specifically allows universities to treat vendors as school officials and to share student education records with them where they perform services for the university and are subject to FERPA requirements governing the use and redisclosure of personally identifiable information from education records. Honorlock is FERPA compliant and is bound by the terms of its agreement with the university to comply with FERPA's restrictions on the use of student education records.

