

HISTORY 6000
HISTORICAL METHODS AND RESEARCH
Fall Semester 2008

Professor Tim Wolters (797-1295; t.w@usu.edu)

Class: Tu, 4:30 - 7:00 pm, Old Main 323L

Office hours: Tu, 1:30 - 4:30pm, Old Main 323F, or by appointment

Course Description:

This course introduces beginning graduate students to the professional study of history. Students will learn about the discipline of history and the historical profession, and how historians communicate with each other and a broader public. To complete the course, students must finalize their proposed plan of study and identify a potential thesis topic (this includes identifying accessible archival collections that will serve as the basis for that thesis). This requirement holds even for students pursuing a 'Plan B' degree (i.e., non-thesis option).

Learning to write clear and intelligible prose is a key part of this course. Students also are expected to use correct citations at all times. Assignments must be submitted on time, and punctual attendance is mandatory. Specific instructions for assignments will be given in class.

Professor's Comments:

In most basic terms, the purpose of this course is to teach you the 'nuts and bolts' of the historical profession. I believe the best way to accomplish this is through a series of practical assignments on topics relating to those nuts and bolts. Because my own expertise is in the history of American naval technology, the practical assignments will revolve around that subject. I realize most (probably all) of you have research interests in other areas. Thus you should keep in mind that the purpose of this class IS NOT to make you experts in American naval history. Rather, it is to give you the tools that will enable you to succeed as an historian. In each practical assignment, I will be assessing how well you have performed the task assigned (e.g., citing sources, analyzing primary documents, writing a book review, etc.), not whether you have mastered the intricate details of ship design or officer technical education. Throughout the semester, you should always keep in mind that the goal of this course is to TEACH YOU THE COMMONLY ACCEPTED PRACTICES OF THE HISTORICAL PROFESSION, not to have you master the minute details of a specific subject.

Two other points are worth noting. First, this is a graduate class, and if you have never taken a graduate-level class you may be surprised at the workload. Be prepared to devote a significant amount of time to this and any other 6000-level history classes. Second, while most of you likely majored or minored in history, be aware this class is about *doing* history. As such, it is not a lecture course. Students are expected to participate in, and contribute to, all class discussions.

Grading:

Citation Practicum – 5%
Primary Source Practicum (I) – 15%
Memoirs Practicum – 10%
Oral History Practicum – 10%
Primary Source Practicum (II) – 15%
Student Presentations – 5%
Book Review – 10%
Class Participation – 10%
Final Assignment – 20%

Note: Any student who fails to turn in a *both* an approved program of study and a final thesis proposal will receive a failing grade for the course.

Disability Resource Center:

If accommodations for the course are needed, students should contact the DRC, located in Room # 101 of the University Inn. The DRC can provide a copy of this syllabus in a suitable alternate format.

Miscellaneous:

Any cheating, falsification, or presentation of another's work as your own without proper credit being given (i.e., plagiarism) is a violation of Section V-3 of "The Code of Policies and Procedures for Students at Utah State University" and will lead to one or more of the sanctions described in Section VI-1 of the code. If you are unclear about what constitutes plagiarism, see me.

University policy states that students may receive an "I" for extenuating circumstances only (such as serious illness or a death in the family). An incomplete cannot be used to avoid a poor grade or to retain financial aid.

Course Schedule:

Week 1 – August 26

Topic: Course Introduction

Week 2 – September 2

Topic: *Chicago Manual of Style*

Due: Personal Statements

Week 3 – September 9

Topic: Primary Sources, Part I

Due: Citation Practicum

Week 4 – September 16

Topic: Special Collections & Archives at USU (meet in Merrill-Cazier's Tanner Room)
Due: N/A

Week 5 – September 23

Topic: Memoirs
Due: Primary Sources Practicum I

Week 6 – September 30

Topics: Digital Resources (meet in Merrill-Cazier, room # 122)
Due: Assigned Book - Barzun

Week 7 – October 7

Topic: Oral History
Due: Memoirs Practicum

Week 8 – October 14

Topic: Primary Sources, Part II
Due: Oral History Practicum

Week 9 – October 21

Topics: Selecting a Thesis Topic, Part I
Monographs, Part I
Due: Primary Sources Practicum II

Week 10 – October 28

Topic: Approaches to Historical Practice
Due: N/A

Week 11 – November 4

Topics: Monographs, Part II
Scholarly Journals, Part I
Due: Assigned Book - Felker

Week 12 – November 11

Topic: Selecting a Thesis Topic, Part II
Due: *Preliminary* Thesis Proposal

Week 13 – November 18

Topic: Scholarly Journals, Part II
Due: Student Presentations

Week 14 – November 25

Topic: Book Reviews
Due: Assigned Book - Stein

Week 15 – December 2

Topic: Course Conclusion

Due: Book Review

Week 16 – December 9

Topic: Open – we will meet this day only if a previous class has been cancelled

Due: Approved Program of Study

Final Thesis Proposal

Final Note:

If circumstances dictate, this syllabus may be revised. Any updates will be posted on my homepage at <http://www.usu.edu/history/faculty/wolters/classeswolters.htm>.