History 600 | Migration and Me: Researching Family Stories

"To see a human life whole, from first to last breath, is to see both the specific slog of getting through it, and the ways in which that life is impelled, often dramatically and chaotically, by wider forces. A single life seems to map clearly on to larger trends and patterns; yet it also feels unique and untranslatable, a corrective to historical simplification. Born in 1946, my father lived a typical baby boomer life, one in which the bonds of place, tradition and faith were loosened by the mobility, opportunity and secular liberalism of the postwar years. In other ways his story was not typical at all, as no one's is."

--Joe Moran, "The Scattering: a Family History for a Floating World"

INSTRUCTOR DETAILS

Professor Kathryn Ciancia (she/her)
Office: 4133 Mosse Humanities
Email: ciancia@wisc.edu
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1:30-3:30pm, or by appointment
Office Hours will generally be held in-person. If there is a reason for office hours to be held on zoom, we can meet in my virtual zoom room (link on Canvas).

COURSE DETAILS

Semester
Spring 2025

Requisites
History 201 or History of Science 211

Course Designations and Attributes
Breadth - Either Humanities or Social Science
Level - Advanced
L&S Credit - Counts as Liberal Arts and Science credit in L&S
Honors - Accelerated Honors

How Credit Hours are Met
This is a 3-credit course. The credit standard for this course is met by an expectation of a total of 135 hours of student engagement with the course learning activities (at least 45 hours per credit), which include regularly scheduled instructor: student meeting times, reading, writing, problem sets, studio time, labs, field trips, and other student work as described in the syllabus. Each student is

expected to meet with Professor Ciancia outside of regular class time at least once during the semester.

Meeting Time and Place
Wednesdays, 11am-12:55pm, 5257 Humanities Building

Instructional Modality
This is an in-person class

Canvas Course URL
https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/440954

Course Description
Many of us have heard stories about the movement of our ancestors from place to place—and even from continent to continent. Such histories of migration, whether within or across international borders, are always personally dramatic: people flee persecution, are forcibly relocated, or move for economic advancement; they leave behind loved ones and attempt to make a new life in a new place; they miss home and then ask themselves what "home" even means. Stories of migration become lodged into family lore, frequently acting as myths about what families mean to their members, even if we are not entirely sure exactly how, why, or even if these events happened.

While genealogical research is often the work of non-professional historians, this class allows students to situate characters from their own families within the broader historical contexts to which those people belong. During the first part of the semester, students will read examples of this genre of history; learn how to work with internet-based genealogical search engines, such as ancestry.com, the SlaveVoyages website, Ellis Island records, and national censuses; practice scouring local and national newspapers; explore the best practices for conducting oral histories with family members; and discuss how they might analyze treasured family objects.

In the second part of the class, students will write a research paper, reconstructing the experiences of family members—living or dead—and using those people's stories as a lens through which to explore larger issues linked to migration, such as class, nationalism, racism, war, gender, borders, and citizenship. Along the way, we will discuss the excitements and challenges of this kind of historical detective work, the ways in which it affects our personal sense of identity, and how revelations about family history might inform contemporary debates about migration in the United States and beyond.

Course Learning Outcomes
History 600 is an advanced research seminar in History and a capstone class for Major and Certificate students. As such, by the end of the class, students should be able to:

- Develop an original, well-substantiated argument that synthesizes diverse historical knowledge and is based on a critical analysis of primary sources.
- Create, plan, and execute a significant, self-designed and self-driven research project.
- Communicate original historical research findings clearly and effectively.
- Lead and participate productively in purposeful collaboration, discussion, and feedback.
- Seek to understand differing views and ways of being in the world.

In *this* particular section of History 600 (i.e., Migration and Me), students should also be able to:

- Combine genealogical tools and methodologies with other forms of historical research, using primary and secondary sources in order to place their individual character meaningfully into broader historical contexts.
- Discuss the ways in which migration histories can be (re)constructed through focusing on individuals from their own family history.
- Reflect on their developing sense of personal, familial, and/or national identities, as they engage with their research projects.

Course Grading Criteria

Active Engagement in All Class Sessions (30% of total grade)
Engagement is essential for this class. Attendance at **all** meetings is mandatory unless there is a valid reason for an absence, such as illness or an emergency. Unaccounted absences will severely impact your final grade, so please let me know via email if you can't make a class. Participation doesn't just mean attending class. I will also assess your levels of engagement and interaction, your listening skills, and your willingness to ask questions and provide feedback in ways that are both respectful and constructive. This also means not distracting from the proceedings, including by looking at your phones or other screens. You are welcome to come and see me at any time if you want to check in about this part of your grade. See Appendix C for my discussion grading rubric.

