

HIST 4990: Modern America
Professor Victoria Grieve
Spring 2008, Monday 3:30-6pm

Classroom: Main 326

Office Location: Main 323

Office Hours: Tuesday and Wednesday, 10am-11am and by appointment

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NOTE: This syllabus is subject to changes and/or additions at the discretion of the professor.

Course Description: This course is designed for senior History majors as the capstone course for their undergraduate work. HIST 4990 offers students the opportunity to apply knowledge from survey classes and upper-division courses to a well-defined research project. This course emphasizes historiographical literacy, research, and writing skills in relation to a specific historical topic: Modern America (1890-present). Students will be expected to read secondary materials (i.e. the assigned reading and other books and articles relevant to their topic) and write a seminar paper based on primary sources. The end result of the course is a well-researched, well-written, conceptually sound, and scholarly paper, which indicates that you have mastered the skills of a historian. The paper must be properly footnoted with an attached bibliography and will be written in the best prose you can muster. This will require several drafts. A short oral presentation of the major argument of the paper will be given to the class at the end of the semester. The paper accounts for half of the course grade, the remainder is divided among the quality of various stages of the paper, your comments as a peer reviewer, and your oral presentation. Plagiarism will be rewarded with an F in the class. See the USU catalogue for the university's statement on cheating and plagiarism.

This class has three objectives:

- 1.) Students review the basic methods, skills, and tools of historical research.
- 2.) Students examine the historiography of a particular issue in modern American history.
- 3.) Most important, students write a major research paper based on a critical examination of various primary and secondary sources. Students will first create a statement of their research topic (prospectus), then construct a bibliography, then outline the paper, then compose the paper.

Your first assignment is to familiarize yourself with the requirements of this course. Read this syllabus carefully in order to understand the *assignments* you must complete, the *due dates* for your work, and the *penalties* for late submissions.

Basic Reminders:

- 1.) The research papers for this course must:
 - focus on questions dealing with modern American history
 - rely on primary source materials

- 2.) Attendance is mandatory during weeks one through seven, week nine, week twelve, and for the entire period of presentations on April 28. I will be available to answer any questions you may have about your work. **You are required to come to see me at least once during Weeks 14 and 15**, but feel free to visit as often as you'd like to discuss your ongoing work and any problems or questions you may have.

- 3.) ALL deadlines are firm, and I impose stiff penalties for any written work submitted late – one half grade per day. I do not make exceptions.

- 4.) ANY evidence of plagiarism, even a single sentence, will be grounds for automatic failure in the course. Familiarize yourself with the definition, policies, and penalties regarding plagiarism at: <http://www.usu.edu/policies/PDF/Acad-Integrity.pdf>
See the helpful tutorial at: <http://library.acadiau.ca/tutorials/plagiarism/>

- 5.) Throughout the semester, as your paper achieves various stages of completion, make back-up copies of your files. On the day your paper is due, a system crash or lost disk or any other technological failure will **not** be an acceptable excuse for late submissions. No excuses!

Required Readings (Available in the Bookstore):

Cobbs and Hoffman, *Major Problems in American History Volume II, Since 1865*.

Kirszner, Laurie G. and Stephen R. Mandell, *The Pocket Handbook for History*. Second edition. Boston: Thomson Wadsworth, 2004.

Muccigrosso, Robert. *Term Paper Resource Guide to Twentieth-Century United States History*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1999. On reserve in the library.

The Research Paper:

As stated on page one, research papers for this course will focus on questions dealing with modern America.

You will work toward this final goal in stages:

Stage One: approval of a topic (due Feb 4)

Stage Two: approval of a bibliography (due Feb 11)

Stage Three: approval of an outline (due Feb 19)

Stage Four: completion of a rough draft (due March 17); The draft should be 12-15 pgs.

Stage Five: completion of the final paper (due April 21). The paper will be 18-22 pgs.

The final copy of your paper (both electronic and hard copy) should adhere to the Chicago Manual of Style. The electronic copy must be in Word format. The hard copy must be in 12-point

font with one inch margins on all sides, double-spaced, pages numbered, no plastic covers or holders, paper-clipped; 18-22 pages of text plus 1-5 pages of endnotes and 1-2 page bibliography.

Make back-up copies of all work throughout the semester. A system crash, lost disk, or other technological failure will **not** constitute an acceptable excuse for late submissions.

