

Historical Methods

WINTER 2013

HIST 203

HOWARD



*"Viewed from a distance, everything is beautiful."
—Tacitus*

Doing history...one step at a time.

This course is designed to introduce you to the basics of history, both in theory and in practice.

We will examine the kinds of sources historians explore, the approaches they take when examining those sources, and the different interpretations they might develop. The course also looks at the typical output of historians, from book reviews to historiographic essays to museum placards. The ultimate goal of the course is to better understand what the field of history is about, and how historians think and write about the past.



Historians have a specific skill-set, and throughout this course we will emphasize the skills and techniques used in undergraduate historical research. This includes learning the basics of citation, which is a fundamental skill you will use throughout your college career, not only in history classes but in all of your academic work.

Historians use specific sources, and this course is designed to introduce you to historical sources readily available in a variety of places and formats. Learning to navigate these sources will help you as you develop your capstone topic and begin your capstone research (in HIST 303 and 403).

Historians interpret the past differently, and by the end of this

course, you will understand how events of the past can be viewed differently by historians, with equal validity.

*To be ignorant of what occurred before you were born is to remain always a child.
--Cicero*

Our goals... By the end of this course, you should be able to use the library to find sources, to effectively assess the merits of those sources, to cite the sources accurately, and to read the sources critically.



History doesn't repeat itself, but it does rhyme. —Mark Twain

History will be kind to me for I intend to write it. —Winston Churchill



Course Assignments

Abstracts

You will write five abstracts over the quarter, working from assigned reading and from your own texts. 20 points each for 100 points total.

Quizzes



Each week you will have an in-class quiz or activity. Quiz topics will be presented in advance, and in some cases you will be allowed to bring material in to use for the quiz.

10 pts each for 100 pts.

Citation & Bibliography

You will compile two bibliographies (30 points each) and one annotated bibliography (50 points). Details on these will be discussed in class. For formatting guidelines you should study Turabian. There will also be a 20 point footnote activity as well.

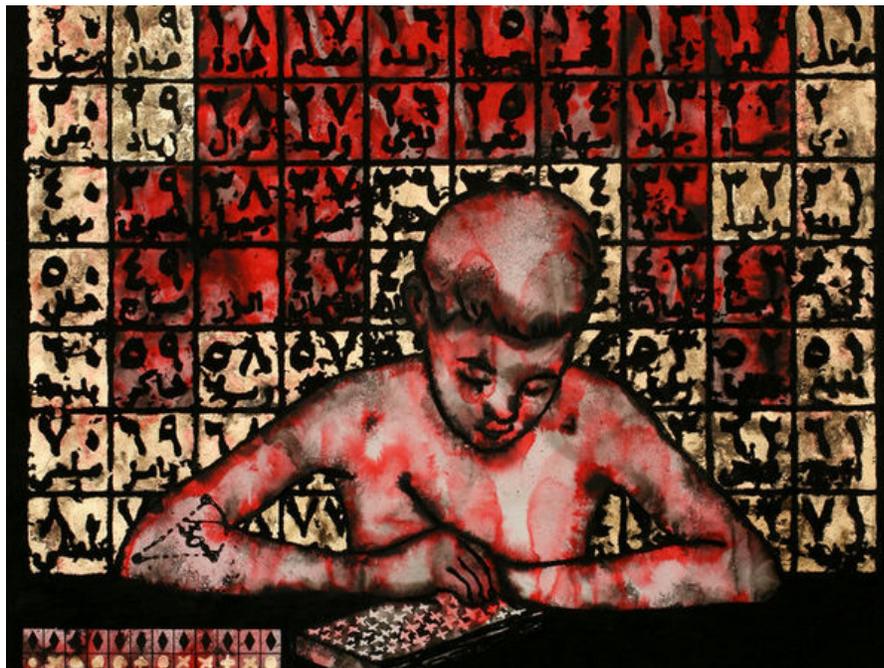
Book Reviews



You will write one book review in the course on a scholarly monograph approved by the professor. 50 point draft, 50 points for final version.

Final Exam

The quarter will end with an in-class final exam that covers the various skills you have learned over the quarter. See the university's final exam schedule for day and time. 70 points.



Alfred Tarazi, *The Historian at Work*, 2011

Presnell, Jenny L. *The Information-Literate Historian: A Guide to Research for History Students*.

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th ed.

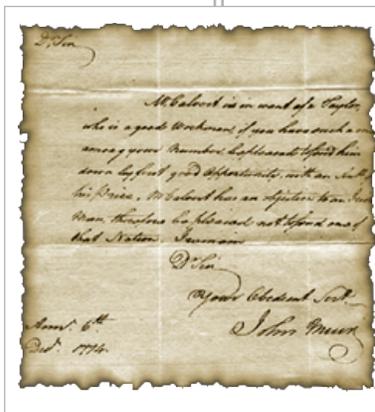
What you need to succeed in HIST 203:

To succeed in this course you will need to attend all classes, read all assigned texts, participate in discussion, engage with your colleagues' work, and complete all written assignments.

Faculty in the History Department at EOU have designed this course as an opportunity for students to build a foundation of skills for both upper and lower division history courses. These skills are also central to success beyond the academy, in a diverse array of career paths. At the end of ten weeks, you should be able to frame a research question, find primary and secondary sources, read and interpret those sources

critically, and produce solid written work in a variety of formats, from informational abstracts to book reviews to annotated bibliographies. At the end of the course you will have compiled a portfolio that should help you prepare for your History capstone project.

Students who successfully complete HIST 203 may be heading directly into their capstone courses (303 and 403), which means they will want to use this course to develop a firm capstone topic. Other students may be a year or more away from their capstone work. For them, the urgency of selecting a topic is reduced, and emphasis should be placed on exploring a variety of areas to get a feel for what may or may not work as a long-term project.



Schedule

WEEK AND TOPIC	READING	ASSIGNMENTS
(1) The History of History and how to begin this course	Read Presnell: Intro & ch. 1 Jill Lepore, <i>The Story of America</i> , intro	Concept maps and outlines
(2) Framing a research question	Turabian pt. 1, pp. 3-23 and pp. 77-80. Read slate.com article on BB.	Abstract #1 due
(3) Sources: the good, the bad, and the completely ahistorical	Turabian ch. 3. Presnell, ch. 2-3	Research question due Brief bibliography #1 due
(4) Learning to read (like a historian)	Presnell, ch. 4 and ch. 7	Abstract #2 due
(5) Doing Research: Part I	Presnell ch. 5 and ch. 6 through page 122; Turabian ch. 4	Abstract #3 due
(6) Literature reviews and book reviews	Turabian ch. 5; Presnell pp. 45-47	Book review draft due
(7) Doing Research: Part II	Presnell ch. 9; Turabian ch. 15	Revised research question due Brief bibliography #2 due
(8) Revision: it's more than just copyediting	Reading TBA	Abstract #4 due
(9) Gaining Expertise	Reading TBA	Book review due
(10) Putting it all together	Presnell ch. 11	Abstract #5 due Annotated Bibliography due

Digital Resources

There are assorted online resources for historians that you want to become familiar with. Here are some useful links:

Center for History and New Media: <http://chnm.gmu.edu>

History Matters: <http://historymatters.gmu.edu>

House Divided Project: <http://housedivided.dickinson.edu>

Learning Historical Research: <http://www.williamcronon.net/researching>

Exploring the French Revolution: <http://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution>

