

History J495 Senior Seminar in Biography
Tuesday, 4:30-7:05 pm, Fall, 2006
Classroom: Indiana Historical Society
Office hours: 2:00-4:00 at IHS
and by appointment

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GOALS: This course will acquaint students with the development of biography (and autobiography) over the last three centuries, although student assignments concentrate on twentieth- and twenty-first-century-materials. Students will gain a substantive understanding of the scholarly literature of biography, the techniques and materials of biographical research, and the historiography of the area of biography most useful to their own research. Guest speakers will provide additional insights to biography for public audiences, edited collections as a form of biography, and biographical sources. Assignments related to researching and writing biography will be an integral part of weekly activities. The products of the course itemized below at evaluation identify more than 40 pages of written assignments to be completed by each student.

METHOD: Discussion and intellectual exchange are important components of this course. Each week students will be expected to be familiar with assigned materials. Most of the class periods will be devoted to discussion, and students are expected to engage in class discussions and in dialogues with guest speakers. By that I mean that in addition to discussion of each week's assignments, students will indicate their interests in the presentations of guests and other students by asking well-phrased questions that will enhance everyone's understanding of the topic discussed. Please note that Indiana Historical Society volunteers will participate in the course on dates indicated below. Their interests in the books to be read and student research projects will enhance everyone's understanding of the techniques and uses of biography.

PRINCIPLES OF UNDERGRADUATE LEARNING: Students will be expected to read, write about, and discuss the materials presented in this course. In written assignments particularly, students will be expected to analyze evidence, argument, and conclusions of the authors of assigned texts (and lectures) to reach reasoned conclusions. Students will synthesize the materials of biography to better understand how American society and interpretations of it over time have influenced our cultural traditions.

ASSIGNMENTS: Each student will prepare a source report, an annotated bibliography, a research design, and an extended research paper. Further, each student will give oral presentations of several written assignments. Each written assignment will be discussed in class in advance of the due date, and all projects are described below or in handouts.

IN CASE OF BAD WEATHER: If class is canceled by the university or the instructor or you have an acceptable excuse for absence, written assignments are due to the History Department Office on the day the university reopens or within two days of your absence. Please ask the secretary to initial and date/time the assignment.

EVALUATION: Students are expected to participate in every class and complete written assignments on time.

DUE DATE	ASSIGNMENT	APPROX. LENGTH	VALUE
	Class participation		10%
Sept. 12	Draft thesis statement	1	
Sept. 26	Final thesis statement	2	
Oct. 3	Source summary*	2	5
Oct. 10	5-Item bibliography	3	
Oct.. 24	20-Item bibliography	10	15
Oct. 31	Research design	5	15
Nov. 21	Draft paper**	15	20
Nov. 28	Critique***	2	5
Dec. 5	Final paper	25	30

*Be sure to make enough copies for all class members and the instructor

**Be sure to make a copy for the reviewer and the instructor

***Be sure to make a copy for the reviewee and the instructor

The draft thesis statement, final thesis statement, and 5-item bibliography will be commented on by the instructor but will not be graded.

Grade scale: A+ (rarely), A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C. A final course average below C will not qualify for graduation as a history major. In order to graduate, all history majors must have a C or better in this class.

POLICIES:

All students are expected to attend and participate in every class. Each absence without the advance consent of the instructor (barring unforeseen disasters) will result in the loss of two (2) points on the FINAL course grade.

All projects are due on the date assigned. Failure to turn in a project on the date due will result in the loss of two (2) points on the FINAL course grade for each day the assignment is late.

A grade of zero (0) will be assigned to any work which has been produced by academic misconduct, including cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, interference, or violation of course rules. A student also must not intentionally or knowingly help or attempt to help another student to commit an act of academic misconduct. The definitions for these forms of misconduct are found on the Office of the Registrar's website at: <http://registrar.iupui.edu/misconduct.html>. By the second week of class you will be expected to have read these conditions, and I will ask you to

sign a statement that you have read and understand them. I will, of course, be happy to answer any questions you might have.

