

History 300: Methods and Skills of History

Spring 2017

Section 1: Monday and Wednesday, 9:35-10:50 am, 231 CCC

“Each age writes the history of the past anew.” —Frederick Jackson Turner, 1891.

“Whatever may be the limitations which trammel inquiry elsewhere we believe the great state University of Wisconsin should ever encourage that continual and fearless sifting and winnowing by which alone the truth can be found.” —UW Board of Regents, 1894.

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Office Hours: Monday 3:00-4:00, Wednesday 11:00-1:00, and by appointment.

Course Description and Objectives

In History 300 you will begin to master the art of “doing history”: asking thought-provoking questions about the past, seeking out evidence in a variety of sources, and using that evidence to build authoritative answers to your questions. You will practice this art by completing a semester-long research project culminating in a polished paper and in-class presentation.

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Conduct self-directed historical research.
- Write an effective original research paper.
- Deliver a professional oral presentation describing historical research.
- Constructively review the research and writing of others.

Required Texts

- Furay and Salevouris, *Methods and Skills of History*, 4th ed., required for purchase (MSH)
- Turabian, *Manual for the Writers of Term Papers*, 8th ed., required for purchase

Contacting me

Helping you learn is the *most important* and *most rewarding* part of my job. If you have questions or concerns about the course, either visit me during office hours or contact me to make an appointment. I receive and reply to email more quickly than voice mail. Please put “History 300” in the subject line.

How to succeed in History 300

Attend regularly, participate actively, and make steady progress each week on research and writing. Multiple absences (either physical or mental) will make it difficult or impossible to complete the course, whatever the reason. In History 300, students generally CANNOT “catch up” late in the semester after falling behind. Most students who miss deadlines will withdraw from the course. Don’t let that be you. If you are worried about your progress, please contact me ASAP.

As with any other three-credit course, you should expect to spend 6-9 hours each week on out-of-class work. Because this is a writing-intensive class, you will probably find yourself closer to nine. You will devote most of those out-of-class hours to your research project, which will require steady work throughout the semester. You will choose your research question yourself, with my approval, but you must have enough primary sources, including archival sources, to answer your question.

Paper Requirements

Both your first draft and final draft will be graded according to the following criteria:

- Articulates a clear and persuasive argument, summarized in a thesis statement of one or two sentences, underlined.
- Supports that argument effectively with evidence from at least 10 primary sources, including at least two archival sources. You may not conduct oral interviews for this project.
- Critically evaluates relevant historiography: at least four scholarly publications by historians (published by peer-reviewed journals or scholarly presses).
- Follows a clear structure, usually including an introduction, historiography section, background section, narrative sections, and conclusion, totaling 10-15 double-spaced pages.
- Explains the significance of your research findings (i.e., so what?)
- Cites all sources in footnotes, using Turabian note format, clearly indicating both the specific documents being cited and their source.
- Includes a full bibliography, in Turabian bibliographic format, listing primary and secondary sources separately.
- Articulates your ideas in clear, effective prose: using active language, effective topic sentences and transitions; quoting minimally; and using standard grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- Submits the document in MS Word format, including your name, a title, page numbers, and normal fonts and margins.
- Responds effectively to peer and instructor feedback on earlier work.

Collaborative Learning

In History 300, each member of the class (including me) shares responsibility for the learning of every other member of the class. Throughout the semester, you will exchange constructive feedback with your classmates. You will also complete in-class group activities. Helping others with their projects will help you improve your own. It is the most important thing you will do in this class.

Archival Research

Working with archival materials is one of the greatest joys, and most important skills, of historical research, and a key requirement of the History 300 research project. As an Area Research Center (ARC), the UWSP Archives house a wonderful collection of primary sources documenting central Wisconsin history. Equally important, UWSP archives patrons may access items from other ARCs around the state, including the world-renowned collections of the Wisconsin Historical Society. Items you request through the ARC network can be transferred for you to study here at the UWSP archives (this is an incredibly unusual and valuable service: in nearly all other college and university systems, you would have to travel to each different archive).

