

Historical Methodology
History H501 Section 20147 (4 credits)
Spring 2007, Mondays, 6:00-8:40
Cavanaugh Hall 537

Instructor: Dr. Nancy M. Robertson
Office Hours: Mondays, 4:00pm to 5:00pm
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We do not know yet what our past is going to be.

-Eastern European aphorism

History is like playing tricks on the dead.

-Voltaire

Course Description and Objectives:

The catalog description for H501 is deceptively simple: "Discussion and application of the various methods and strategies used in historical research." In order to accomplish this goal, the course will include two components: (1) discussion of common readings, generally a book a week, paying particular attention to the authors' objectives, methods, sources, argument, and outcomes (and, to a lesser extent, narrative), and (2) development of a prospectus or research design for a sustained project. For those of you who will be doing a thesis, the latter is a necessary step even if your ultimate prospectus looks different from what you produce in this class. For those of you planning to take H750 in the future, the step may allow you to get a jump on what is a demanding course (if you are taking H750 this semester, we should talk about how to combine work for the two classes). For those of you completely unsure of your topic or who may not be writing an MA thesis or Public History paper, the research design is a chance to think through how you might develop a sustained research project--whether or not you ever do it. In addition, elements in it parallel those necessary to develop a competitive grant proposal--something that, like it or not, many of you will end up doing at some point.

The research design produced by each student will demonstrate her or his ability:

- to select a historical topic, identify its significance, and create a research plan;
- to identify and locate primary sources concerning the topic chosen;
- to identify and evaluate the secondary literature relevant to the topic;
- to trace the historiography of that topic;
- to suggest a thesis, based on research in both primary sources and secondary literature;
- to follow standard guidelines for formatting, citing, and other formal mechanics.

This is a graduate class and as such, while there will be some lecture or presentations to provide background, the class meetings will primarily be discussion. Students should come prepared to talk about the issues raised by the readings, their own research and writing, and their

understanding of their colleagues' projects (and lectures, when applicable).

Books:

The required books and Turabian can be purchased at Indy's College Bookstore (609 W. 11th Street), but not in the Cavanaugh Bookstore.

Required:

Eric Foner, ed., *The New American History* rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 1997) – referred to below as FONER.

John Demos, *The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from Early America* (New York: Knopf, 1995). *The 1995 Vintage edition is also acceptable.*

Joseph Ellis, *His Excellency: George Washington* (New York: Knopf: 2004). *The Library may have this in electronic form as an e-book; there are certainly copies in public libraries.*

Paul Johnson and Sean Wilentz, *Kingdom of Matthias: A Story of Sex and Salvation in 19th-Century America* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1995).

Thomas Dublin, *Women at Work: the Transformation of Work and Community in Lowell, Massachusetts, 1826-1860*, 2nd ed. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1993). *The 1st edition from 1979 is also acceptable.*

Tony Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War* (New York: Vintage, 1999).

C. Vann Woodward, *Strange Career of Jim Crow*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1974). *Do NOT get an earlier edition, although the later commemorative one is acceptable.*

Angel Kwolek-Folland, *Engendering Business: Men and Women in the Corporate Office, 1870-1930* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1994).

Mary Renda, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915-1940* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina, 2001).

James Goodman, *Stories of Scottsboro* (New York: Vintage, 1995).

Karen Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folks: and What that Says about Race in America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1998).

John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics. Sexual Communities: the Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago, 1998). *1st ed. also works.*

Expected:

Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 6th ed. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1996). You may find earlier editions provide sufficient instruction. Note: if you plan to do extensive scholarly writing or editing in the future, you may want to consider purchasing a copy of the *Chicago Manual of Style*, now in its 15th edition (2003). Turabian's manual ought to get you through the M.A.

You should have a recent U.S. history textbook readily at hand; they may be boring to read, but they are excellent reference tools.

Course Assignments:

I will provide longer descriptions of the written work, but the assignments will include:

Active class engagement. This requirement entails careful reading of the materials, attendance, participation, and informal written assignments—**15% of final grade.**

Three comments:

- Given that this is a methodology class, you should read “ancillary” materials (i.e., notes, comments on sources, source essays, etc.) closely.
- Life happens, but seminars still require participants. You are allowed one absence without penalty. Please note, that absences on 4/16 and 4/23 (when you will be discussing each other’s work) will be problematic—let me know ASAP if you will miss one of those days.
- Participation means not just speaking. It means being prepared and contributing thoughtful and informed ideas, questions, or opinions.

