

History 680/690: Honors Thesis Colloquium

Basics

Time and Place: Monday, 1:20-3:15, Humanities 2621

Instructor: Professor Judd Kinzley

- **Office:** 4118 Mosse Humanities Building
- **Office Hours:** Mondays, 10:50-12:50 and by appointment
- **Email:** kinzley@wisc.edu

Course Description:

This course is designed to supplement your work with your advisor, thereby helping you write the best senior thesis possible in the short time available to you. This is a mixed class, with some students just starting work on their theses and other finishing up. While both first semester writers and second semester writers are required to come to class, participate in discussions, and prepare presentations, for several weeks (particularly toward the end of the semester) the assignments for both will be different. For information on assignments see the schedule below. Generally, the course will:

- 1) give you opportunities to present to your peers, thereby helping you work on organizational and argument issues in your thesis
- 2) offer hands-on training and reviews to help you improve your writing and research
- 3) set deadlines to help ensure that the paper and its ancillary elements get written.

Evaluation:

Attendance and Participation	35 percent
Assignments	25 percent
Timely and High-Quality Feedback to peers	20 percent
Final presentation	20 percent

Participation

Since most of class time will be devoted to discussion, attendance and participation in class are required. Participation can take a variety of forms—including questions, suggestions, or reflections—but it should always be constructive. Be respectful of your fellow peers' work and progress especially in this early stage of research.

Schedule

January 30: Course introductions

Assignments: None

Class plan: *We will talk about the class and course expectations. We will also introduce ourselves and our work.*

History 680/690: Honors Thesis Colloquium

February 6: Research Questions

Readings:

Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (University of Chicago Press, 2007) 5-22

Assignment: Prepare a five minute presentation of your work. In it you should lay out your topic, your research question, why this question is important, and your plan for answering this question.

Class plan: We will start by talking about research questions. Then we will spend the rest of the time having everyone present and receiving suggestions from your peers about how to tighten your questions.

February 13: Thinking About Writing

Assignment: Be prepared to discuss this week's readings

Readings:

1. Lynn Hunt, "The Art of History: How Writing Leads to Thinking," *Perspectives on History*, Feb 1, 2010;
2. Liena Vayzman, "Issues in Graduate Education: Practical Advice for Writing Your Dissertation, Book, or Article," *Perspectives on History*, Dec 1, 2006;
3. Sample Senior Thesis

Class plan: Using the readings as a jump off point, we will talk about the writing process (including the challenges!). We will finish by discussing our responses to the sample thesis.

February 20: Historiography

Assignment: Write two paragraphs based on the *They Say, I Say* text (below). The first will sum up the argument of a book in your field. The second will bring in your own work, as you draw a contrast between the argument made in the first paragraph and the argument you are thinking about in your thesis.

Readings:

Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, *They Say, I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*, 19-29, 55-77.

Class Plan: We will discuss how to use secondary sources and to engage with the scholarship in your field. You will also reflect on the process of writing up your paragraphs for class.

February 27: Primary Sources

Assignment: Post to canvas and also bring to class one of your more interesting and challenging primary sources. Write up a paragraph on the source, where you summarize the source, analyze it, and discuss how you will deploy it in your thesis. Be prepared to present this source in class.

Readings:

Briefly take a look at your classmate's sources on Canvas.

History 680/690: Honors Thesis Colloquium

Class Plan: Everyone will present their primary source and their analysis of it in class. After each presentation we will discuss it as a group.

March 6: Writing Day 1

Assignment: Upload and bring to class a 1-2 page or so piece of writing that is connected to your thesis. This may or may not make it into the final draft, but it is an opportunity to begin writing (and thinking). Also prepare a one paragraph statement explaining what this writing is and how it is connected to the thesis. Take a brief look at your classmate's work.

First semester writers: your piece of writing will consist of a 1-2 page statement of the historical context for your thesis. This should include all of the relevant context that you need to explain to a reader for them to understand your contribution.

Prepare one paragraph, explaining how this context connects to your own work.

Class plan: The class will be divided into groups of two and the groups will read and offer a brief critique of one another's work. Then we will reconvene as a group to exchange ideas and offer feedback.

March 13 Spring Break ~ No class

March 20 Outlines

Assignment: Write an outline/plan for your thesis and post it to thesis. Also include a one paragraph statement of the challenges you are facing in terms of thinking about structure. Feel free to draw on the Turabian reading for this week for examples of an outline. Take a look at your classmate's outlines before class. Be prepared to present your outline and offer suggestions for your classmates.

First semester writers: You should also write an outline, though it will certainly be less detailed than those of the second semester writers. In addition, start putting together an annotated bibliography. This bibliography should include a list of your primary and secondary sources and a brief (one paragraph or so) description of how each source fits within your project.

Readings: Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*, 62-70

Class Plan: Everyone will present their outline in small groups and then we will reconvene to receive feedback from the class.

March 27: Writing II: The Introduction

Assignment: Post and bring in a first stab at your introduction. This draft should be five pages maximum. Also bring in one paragraph discussing your writing process and challenges that you faced in writing. Make sure you also read your classmates' submissions.

First semester writers: Post and bring to class your annotated bibliography. In addition, post a one paragraph statement of the argument of your thesis as it currently stands.

Class Plan: Everyone will present their outlines in small groups reconvene to receive feedback from the class.

History 680/690: Honors Thesis Colloquium

April 3: No Class – work on your thesis/prospectus

Readings:

For inspiration and comfort: Anne Lamott, “Shitty First Drafts,” *Language Awareness: Readings for College Writers*, edited by Paul Eschholz, Alfred Rosa, and Virginia Clark (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2005), 93-96

April 10: Writing III: The Full Draft

Assignment: Post and bring to a class a full rough draft of your thesis. Also include a paragraph discussing challenges, advice you need on the draft, and specifics places that you would like feedback on. Skim the drafts of your classmates.

First semester writers: Post and bring to class a rough draft of your prospectus (5-7 pages). Include one paragraph explaining the challenges that you have faced in writing this and feedback that you need to improve it.

Class Plan: We will spend the first part of class doing peer review. The second will focus on discussing the process of drafts and thinking about revisions.

April 17: Writing IV: Final-ish Drafts

Assignment: Post and bring to class a full and final-ish draft that incorporates the feedback and suggestions from the class. Include one paragraph pointing to problems you are facing and issues you would like your classmates to focus on.

First semester writers: post and bring to class a final-ish draft of your prospectus.

Class Plan: We will peer review work for the first part of class. Then we will talk about next steps for writing and revision

April 24: Rehearsal for Final Presentation

Assignments: students should be prepared to present a 10 minute version of their honor’s thesis in preparation for the Final Presentation event the next week. Make sure to have completed your powerpoint slides.

Class Plan: Everyone will rehearse their presentation and receive feedback from their classmates.

May 1: Final Presentation Event

Class plan: More details on this event will be forthcoming later in the semester. But the plan is for everyone to give a 10 minute formal presentation of their thesis at an event that will be followed by a reception.