

# History 400: Seminar Project: Wisconsin Places

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UWSP – History Department

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Fall 2021

**Welcome!** This course is the capstone for the History major and will therefore utilize much of what you've learned in the program—and put it to use. Our project is to create an online encyclopedia for central Wisconsin. More accurately, our project is to begin one. This semester is the first in what will hopefully become a longstanding project that will benefit our part of the state.

Why this project for the capstone to the major? There are actually many reasons for it, so let me share some of the more important ones:

- Allows for independent work within a community of fellow collaborators
- Draws upon research methods learned in History 300 and other courses
- Turns student work toward the public

I am particularly excited for this project because it will show that historical research can contribute to public discussion. In the 2020's, we face a gaping hole in local media. Few genuinely local newspapers exist anywhere in the country, central Wisconsin included. The number of journalists who are actually experts on our region's culture and history is dwindling by the year. As a public, we face a genuine need for easily accessible, well researched information that can be drawn upon by anyone writing about the region. This course can help fill that need.

Let me say at the outset: this course will be different than your previous courses. Whereas you might be used to taking lecture notes during class time, in this course you will be giving your fellow students information and getting information from them. In other words, our class meetings will be much more like a professional meeting.

## The Model:

- If you want to start getting an idea of our goals, then take a look at the *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee*, which we will be emulating in our course: <https://emke.uwm.edu>

**Course Structure:** In the first few weeks, our work will be getting familiar with the genre of encyclopedia writing, with a special emphasis on the types of primary sources we'll be using. In the middle weeks, we will write a handful of short entries. Up through these weeks, all work will be Team Assignments and graded primarily for effort and professionalism. In the last weeks of the semester, we will turn our focus to Long Entries, which will be graded according to their qualities as research papers.

**Group Work:** While our work is collaborative, each assignment has only one name on it. Students will be graded for the work they do, not for what our entire group creates as a whole. The collaborative aspects of the course are structured into course meetings. In short, if you dislike group work for all the reasons students typically do, then I think you will still appreciate and enjoy the structure of this course.

**Dr. Prendergast's Office Hours:** This semester, I will not be seeing students in person. Office Hours will be held via Zoom from 2:00 to 3:00 on Tuesdays and Thursdays. A link will be available in Canvas. (Other times will work, too, as my schedule allows.)

**Email:** [nprender@uwsp.edu](mailto:nprender@uwsp.edu) Email is a great way to get a hold of me.

(If you're uncertain about how to write an email to a professor, then this is a great template:  
<https://medium.com/@lportwoodstacer/how-to-email-your-professor-without-being-annoying-af-cf64ae0e4087> )

**Assignments and Grading:** There are twenty Topic Assignments, three Unit Papers and one Final Paper.

20 points for **Daily Prep (20 at 1pt each)**

10 points for **Revision of 2020 Entries**

10 points for **Short Entry**

20 points for **Long Entry #1**

20 points for **Long Entry #2**

20 points for **Long Entry #3**

100 points total

**All assignments will have detailed instructions. Below are brief descriptions to give students an idea of what the semester will be like. All assignments will be announced in class.**

**Daily Prep:** Nearly every day requires special preparation. These tasks will be reasonable in length and aimed to make a productive work hour while in class.

**Revision of 2020 Entries:** Last year was the first in this encyclopedia project. One job this year is to revise what the previous cohort produced.

**Short Entry:** This entry will utilize a small number of sources. It will be a good start to our own research and writing. Peer review will offer guidance for revisions. The entry will be given a provisional grade when submitted at the due date. Revisions can increase the grade and are due at the end of our semester.

**Long Entries:** These entries will draw from a greater number of primary sources, as well as engage secondary sources. Peer review will offer guidance for revisions. The entry will be given a provisional grade when submitted at the due date. Revisions can increase the grade and are due at the end of our semester.

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**Canvas:** We will use Canvas sparingly this semester. Mostly, I will post readings there associated with Assignments. It will also be a place to submit work and track grades.

We will use the following grade schedule:

A 93-100	B+ 87-89.99	C+ 77-79.99	D+ 67-69.99	F 59.99 and below
A- 90-92.99	B 83-86.99	C 73-76.99	D 60-66.99	
	B- 80-82.99	C- 70-72.99		

**Course Policies:** For information on plagiarism, consult <http://www.uwsp.edu/centers/rights>. See Chapter 14, *Student Academic Standards and Disciplinary Procedures*, pages 5 -10, for the disciplinary possibilities if you are caught cheating. As an instructor deeply concerned with fairness in the classroom, I pursue each and every case of plagiarism and cheating. Please note that turnitin.com is used for the essay assignments.

**Equity of Educational Access:** If you have a learning or physical challenge which requires classroom accommodation, please contact the UWSP Disability Services office with your documentation as early as possible in the semester. They will then notify me, in a confidential memo, of the accommodations that will facilitate your success in the course. Disability Services Office, 103 Student Services Center, Voice: (715) 346-3365, TTY: (715) 346-3362, <http://www.uwsp.edu/special/disability/studentinfo.htm>

***Note:** The syllabus is a general plan for the course. Changes announced via email or in class may be necessary.*

**Our Digital Sources:** Our research this semester will focus on two collections, the Downtown Action Committee Administrative Papers and the Ray Specht Papers, which UWSP Archivists Brad Casselberry and Kyle O'Neill graciously digitized for our course. These collections are excellent for our encyclopedia project. The DAC was charged with assessing options for downtown redevelopment in the 1970s and 1980s, which meant they studied the downtown of Stevens Point extensively. We will be able to use their work to craft entries for our encyclopedia. Similarly, Ray Specht impacted the Stevens Point landscape through his work at the university and in local government. Beyond these, we will also utilize the *Stevens Point Journal*, which has a long run that has been digitized, and also Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, also digitized.

