Syllabus
H 217 The Nature of History
Fall 2006
Monday, 6:00pm-8:40pm
Room CA 235

Professor: Dr. Melissa Bingmann
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Office Hours: Monday, 1:00pm-2:00pm; Wednesday, 4:30pm-5:30pm
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course is an introduction to the meaning, philosophy, and study of history. Readings and discussion will explore sources that historians use to construct interpretive narratives presented in exhibits, film, and traditional sources. Students will learn the basics of historical research methodology and demonstrate their ability to employ these skills by creating a National History Day project. This course is a regular offering of the History Department and is required for undergraduate Social Studies Education majors and the undergraduate Museum Studies Certificate.

PRINCIPLES OF UNDERGRADUATE LEARNING:
Critical thinking and analytical skills are essential to the study of history. Students will develop these skills by analyzing and synthesizing historical perspectives presented in lectures, websites, and text. Students will develop oral communication skills by analyzing and discussing assigned text and presenting their historical research conducted for a National History Day project. This project will also provide the opportunity for students to express ideas in a variety of formats. The service learning project at the State Archives or Indiana Historical Bureau requires the integration and application of knowledge.

POLICIES:

Attendance
Attendance is required and will be taken at class meetings.

Cheating and plagiarism
Students who cheat or plagiarize will receive a zero for the work in question and will be reported to the Dean. According to the Academic Handbook, Indiana University, August 2001, pp. 172-173, “Any student who fails to give credit for ideas or materials taken from another source is guilty of plagiarism.”

For comprehensive information on IUPUI’s policy on cheating and plagiarism consult Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct available on-line at http://hoosiers.iupui.edu/studcode/studcode.htm.

Incompletes
I will be very reluctant to give a grade of Incomplete (I). I assign Incompletes only to students who have successfully completed no less than 75 percent of the course work and who have been prevented by significant and unanticipated circumstances from finishing all of their assignments.

Classroom Courtesy
Please arrive on time and turn off cell phones and pagers prior to the beginning of class.

READINGS:

The following are available in the IUPUI bookstore:

David Kyvig and Marty, *Nearby History*
Gary Nash, *History on Trial*

The following is available through the IUPUI University Library electronic resources:
*Journal of American History*
*The Public Historian*

ASSIGNMENTS:

Class participation:
Students are expected to complete readings prior to each session in order to participate in discussion. Your comprehension of readings will be assessed by written assignments, oral response, small group discussion, quizzes, and/or mini-exams. I will place discussion questions on Oncourse at least one week prior to the date we will discuss that reading in class. You are also expected to view the primary source documents provided on a cd-rom for *After the Fact*.

Written assignments for readings:
Each student will write a book review for the following using guidelines provided in chapter 9 of *The History Student Writer’s Manual*:

Nash, *History on Trial* OR Linenthal, *History Wars*. DUE Nov. 22
(I recommend Nash for Social Studies Education majors and Linenthal for Museum Studies Majors)

Analytical Skill Building Assignments:
1. Evaluation of junior group documentary process papers DUE Oct. 4
2. Evaluation of children’s literature or historical film DUE Nov. 8
3. Evaluation of the Eiteljorg’s Mihtohseenionki exhibit DUE December 6

Service-Learning Project DUE December 13
Choose either to document a historical marker OR complete 20 hours in the State Archives. You will need a staff member from either location to document that you met the service-learning requirements of this course.

1. Historical Marker—there are hundreds of historical markers across the state—the large blue markers with the outline of the State of Indiana at the top. For those markers installed before 2002, no documentation has been compiled to verify the information included on the marker. The Indiana Historical Bureau, State of Indiana, administers the historical marker program and needs annotated text for those markers. Students will choose one marker from a list, copy the text, photograph the marker if possible, and conduct research to annotate the text and provide related information about the marker topic, especially the historical context. Indiana: A New Historical Guide, Indiana Historical Society Press, 1989, may be of use. Go to http://www.statelib.lib.in.us/www/ihb/markers/index.html to learn more about the history of the program and see models for documenting the history of the marker (2002 and later). Your five-page footnoted write-up will include the marker text and a bibliography of sources used to document the text and provide historical context. Because this project is a bit more involved than option #2, you may be eligible for up to 5 points extra credit for in-depth research.

2. Indiana State Archives,
Your three-page write-up will include a description of activities accomplished and what you learned about the State Archives and its collections. You will need to explore what makes the collections of the State Archives different from other state repositories (Indiana State Library and the Indiana Historical Society), challenges the State Archives currently faces, and the audience it serves. Be certain to ask the staff for ideas for a topic for your NHD project or inquire what materials the archives may have for your selected topic.

Although your written report is not due until the last day of class, I suggest that you complete your service-learning activity and written report early in the semester as several of your assignments are due in November and December. Both assignments have the potential for helping you select a topic for your NHD project, which is another incentive for completing this sooner than later.

National History Day (NHD) research project:
Go to www.nationalhistoryday.org, and click “Contest.” You will find everything you need to develop your project. You may choose to work in groups or alone, however, you may not choose to write a paper. Your final project should be an exhibit, documentary, or performance. This year’s theme is Triumph & Tragedy in History. The annual theme is broad enough to include topics ranging from local history to world history. I encourage you to choose a local history theme because you will have greater access to primary source material. Your final project will be assessed by graduate students in H542 “Intro to Public History,” local educators,

There are two assignments in preparation for the final NHD project. Each student/group will need to create a “Research Design & Bibliography” by October 11th. To complete this assignment, you will need to define your topic, suggest a thesis, list and annotate all available primary and secondary source material available to you, and explain how you are going to approach this material as you complete your research. For the “Historical Context Paper,” students working individually will create an essay that synthesizes four monographs/articles from the bibliography and students working in groups will create an essay that synthesizes three monographs/articles (each student in the group will need to select three different works). This assignment is intended to provide you with the background reading you will need for your interpretation.