Early in the semester, we will spend two class periods in the archives, and as you plan your research projects you will need to consider first and foremost whether appropriate archival sources

are available. After you complete your research prospectus, you will meet individually with UWSP Archivist Ruth Wachter-Nelson to discuss your plans, including ordering items you may need from other ARCs. Please keep in mind the following guidelines:

- You must meet with Professor Wachter-Nelson by appointment. To set a time, please contact her by email: rwachter@uwsp.edu. Mention History 300 in the subject line. In your email, list 3 to 4 times when you are available.
- Bring your prospectus (including your research question and list of sources) to your appointment. Arrive on time. Missing an appointment will affect your grade in the course.
- Archival materials may be used only in the Archives Reading Room, which is open Monday-Friday, 7:45-12:00 and 1:00-4:30. Plan accordingly.
- Transferring materials from other ARCs may take several weeks: request items early.

Most archival materials are unique and irreplaceable, so please observe these rules to protect them:

- You must sign in before beginning your research.
- No food or drink is allowed in the Reading Room.
- Personal items such as backpacks, purses, brief cases, laptop cases, umbrellas, and coats cannot be kept at your research table. There are free lockers available to store them.
- Unlike a library where you get books yourself, a staff member will retrieve material for you.
- In the Reading Room, you may use pencils, laptops, notebooks, notecards, and citation manuals. You may NOT use pens or highlighters.
- Many archival materials are fragile. Handle them with care.

Feeling Overwhelmed

If you are a human being, you will probably find yourself getting overwhelmed at times during this course. I recommend the following, in any order:

- Find a quiet place to sit and breathe deeply. Rinse and repeat.
- Know that everyone who has ever pursued a major research project has felt the same way, including your professor. Of course, that doesn't make the feeling go away, but at least it isn't just you. See "Manage Moments of Normal Panic," Turabian 4.6.
- Shift gears. Spend time doing something completely different. Preferably outside.
- Break your project down into bite-sized pieces. Identify small tasks that you can do relatively quickly ("read that source"). Focus on one task at a time.
- Step away from your computer—far away if necessary—take out a pad of paper, and start writing whatever comes into your head.
- See me. Email me with the subject heading "help!" to schedule an urgent appointment.
- Reward yourself for making progress. Ice cream and chocolate work well.

Use of Student Work

Students often benefit from seeing examples of strong work completed by other students. For that reason, I may distribute exemplary student work, after removing all identifying information. If you object to my using your work in this way, please notify me and I will respect your wishes.

Students with Disabilities

I will make every reasonable effort to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities. Any student requesting accommodation must meet with UWSP Disability Services staff as early in the

semester as possible. No accommodation will be granted until I receive and agree to a formal plan approved by Disability Services.

Academic Integrity

Cases of academic misconduct, including plagiarism, will be formally reported following the policies laid out in UWSP's Student Academic Disciplinary Procedures. Plagiarism consists of submitting work created by someone else as your own. To learn more about academic integrity, please ask me or consult <http://library.uwsp.edu/Guides/VRD/plagiarism.htm> . Students found to have committed academic misconduct will receive an F for the course.

Grading

Short assignments:	10%
Attendance and participation:	10%
Workshops and peer review:	10%
Primary source analysis essay:	10%
Historiographic essay:	10%
First draft of paper:	20%
Research presentation:	10%
Final draft of paper:	20%

Course Schedule: The following schedule is subject to change. All class meetings will take place in the regular classroom unless otherwise announced.

Monday, Jan. 23: Take the red pill.

Wednesday, Jan. 25: Welcome to Wonderland!

Meet in the archives (506 LRC)

- > Read the syllabus; purchase required texts
- > Read "The Strange Death of Silas Deane" (on D2L)

Monday, Jan. 30: What is historical thinking?

- > Read MSH 13-20, 27-35. What do they mean by "stages of historical consciousness"?

Wednesday, Feb. 1: What did you find in the archives?

Meet in the archives (506 LRC)

- > Complete "Historians in Wonderland" assignment (see handout)
- > **Between Feb. 6 and Feb. 15: required individual research conference with me**

Monday, Feb. 6: What kinds of questions do historians ask, and how do they answer them?

- > Read Turabian ch. 2. What makes a good research question?
- > Read Turabian ch. 3.1-3.2 and MSH 169-77. What are primary, secondary, and tertiary sources?

Wednesday, Feb. 8: How do historians find and take notes on sources?