Short written assignments (25% of total grade)
The short assignments throughout the class constitute the building blocks for the final research paper. Details about the written assignments can be found in the "Weekly Class Schedule" section on this syllabus.

Final Research Paper and Reflective Essay (35% of total grade)
The final research paper, in which you will trace the story of your character(s) and contextualize their journeys and experiences, should be between 17 and 20 pages long (double-spaced). For the assignment to be considered complete, you must <u>also</u> submit a companion piece: a five-page reflective essay in which you discuss, among other things, the process of carrying out the research, the challenges that you faced (and how you attempted to overcome those challenges), and the ways in which the experience led you to develop new ideas about issues of family, identity, and/or migration. We will discuss the content of the final assignment in more detail over the course of the semester.

Final Presentation (10% of total grade)
Students will deliver final presentations in the last week of class. We will discuss the grading rubric for these presentations during the course of the semester.

Grading Scale

A = 92.5-100
AB = 87.5-92.4
B = 82.5-87.4
BC = 77.5-82.4
C = 70-77.4

D = 60-69.9
F = below 60

Format of Written Assignments
Assignments must be submitted in the correct folder on Canvas as Word documents, rather than pdfs. Please save your file in the following format: "yourlastname_the week #" (e.g., "Smith_week 3").

Late Work Policy
I will apply a penalty of 2 percentage points for every 24 hours after the deadline that a piece of work is submitted, unless we have agreed to an extension ahead of time.

Technology Policy
In general, a seminar that minimizes distractions from technology is best. Please silence and put away your phones for the duration of the class and turn the internet off your laptops (unless we are engaged in an activity that requires the internet). You should download all readings ahead of class so that they are on your computer. Also: bring a pen and notepad for in-class writing activities!

Regular and Substantive Interaction
In this course, Prof. Ciancia will provide direct instruction in weekly classes; assess and provide feedback on students' work; respond to questions from students in weekly classes, via email, and in office hours; facilitate group discussion; and organize workshops and panel discussions for the class.

An Important Note on the Nature of the Class:
This class necessitates a careful balancing act. On the one hand, we will cover a collective set of themes; on the other, you will be working independently on individual research projects.

This means several things:

1. **For each week, you should do *all* the assigned readings, even if they do not immediately seem relevant to your own character's story.** A critical part of the project involves contextualizing individuals in the broadest possible sense. Ensuring that you have completed all the readings means that you will be prepared to fully participate in classroom discussions.

2. **The reading assignments for the class are a starting point.** But you will also be required to do independent research in order to make sense of the experiences of your own character. Along with experts at the WHS and Memorial Library, I will guide you through these processes and suggest the resources that are available. Ultimately, however, the project will largely be what you make it.

3. Based on how the class is developing and the interests and needs of students, **I may ask you to do some short supplementary readings that are not currently on the syllabus.**

Weekly Class Schedule

Please note that all reading materials/links will be provided via Canvas. There are no textbooks for this class.

PART I: Migration as History and Memory

Week 1 (Jan 22): Class Introductions: What are we doing? Why are we doing it?

Readings:

1. "A Journalist Seeks Out Her Roots, But Finds Few Answers In The Soil," NPR's *Fresh Air* (April 30, 2018).
2. Jonathan Blitzer, "Your Grandma Was a Chain Migrant!" *The New Yorker*, February 5, 2018.
3. Mark Mazower, *What You Did Not Tell: A Russian Past and the Journey Home* (New York: Other Press, 2017), 1-11.

Assignment:
Come to class prepared to talk about your initial ideas: Where are you with your initial sleuthing? What kinds of challenges do you anticipate? Why are you engaging in this project? There is no need to prepare a written assignment.

Week 2 (Jan 29): The Bigger Picture: America as a "Nation of Immigrants"?

Readings:

1. David Gerber, *American Immigration: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 1-13.
2. Gunlög Fur, "Indians and Immigrants: Entangled Histories," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 33, no. 3 (Spring 2014): 55-76.
3. Adam Goodman, "Nation of Migrants, Historians of Migration," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 34, no. 4 (Summer 2015): 7-16.
4. Tara Zahra, "America, the Not So Promised Land," *The New York Times*, November 14, 2015.
5. Arica L. Coleman, "The Problem With Calling the U.S. a 'Nation of Immigrants'," *Time,* March 17, 2017.

Assignment:
No assignment due today.

Week 3 (Feb 5): The ABCs of Genealogical Research

Class Location: Wisconsin Historical Society

We will meet at the WHS for a practical workshop with Jill Fuller, a specialist in genealogical research. In addition to listening to Jill's introduction, you will have time to use the various databases

and facilities in order to move to the next level of detective work on your character(s). You will also have the opportunity to talk with Jill about your projects.