Research Design & bibliography for NHD project due: DUE October 11  
Historical Context Paper DUE Nov. 1  
Final project DUE Dec. 13

ASSESSMENT:  
Class Participation (discussion, quizzes) 20  
Mini-exam on readings Sept. 13 5  
Book Review, Nash, History on Trial OR Linenthal, History Wars 7.5  
Evaluation of junior group documentary process papers 5  
Evaluation of children’s literature or historical film 7.5  
Evaluation of the Eiteljorg’s Mihtohseenionki exhibit 5  
Service-Learning 10  
NHD Research Design & Bibliography 10  
NHD Historical Context paper 10  
NHD final project 20

COURSE SCHEDULE

Aug. 23 Introduction  
Review NHD program  
Guest speakers to discuss service-learning options

Aug. 30 What Is History?  
Readings:  
Hellstern, Scott, Garrison, The History Student Writer’s Manual, section I  
Kyvig & Marty, Nearby History, Chpt. 1-3

Sept. 6  **Researching on-line documents**  
**CLASS WILL MEET AT THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY—UL 1130**

**Guest Speaker:** Daniel Rulli, Education Specialist, National Archives and Records Administration

**Readings:**
- Davidson & Lytle, *After the Fact*, chpt. 3 & 15
- Hellstern, Scott, Garrison, *The History Student Writer’s Manual*, chpt. 8
- Kyvig & Marty, *Nearby History*, chpt. 4-5

Sept. 13  **On-line mini-exam on Oncourse**  
(I will be at the AASLH conference in Phoenix and will not be checking e-mail starting Tuesday afternoon, Sept 12 through Sunday, Sept. 18)

Sept. 20  **Conducting Historical Research & Developing a research plan**

**Readings:**
- Kyvig & Marty, *Nearby History*, chpt. 11
- Wineburg, *Historical Thinking*, chpt. 4.
- Vandenberg-Daves, “Research Road Map,” [www.nationalhistoryday.org](http://www.nationalhistoryday.org)

**Research Design & bibliography for NHD project due:** October 11

Sept. 27  **Visual Documentation**

**Readings:**
- Davidson & Lytle, *After the Fact*, chpt. 9
- Kyvig & Marty, *Nearby History*, chpt. 7

**Interpreting visual documents—In-class activity.**
Oct. 4  Junior Group NHD Documentaries from 2006 Run-Off competition
We will view a selection of junior group documentaries that advanced to the run-off competition at the 2006 national contest. Groups will evaluate and rank entries according to the NHD criteria.

Readings:
Study NHD rules and criteria for documentaries.
Review student process papers and bring your critique with you to class in written, narrative format. Include suggestions for improving research/bibliography.

Oct. 11  History from the Bottom Up & Oral History

Readings:
Davidson & Lytle, *After the Fact*, chpts. 8 & 14
Hellstern, Scott, Garrison, *The History Student Writer’s Manual*, chpt. 11
Kyvig & Marty, *Nearby History*, review chpt. 1-3 & read chpt. 6

Oct. 18  Material Culture—getting beyond “eye candy”

Readings:
Davidson & Lytle, *After the Fact*, chpt. 4
Kyvig & Marty, *Nearby History*, chpt. 8
[http://lewisandclarkexhibit.org](http://lewisandclarkexhibit.org) launch the on-line exhibit. Be prepared to analyze and discuss the curator’s use of maps, documents, and artifacts in this interpretation. Consider how the absence of one or more of these elements would have impacted the interpretation.

Oct. 25  Myth shaping/Linking the Specific to the Universal

Readings:
Davidson & Lytle, *After the Fact*, chpts. 8, 14, 16
Kyvig & Marty, *Nearby History*, chpt. 12

Take home assignment: evaluation of children’s literature or historical film, due Nov. 8

Nov. 1  Mid-point assessment of NHD entries
Individual meeting with professor and hand-in fives to eight page historical context paper, synthesizing 3-5 monographs on your topic. (five for individuals, three for group project)
Nov. 8 Culture Wars—the American West

Readings:
Davidson & Lytle, *After the Fact*, chpts. 5-6
*The West As America*

Nov. 15 Culture Wars—History Standards and the Enola Gay

Readings:
Choose either Linenthal, *History Wars* OR Nash, *History on Trial*

**Book Review due on November 22nd**
Use *History Student Writer’s Manual* chapter 9 to develop your book review.

Nov. 22 Work on History Day Projects
I will be available by appointment to meet with students to discuss entries. Please make an appointment.

Nov. 29 Historical Thinking

Readings: Complete Wineburg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts*

Dec. 6 Interpretation of Native Americans


**Museum visit:**
View the Eiteljorg exhibit Mihtohseenionki and provide a one-two page written review of the exhibit based on the conversation in the reading. (IUPUI students receive free admission)

Dec. 13 National History Day Projects

February 23, 2007 “Presenting the Past” conference for History educators hosted by the Indiana Council for History Education (ICHE) at the Indiana Historical Society.

*Syllabus is tentative and subject to change*