- > Read Turabian ch. 4.2-4.6
- > Read MSH 103-14 and 120-23, and complete the notetaking exercise (122-23)

Monday, Feb. 13: How can you find more sources?

- > Explore historical newspapers and government document databases. Experiment with different filters and ways of searching. Look for sources relevant to your topic.
 - Historical newspapers: <http://libraryguides.uwsp.edu/historicalnewspapers>
 - Congressional publications: <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.uwsp.edu/congressional>
 - US Government publications: <http://libraryguides.uwsp.edu/go.php?c=14751030>
 - Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau Digital Collections:
<http://lrbdigital.legis.wisconsin.gov/>
 - UWSP catalog (use advanced search): <http://www.uwsp.edu/library/Pages/default.aspx>
 - Digital Sanborn Maps, 1867-1970: <http://sanborn.umi.com.ezproxy.uwsp.edu/>
- > Print out and bring to class at least one primary source from the databases (1-2 pages). Record all information necessary for citation (see Turabian chs. 3.2 and 17 for details).

Wednesday, Feb. 15: Research Prospectus due

- > **Between Feb. 15 and March 1: required conference with archivist Ruth Wachter-Nelson.**

Monday, Feb. 20: How do historians use primary sources?

- > Complete Kent State exercise 4 (MSH 193-96). Bring your answers to class.

Wednesday, Feb. 22: What can you learn from your primary sources?

- > Choose two or three primary sources you may use for your project. Analyze the sources, following the format on MSH 185-88, and come to class prepared to share what you found.

Monday, Feb. 27: Draft Primary Source Analysis due (upload to D2L Dropbox)

Wednesday, March 1: Primary Source Analysis workshop

- > Complete PSA Peer Review assignment

Monday, March 6: Final Primary Source Analysis due

Wednesday, March 8: How do historians find secondary sources?

- > Read Turabian chs. 3.3-3.4.
- > Try out the following research tools. Look for sources relevant to your topic. Look for, and use, LOC subject headings and keywords. Take notes on your finds. Be ready to discuss them in class.
 - Google Scholar: <https://scholar.google.com/>
 - Jstor (use advanced search, and filter for history journals): <http://www.jstor.org/> (on campus) or <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.uwsp.edu/>
 - America: History & Life: <http://tinyurl.com/ahl-uwsp>
 - UWSP catalog (use advanced search): <http://www.uwsp.edu/library/Pages/default.aspx>

Monday, March 13: How can historians most effectively read secondary sources?

- > Read MSH 131-39 and complete exercises 2 and 3 (MSH 144-48). Print out the précis to hand in.

Wednesday, March 15: What can you learn from your secondary sources?

- > Choose two secondary sources for your project. Analyze each using the format on MSH 147-48.

March 18-26: Spring Break

Monday, March 27: How do historians analyze historical interpretations?

- > Read MSH 217-26 and complete exercise 4 (MSH 232-34)

Wednesday, March 29: What will your historiographic essay look like?

- > Bring to class your notes on secondary sources, on paper.

Monday, April 3: Historiographic Essay draft due in D2L Dropbox.

Wednesday, April 5: Historiographic Essay workshop

- > Read Turabian ch. 7 and MSH 241-48.
- > Draft a paragraph for the body of your paper, based on evidence in your primary sources. Print it out and bring it to class (include your thesis statement on the printout).

Monday, April 10: Final Historiographic Essay due in D2L Dropbox. No class.

Wednesday, April 12: How will you structure your first draft?

- > Recommended: Turabian ch. 6 and MSH 83-90.
- > Write an outline including a thesis statement and descriptions of sections (about 2 pages total)

Monday, April 17: How will you write this?

- > Recommended: Turabian ch. 7 and MSH 241-48.

Wednesday, April 19: First draft of paper due in D2L Dropbox AND in class

Please bring hard copies for group members and for me.

Monday, April 24: Draft Workshop

- > Complete first draft peer review
- > **Between April 24-May 10: individual revision conference with me.**

Wednesday, April 26: revising and presenting

- > Skim Turabian chs. 9, 10-12 and 13.1-2. Which parts are most helpful for you?

May 1-10: Research Presentations

Final paper due at end of official exam period: Tuesday, May 16, 4:45 pm