Readings:

- Francois Weil, "Everybody's Search for Roots," in *Family Trees: A History of Genealogy in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013): 180-216.
- Genealogical resources provided on Canvas.

Assignment #1:
Come to the session with:

a) As much information as you currently have about your character(s);
b) A list of several key things that you would like to find out about your character(s);
c) your laptops, if possible.

Assignment #2:
*200-Word Self-Reflection #1, due on Canvas **by 5pm on Friday, February 7***

Week 4 (Feb 12): The Tools of Historical Research: Oral Histories and Secondary Sources

Class Location: Memorial Library

We will meet in Memorial Library for a session with Troy Reeves (first hour), who will hold a workshop on carrying out oral histories, and Julianne Haahr (second hour), a librarian who will introduce students to secondary source collections. Please bring your laptops to this session.

Readings:

- Introduction to Oral History Module
- The current OHA's Principles & Best Practices, specifically the Ethics essay

Assignment:
After completing the session, create a short bibliography of secondary sources that will help you to begin contextualizing your character(s). This should include at least two books and two articles. After each source, you should include several sentences describing why the source is relevant to your project and how you might use it. **You should upload the completed assignment in the appropriate folder on Canvas by 5pm on Friday, February 14.**

Week 5 (Feb 19): How Historians Recreate Worlds

Readings:

1. Hilary Mantel, "The Day is For the Living: Hilary Mantel on writing historical fiction," BBC Reith Lectures 2017, part one (broadcast on BBC Radio 4, 13 June 2017).
2. Daniela Blei, "Seeing the Lives of Immigrants in Objects and Images of Home," Hyperallergic.com, April 5, 2018.
3. Joe Moran, "The Scattering: A Family History for a Floating World," *History Workshop Journal* (2021): 1-25.

4. Kendra Taira Field, *Growing Up with the Country: Family, Race, and Nation after the Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018): Preface (ix-xv), Acknowledgments (xvii-xxv), and Introduction (1-22).

Assignment:
Bring a primary source from your research to class. It may be a photograph, an object, a letter, an official document, a transcript from an interview, or something else entirely.
Write a brief 200-word essay about the significance of the primary source to the story that you would like to tell. **You must upload the assignment 24 hours *before* the beginning of class on the Canvas site (i.e., by 11am on Tuesday, February 18).**

Week 6 (Feb 26): DNA Testing and Genealogy

Readings:
1. Ancestry DNA Hub: Reading Your Ethnicity Estimate (the article and all the articles that are hyperlinked in the text): https://www.ancestry.com/c/dna-learning-hub/reading-your-ethnicity-estimate
2. Ed Yong, "How African Americans Use DNA Testing to Connect With Their Past," *The Atlantic*, June 27, 2017.
3. Libby Copeland, *The Lost Family: How DNA Testing is Upending Who We Are* (New York: Abrams Press, 2020), 144-202; 208-210; 219-221; 242-267.

Assignment:
- In 150-200 words, describe whether you have DNA testing as part of your evidence and, if so, in what capacity. Why have you and/or family members chosen "to spit or not to spit" (and how did this week's readings help you to reflect on these kinds of decisions)? If you do have DNA data, are you intending to use it as part of your research? If so, how? **You must upload the assignment 24 hours *before* the beginning of class on the Canvas site (i.e., by 11am on Tuesday, February 25).**

PART II: Contextualizing Your Characters

Week 7 (March 5): Origins

Readings:
No assigned readings.

Assignment:
This week we will be discussing why people migrate. You should locate the starting point of the part of your character(s)'s story that you will be researching and what the context for their migration was. To complete the latter task, you will need to collect a selection of secondary sources (books, articles, and so on). These may (or may not) be the same ones that you located in Week 4.

Write a short essay (at least 300 words, with proper footnotes), which you must upload 24 hours *before* the beginning of class on the Canvas site (i.e., 11am on Tuesday, March 4).

In the essay, you should consider some of the following questions:

- Where was your character born? Where did they live prior to migrating?
- What was the political, economic, and/or social climate like there during this period?
- What were their personal circumstances? What do you think accounted for their migration? How much power did they have over their own lives (specifically, their mobility)?
- Do you think that they left voluntarily? Why/why not?
- Were they part of a mass movement of people?
- Did they move directly to their destination, or did they go via other places?