**Classroom Norms and Culture:** This course is project based, which means students should expect class meetings to focus on the actual work of writing history. At our meetings, we will most often be reading maps, editing writing, and examining historical documents. There will be many moments for discussion of our work, but much of the time will actually be spent in the work itself. The “feel” of the course, therefore, will be dramatically different than in courses where students are expected to take notes on a lecture or discuss a common reading. If our meetings feel like a workshop or studio, then we're doing it right.

<b>Schedule</b>			
Week 1	Thursday, Sept 3	Introduction	
Week 2	Tuesday, Sept 8	Good Qualities of an Encyclopedia	Daily Prep 1: Read Selections from <i>Encyclopedia of Milwaukee</i> ; read Advice from Last Year's Students
	Thursday, Sept 10	Downtown Action Comm. Collection	Daily Prep 2: Read Finding Aid and Selections from the DAC Collection
Week 3	Tuesday, Sept 15	Sanborn Maps	Daily Prep 3: Read Sanborn Intro
	Thursday, Sept 17	Stevens Point Journal	Daily Prep 4: Read Historic Newspaper Intro
Week 4	Tuesday, Sept 22	Revising Entries	Daily Prep 5: Read <i>On Writing Well</i>
	Thursday, Sept 24	Revising Entries	Daily Prep 6: Work on Revisions (DAC Collection)
Week 5	Tuesday Sept 29	Revising Entries	Daily Prep 7: Work on Revisions (DAC Collection)
	Thursday, Oct 1	Selecting Short Entries <b>Revised Entries Due</b>	
Week 6	Tuesday, Oct 6	Short Entry Research	Daily Prep 8: Research Specht Papers, <i>SPJ</i> , and Sanborn
	Thursday, Oct 8	Short Entry Research	Daily Prep 9: Research Specht Papers, <i>SPJ</i> , and Sanborn
Week 7	Tuesday, Oct 13	Selecting Long Entries <b>Short Entry Due</b>	
	Thursday, Oct 15	Long Entry Research	Daily Prep 10: Research Specht Papers, <i>SPJ</i> , and Sanborn
Week 8	Tuesday, Oct 20	Long Entry Research: Secondary Sources	Daily Prep 11: Locate Secondary Sources

	Thursday, Oct 22	Long Entry Research	Daily Prep 12: Research and Writing
Week 9	Tuesday, Oct 27	Peer Review  <b>Long Entry #1 Due</b>	
	Thursday, Oct 29	Long Entry Research	Daily Prep 13: Research Specht Papers, <i>SPJ</i> , and Sanborn
Week 10	Tuesday, Nov 3	Long Entry Research: Secondary Sources	Daily Prep 14: Locate Secondary Sources
	Thursday, Nov 5	Long Entry Research	Daily Prep 15: Research and Writing
Week 11	Tuesday, Nov 10	Peer Review  <b>Long Entry #2 Due</b>	
	Thursday, Nov 12	Long Entry Research	Daily Prep: 16 Research Specht Papers, <i>SPJ</i> , and Sanborn
Week 12	Tuesday, Nov 17	Long Entry Research: Secondary Sources	Daily Prep 17: Locate Secondary Sources
	Thursday, Nov 19	Long Entry Research	Daily Prep 18: Research and Writing
Week 13	Tuesday, Nov 24	Peer Review  <b>Long Entry #3 Due</b>	
	THANKSGIVING		
Week 14	Tuesday, Dec 1	Revisions	Daily Prep: <i>On Writing Well</i>
	Thursday, Dec 3	Revisions	Daily Prep: Revise, Revise, Revise
Week 15	Tuesday, Dec 8	Future Directions	Daily Prep 19: Finding Aids at the University Archives
	Thursday, Dec 10	Future Directions	Daily Prep 20: Letter to the Next Cohort

**Final Revisions to All Entries due at end of Final Exam period.**

**See AccessPoint for Final Exam time.**

**Mask Policy:** <https://www.uwsp.edu/coronavirus/Documents/UWSPChancellorOrder%208.6.2021.pdf> We will follow that policy without exception.

*Please note that I cannot hold class if even one student is unmasked.*

**Vaccines:** I myself am vaccinated. I took the vaccine to protect myself, but more importantly to protect my wife and son. My son is too young to get vaccinated, but my vaccination buffers him against infection. My wife is vulnerable due to medicine she must take to battle Multiple Sclerosis, but again my vaccination provides an important buffer. For me, these were the reasons to get the vaccine.

There are also more uplifting and fun incentives to vaccinate. The university has prizes, including scholarships, laptops, parking passes, and shopping sprees available. See details: <https://www.uwsp.edu/coronavirus/Pages/ItsWorthAShot.aspx>

The State of Wisconsin is offering \$100 to get vaccinated before Labor Day: <https://www.wpr.org/wisconsin-will-give-you-100-if-you-get-covid-19-vaccine-labor-day>