The Student Advocate is located in UC002. Phone 278-7594 and email stuadvoc@iupui.edu. See Student Advocate website at <http://www.life.iupui.edu/advocate/>

A grade of “incomplete” will not be assigned except in the event of a catastrophe such as serious personal illness or death of a family member. All incompletes must be arranged in advance of the final day of class. Arrangement for an incomplete will require the instructor’s approval of a signed statement from the student about the reason for requesting the incomplete and a date when all remaining work will be submitted.

Class Participation: see discussion at “method” above. Also note that each student will prepare a formal, oral presentation of the source summary, research design, and the final paper. There will also be round-table discussions of other course assignments, especially the annotated bibliography.

Texts:

James Boswell. (Introduction by Christopher Hibbert.) Life of Samuel Johnson. (London: Penguin, 1979).

Jerald E. Brown. The Years of the Life of Samuel Lane, 1718-1806. A New Hampshire Man and His World. (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2000).

John Ruston Pagan. Anne Orthwood’s Bastard: Sex and Law in Early Virginia. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

Adam Sisman. Boswell’s Presumptuous Task: The Making of the Life of Dr. Johnson. (London: Penguin, 2000).

Written Assignments:

General Format: All assignments for this course must be typewritten, one-inch margins, double-spaced, and composed in excellent grammar and style with no spelling errors. All projects should be proofed. Asking someone to proof your papers does not constitute cheating. Significant numbers of errors that should have been caught in proofing will cause a paper to be returned, so that proofing can be conducted and a professional paper submitted. Your name should be typed in the upper right corner of the first page (no need for a title page) and may also be shown on subsequent pages. Please use a “12” font in the typeface of your choice, but keep in mind the instructor’s middle-aged eyes. I prefer that you use double-spaced endnotes and bibliographies for your papers. All pages should be numbered. Projects should be stapled together (no folders). **BE SURE TO KEEP A COPY OF YOUR PAPERS.**

Draft thesis statement (due September 12). About 300 words/ 1 page. Identify the subject (person) on whom you propose to write your paper and briefly discuss his/her significance. What major area of history does your subject represent? Why is he/she important? How do you propose to contribute to the historical literature—what will distinguish your research from your predecessors' in the same field? What will be the scope of your research?

Final thesis statement (due September 26). Two pages. A thorough and extended revision of the draft thesis based on comments from the instructor, class discussion, and research.

Source summary (due October 3). One page, front and back, single-spaced. Each student will be assigned a primary source frequently used by biographers. In a one-page paper each student will define the source, state what information the source may (or may not) provide, describe or show examples of sources, and identify where additional information may be obtained. Each student will bring to class enough copies for all members of the class and the instructor. And each student will give a brief (five minute) presentation on the source. Sources include: U.S. Census records, probate records, church records, government documents (Overseers of the Poor, Insane Asylums, Orphanages), city directories, immigration records, tax records, vital records, social organization records, newspapers, cemetery records, school records, diaries, letters, photographs.

Each student will prepare and deliver a formal presentation about of about four minutes (it will be timed) about the source and will answer questions from classmates and the instructor.

Annotated bibliographies (due October 10 and October 24). An annotated bibliography is a list of important references for your research. The secondary items should include both books and journal articles that are germane to your research. Each entry should have a complete bibliographical citation followed by at least a paragraph about the item and its relevance to your topic. Of course that means you must have read or at least skimmed each item. For every item you include you will probably search through about four or five that you will ultimately discard in your search for the best reference for your topic. The annotations should be in complete sentence form. All entries should be listed alphabetically by the last name of the author or editor. You should list the primary references separately. All of the books and articles for this course provide proper citation format for secondary sources. Your primary references could include items such as: letters and papers of individuals related to your subject, some government documents, wills, church records, vital records, business papers, diaries, photographs, maps, etc. In other words the Will Books of Marion County would count as one entry, as would the Papers of Daniel Webster, although there might be hundreds of will books and multiple volumes of Webster's papers.