Week 8 (March 12): Experiencing Borders

Readings:

- Ronald H. Bayor, *Encountering Ellis Island: How European Immigrants Entered America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 6-38.
- Erika Lee and Judy Yung, *Angel Island: Immigrant Gateway to America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 29-67.
- Rachel St. John, *Line in the Sand: A History of the Western U.S.-Mexico border* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 174-198.
- "For a child migrant, days feel like a lifetime when you're imprisoned and alone" (interview with Professor Beth Lew-Williams on PRI's *The World*, June 20, 2018).

Optional Reading:

- If necessary, you may wish to consult the relevant section(s) of David Gerber's *American Immigration* (available as an e-book through the UW-Madison Library website; link on Canvas).

Assignment:

Write a short essay (<u>at least 300 words,</u> with proper footnotes) in which you describe and contextualize the arrival of your character(s). <u>You must upload the essay 24 hours *before* the beginning of class on the Canvas site (i.e., 11am on Tuesday, March 11).</u>

Questions to think about include:

- Do you know how and where your character(s) crossed a border?
- What might this experience have been like for them? How did their experience compare to that of other people who were crossing the same border?
- Where did they move to after arriving? How did they get there? Why did they choose that place?

Week 9 (March 19): Everyday Life after Arrival

Readings:

No assigned readings.

Assignment:

Write a short essay (<u>at least 300 words,</u> with proper footnotes) about your character's life in the place where they settled. <u>You must upload the essay 24 hours *before* the beginning of class on the Canvas site (i.e., by 11am on Tuesday, March 18)</u>.
You may choose to engage with some of the following questions:

- Where did your character(s) live? What was their life like once they arrived? Did they move around or stay in one place?
- Is there any evidence that they considered themselves to be part of a Diaspora? What kinds of contacts did they keep up with people in their place of origin?
- Did they ever return to their place of origin? When, how, and why?
- What did they do as an occupation? Was it the same job that they did before they moved?
- Did they become a citizen of a new country?
- How might your character have been treated by the society of the place where they settled? Would they have faced discrimination based on aspects of their identity?

****SPRING BREAK****

<u>PART III: Drafting and Revising</u>

Week 10 (April 2): Planning the First Draft

Readings:
No assigned readings.

Assignment #1:

- **<u>Upload the plan of your paper in the appropriate folder on Canvas 24 hours *before* the beginning of class (i.e., by 11am on Tuesday, April 1)</u>.**
- Bring the plan of your paper to class. Be prepared to discuss what you have so far, what you still have to do, the direction in which you see your paper going, and the challenges ahead.

Assignment #2:
<u>*200-Word Self-Reflection Post #2, due on Canvas **by 5pm on Friday, April 4***</u>

Week 11 (April 9): Partial Draft

Readings:
No assigned readings.

Assignment:

- **Upload at least 10 pages of writing in the appropriate folder on Canvas 24 hours *before* the beginning of class (i.e., Tuesday, April 8).**
- Bring the 10 pages to class.

Week 12 (April 16): First Draft

Readings:
No assigned readings.

Assignment:

- Write a complete first draft (you should aim for 17-20 pages, but it can be longer or shorter than this).
- **Upload the first draft in the appropriate folder on Canvas 24 hours *before* the beginning of class (i.e., by 11am on Tuesday, April 15).**
- Bring a copy to class.

Week 13 (April 23): Final Discussion

Readings:

- No assigned readings.

Assignment:

- Bring a plan of your oral presentation to practice during class time.
- You should also come to class ready to discuss some of the following questions: What have you learned about the nature of historical and genealogical research? What have you learned about your character(s)? What have you learned about your family and yourself?

Week 14 (April 30): Research Presentations

Class Location: Curti Lounge (5233 Mosse Humanities Building)

The final presentations provide an exciting opportunity to showcase your research to a broader audience. More details will be provided closer to the time.

Final Papers are due on Canvas at 5pm on Friday, May 2

APPENDIX A: An Inclusive Classroom

One of my priorities as an educator is to help create an inclusive classroom in which all can thrive and in which everyone's wellbeing is supported and fostered. As a class community, we should work together to create a supportive space for everyone. I also ask that we all commit to listening to feedback and to reflecting on our own attitudes and actions. Please read the following information on how we can work together to ensure that everyone is welcome and that you know the resources through which you can gain help outside of our classroom setting.

Students with Disabilities

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to 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 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. I will work either directly with 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).