Class Schedule:

Week 1: January 7

Introduction; selection/assignment of peer reviewer for the semester
Begin reading *Major Problems in American History*

Week 2: January 14

Visit to Merrill-Cazier Library (Meet in the lobby).
After our visit, we will discuss *Major Problems*, Ch. 3-6.

Week 3: January 21 – No class – You should be reading and considering possible paper topics.

Week 4: January 28

Visit to Government Documents and Special Collections; Meet in the lobby of the Merrill-Cazier Library. After our visit, we will discuss your interests and tentative topics; be prepared to speak about the topic you are considering. We will also discuss *Major Problems*, Ch. 7-11.

Week 5: February 4

Class discussion of *Major Problems*, Ch. 12-15.

PROSPECTUS DUE to your peer reviewer and Professor Grieve; be prepared to give a report on your research progress (primary and secondary sources; major research questions). What primary sources are available at USU or nearby? Government documents, special collections? What can you access through interlibrary loan? Are there any collections of oral histories that may prove useful? What about visual or audio sources? How can you use these to approach your research questions? Begin to get a sense of the secondary literature by looking at the library catalog, browsing library shelves and online search engines.

Week 6: February 11

Report on progress of your papers; Prospectus returned in class.

BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE to your peer reviewer and Professor Grieve. Using the correct format for bibliographies, separately list primary and secondary sources you plan to use to research your topic; all sources must adhere to the Chicago Documentation Style (see Kirsznner 178).

*Week 7: February 19 (Meet on Tuesday)

Report on progress of your papers. **OUTLINE DUE** to your peer reviewer and Professor Grieve: 2-3 page explanation, in outline form, of the paper's basic thesis, methods, and the components of your arguments.

Week 8: February 25 – No class – You should be writing your rough draft.

Week 9: March 3 – No class – You should be writing your rough draft.

Week 10: March 10 – Spring Break – No class – You should be writing your rough draft.

Week 11: March 17

Report on progress of papers; **ROUGH DRAFT DUE** to your peer reviewer and to Professor Grieve.

Week 12: March 24

Copy of peer reviewer comments due to Professor Grieve. Discussion of proper formatting in your paper (footnotes, bibliography, etc.) – skim Kirszner.

Week 13: March 31

Rough drafts returned in class.

Week 14: April 7

No class – meet with Professor Grieve. You should be completing research and polishing your final draft.

Week 15: April 14

No class – meet with Professor Grieve. You should be completing research and polishing your final draft.

Week 16: April 21

No class; Papers due by 10am (both electronic and hard copy versions)

April 28 – Oral presentations. I will post announcements of the event in the History department and it is open to the public.

Two versions of your paper are due. Email the electronic version to Professor Grieve at victoria.grieve@usu.edu no later than 10am. Drop off the hard copy version of the paper to the History Department, Old Main 323. The staff will time stamp your paper. The deadline is 10am.

Penalties for papers submitted late are as follows:

10:01am – 4pm on Monday – one full letter grade deduction

4:01pm Monday – 4:00 pm Tuesday – two full letter grades

4:01pm Tuesday – 4:00 pm Wednesday – three letter grades

4:01pm Wednesday – 4:00 pm Thursday – four full letter grades

No papers will be accepted after 4pm on Thursday, April 24.

Evaluation of the final paper:

- 1.) Opening paragraphs – strong, clear, precise statement of thesis; clear preview of the argument that will follow in the body of the paper
- 2.) Main argument – well organized, coherent, logical sequence of points, plausible interpretation of sources, reasonable claims, significance and persuasiveness of arguments
- 3.) Primary sources – range, relevance, use, strength
- 4.) Citations – proper use and format
- 5.) Mechanics – spelling, punctuation, grammar, sentence and paragraph structure

Components of the Final Grade:

Your final grade will be based on Professor Grieve’s evaluation of:

Attendance and class participation – 10 points

Topic (Originality, depth, complexity) – 5 points

Bibliography (Breadth, use of primary sources, style) – 5 points

Outline (Clarity of objectives, methodology, style) – 10 points

Comments as a peer reviewer on rough draft (Thoughtfulness, depth) – 10 points

Final paper (Structure, clarity, style, strength of argument) – 50 points

Presentation of paper (Effectiveness of relaying major points of your argument, clarity) – 10 points

Total = 100 points