Your annotation should briefly discuss the authors' backgrounds, their theses, and summarize very briefly the books. You should spend most of your energy discussing the sources and methods used by the authors to address historical problems related to your topic. For examples, look at the Chicago Manual of Style or the reviews in major historical journals like American Historical Review and Journal of American History. Anne Orthwood's Bastard includes an excellent (but not annotated) bibliography.

For October 10 you should include five items (3 pages), two of which will be primary

sources. Please double space both your citations and your annotations.

For October 24 you should include 20 items (10 pages), at least five of which will be primary sources. For this assignment you will also briefly discuss your findings in class (4-5 minutes per student), especially which materials you will rely on for your paper. **FOR THIS EXERCISE YOU SHOULD SINGLE-SPACE THE CITATION, BUT CONTINUE TO DOUBLE-SPACE THE ANNOTATION.**

Research design (due October 31). Five pages. A research design is an explanation of how to conduct a research project. It should be divided into four parts: introduction, current knowledge, method, anticipated results. The introduction should include a short version of your thesis statement and an explanation of the importance of your biographical subject. The statement of current knowledge should analyze materials from the annotated bibliography. The design or method will explain how to go about the research and discuss any potential shortcomings and offer suggestions for overcoming those shortcomings. The research design will conclude with a statement about anticipated results and suggest ways to extend the findings to research on other figures.

Each student will prepare and deliver a formal presentation of about 8 minutes and respond to questions about the design.

Draft paper (due November 21). Fifteen pages (footnotes and bibliography do not count). Don't let the name fool you. I expect this paper to conform in style and presentation to other formal assignments; I merely call it "draft" to distinguish it from the revised and final version of the paper. In one extended essay present your subject, your thesis, your analysis of your research findings, and your conclusion. Be sure to fit your research into the literature of your subject/topic. This is a formal paper (even as a draft) that has all of the bells and whistles like discussion notes and source notes. Graphics are encouraged if appropriate but do not affect essay length.

Critique (due November 28). Two pages. More to follow.

Final paper (due December 5). Twenty-five pages (plus separate notes and bibliography at end). The final paper should represent a substantial improvement on the draft paper, reflecting the comments of the instructor, the critique of a fellow student, and materials found after the draft was submitted.

The oral presentation will take about 10 minutes (timed) and will allow for several minutes of questions from other students and guests. Oral presentations should follow the general format of the paper itself.

Class Assignments:

(Note—Dates printed in **bold** and/or with a **v** beside the date may be attended by Indiana Historical Society participants)

(Also note–We will meet in several classrooms at IHS as well as at the Indiana State Library and IUPUI Library–please be sure to check the schedule I hand out in class for each week’s meeting.)

Aug	31v	General overview of course, introductions , choose primary source	
Sept.	5v	<u>Boswell’s Presumptuous Task</u> Individual consultations during week	
	12v	Indiana State Library tour by Marcia Caudell, reference librarian	DRAFT THESIS STATEMENT DUE
	19v	IUPUI Library tour by Kristi Palmer, history bibliographer	
	26v	Indiana Historical Society Library tour Steve Haller, <u>Boswell’s Life of Johnson</u>	FINAL THESIS STATEMENT DUE
Oct.	3	lecture and presentations	SOURCE SUMMARY DUE, PRESENTATION
	10	lecture/discussion	5-ITEM BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE
	17v	Documentary editions presentation by Thomas A. Mason <u>Anne Orthwood’s Bastard</u>	
	24	lecture/discussion	20-ITEM BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE, DISCUSSION
	31		RESEARCH DESIGN DUE/PRESENTATION
Nov.	7v	Biography presentation by Teresa Baer <u>Years of the Life of Samuel Lane</u>	LAST DAY TO DROP CLASS
	14	NO CLASS	
	21		DRAFT PAPER DUE
	28	NO CLASS	CRITIQUE DUE
Dec.	5v	Note this class may run late	FINAL PAPER AND PRESENTATIONS (There is no leeway in this due date)