Pronouns

Pronouns matter–they say a lot about who we are and how we want others to treat us. Using gendered language conscientiously is one small way we can show respect to each other as individuals and make UW a warm, welcoming, and inclusive environment for all members of the campus community. A feature is available in Canvas that enables all students, faculty, and staff (with Canvas accounts) to indicate their gender pronouns in use.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

We all face pressures, academic and non-academic. Please be kind to yourself and to one another. Let me know if you are struggling and need extra time or help. Stressors for which there are resources on campus may include mental health concerns, substance misuse, sexual or relationship violence, family circumstances, campus climate, financial matters, among others. Students are encouraged to learn about and utilize UW-Madison's mental health services and/or other resources as needed. Visit uhs.wisc.edu or call University Health Services at (608) 265-5600 to learn more.

Violence Prevention

All students deserve to be safe and respected at UW-Madison. Unfortunately, we know that sexual and relationship violence does happen here. Free, confidential resources are available on and off campus for students impacted by sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating violence, and stalking (regardless of when the violence occurred). You don't have to label your experience to seek help. Friends of survivors can reach out for support too. A list of resources can be found at https://www.uhs.wisc.edu/survivor-resources/

APPENDIX B: Further Resources and Policies

The Use of Artificial Intelligence

My take: Some people find that AI chatbots, such as ChatGPT, can be a useful tool in thinking through a question, generating ideas, planning an essay, and even writing. However, there is much that is lost when we rely on AI in these ways—and we need to be aware of the loss, as well as the presumed benefits. Not only is AI prone to "hallucinations" (i.e., the fabrication of information) and liable to reproduce larger societal biases, but it also deprives us of engaging in some of the creative processes that allow us to think for ourselves—not least the process of thinking that is deeply entwined with the process of writing (and not simply editing the writing that a chatbot has created). Using a chatbot to produce text *for* you, even as a first draft, will not allow you to achieve some of the goals for this class, which involve personal reflection.

My policy: In general, I discourage the use of generative AI for the reasons outlined above. However, if you do use generative AI, you must always acknowledge precisely how you used it and how you still fulfilled the learning outcomes of our class in a brief statement in the comments when you submit the work on Canvas. If not properly acknowledged, it may be considered plagiarism, which is a serious form of academic misconduct (see below).

Academic Integrity Statement

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 are not limited to, failure on the assignment/course, written reprimand, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion.

Privacy of Student Information & Digital Tools

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 digital tools used to support teaching and learning, to help support success through learning analytics, and to enable proctoring capabilities. UW-Madison takes necessary steps to ensure that the providers of such tools 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 school officials those student education records necessary for carrying out those university functions in which they have legitimate educational interest. 34 CFR 99.31(a)(1)(i)(B). FERPA specifically allows universities to designate vendors such as digital tool providers as school officials, and accordingly to share with them personally identifiable information from student education records if they perform appropriate services for the university and are subject to all applicable requirements governing the use, disclosure, and protection of student data.

Usage of Audio Recorded Lectures Statement

You are not authorized to record our class discussions without permission. Students may not copy or distribute lecture materials/recordings or their own personal notes outside of class. 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.

Students' Rules, Rights, and Responsibilities
See here for a useful guide for undergraduates.

Academic Calendar: Religious Observances and Election Day Observances
Students must notify Prof. Ciancia within the first two weeks of class of the specific days or dates on which they request relief, either for a religious observance or because of their commitment to work as an election official. I will also provide flexibility to students reporting they may be tardy or absent on the day of an election due to waiting to vote at the polls.

Course Evaluations
You will be provided with an opportunity to evaluate this course and your learning experience. I really value your feedback—it helps me reflect on what is working and what might need to change. As such, it also benefits future groups of students. Note that UW-Madison now uses an online course evaluation survey tool, HelioCampus. In most instances, you will receive an official email two weeks prior to the end of the semester when your course evaluation is available. You will receive a link to log into the course evaluation with your NetID where you can complete the evaluation and submit it, anonymously.

APPENDIX C: Participation Grading Scale

A: You participate enthusiastically and regularly in classroom discussions and small group-work, listening to your peers and articulating your own ideas as clearly as possible. Your comments demonstrate that you have done the reading carefully, considered your own approach, and/or articulated how it fits with the general themes of the class

B: Your contributions show that you have done the reading, but they show a less thoughtful response than that of a student achieving an "A" grade. You have thought about how the reading fits into wider themes that we have been discussing, but on a more superficial level. You participate in classroom discussions and small group-work, listening to your peers and articulating your own ideas, although not with the regularity or depth of a student achieving an "A."

C: Your comments in class do not show that you have done the reading in any depth and/or are poorly or vaguely articulated. You include your own thoughts, but do not raise relevant questions or link the materials to the themes of the class. You contribute only rarely to class discussions and/or make comments that do not demonstrate that you have completed the readings or are engaged fully with your classmates.

D: Your comments in class are very irregular. You show no evidence that you have completed and understood the reading.

F: You do not attend discussions regularly.