Helping to lead class (for one of sessions marked with an * (2/19-3/19) and follow-up paper. A sign-up sheet will be circulated to sign up for one of four classes with a classmate. Within 2 weeks of the session, you will have a 5-page paper due (2 weeks will allow you to pace yourself given other assignments)—**10%.**

Topic (due Friday, 1/19) 1-2 sentence/s and **Topic Statement** (2-3 pages), due 2/12—**10%.**

Annotated bibliography of 20 secondary and at least 5 primary sources (as long as it takes), due 2/26—**10%.**

Problem statement and bibliographical essay on secondary sources (6 pages), due 3/19—**10%.**

Sustained analysis of a “document” & essay on primary sources (6-8 pages), due 4/2—**10%.**

“Draft” of the research design. These will be discussed in class; half will hand them in on 4/16 and the other half on 4/23—**5%.**

Comments on draft research designs, due 4/23 or 4/30—**10%.**

“Final” research design, due May 7th, by 9am—**20%.**

Expectations and Logistics:

Two expectations of students in the class are worth emphasizing:

1. Attendance for the full class session is expected.
2. All papers (and written responses) will be handed in or distributed on time.

Because the class is in a seminar format, class engagement forms a significant portion of the

final grade. To state the obvious, it is hard to participate when one is not there. IF it is absolutely necessary to miss a session, the student must notify the instructor in advance. A written assignment may be required of the student to cover the missed session.

If for some reason you do need an extension on written work (and extensions are by no means automatic), you must arrange this in advance. You must get the extension from me in writing and attach that to the written work.

Material that is handed in after the due date (or extension) will generally be marked down at least a 1/3 of a letter grade for each day it is late. That is: a paper that would have been an A, will be an A- if it is one day late and a C- if it is 7 days late, etc. "Days" means "days of the week," not "class sessions."

Late work that inconveniences classmates is particularly problematic (and will be graded accordingly).

Developing your intellectual skills is possible only when you actually do the work assigned. We will have a longer discussion of intellectual work, intellectual dishonesty, and plagiarism. Plagiarism and cheating will result in an "F" for the work in question and possible disciplinary action by the University. See the *IUPUI Campus Bulletin, 2006-08* (pp.36-37) or talk with me if you have questions about what is or is not permissible. Academic integrity is also important to establish a level playing field for all students; to maintain this, I will use whatever means necessary (including Turn-it-in) to detect violations.

A grade of "incomplete" is troublesome for everyone. The University's policy is that they are only for students who have completed almost all course requirements and have been prevented by significant or unanticipated circumstances from finishing them.

Information for this class will be posted on ONCOURSE. This will include announcements to the class, changes in the syllabus or due dates, some handouts, etc. This is particularly helpful when you have to miss a class. I will not be using the "chat room" or discussion features of ONCOURSE, but will use it for e-mail and announcements.

I encourage you to set your ONCOURSE options to let you know when you have ONCOURSE mail.

If you miss a class, you are advised to contact a classmate about what happened in class. You can contact your classmates via class mail in ONCOURSE.

I expect that all students in this class will access ONCOURSE regularly. Generally, I will post materials for class by the preceding Friday at noon. If this will pose a problem for you, please let me know.

Normally, I will respond to e-mail within 48 hours (except for messages sent after 12:00

noon on Friday, to which I may not respond until sometime late Monday).

As you may know, you are entitled to an e-mail account through IUPUI. I realize that many of you prefer to use another provider for e-mail and web work. The University encourages you to set up your IUPUI account to forward information to your other accounts. It means that you can easily access information from the University. If you need help setting up the account or forwarding mail, contact: <http://itaccounts.iu.edu>

I have voice mail that is on twenty-four hours a day. You are welcome to call me should you need to do so. Note, however, that I will not play “phone tag.” If you leave a message, speak slowly and clearly, provide a phone number (and repeat it), and state when you will be at that number.

FYI: There is a University web page that will let you know if the campus is closed for snow: <http://registrar.iupui.edu/adverseweather.html>

The Dean's Office has advised me to warn students that “ultimately, they are responsible for activity on their computer accounts.” Be so advised.

THREE IMPORTANT POINTS:

1. I cannot stress too heavily the usefulness of planning ahead, saving work on your computer OFTEN, making backups, and printing out your paper early. I will recount suitable horror stories of people who did not take these precautions. Please do not become another one of my instructive tales.
2. Unless it becomes necessary, I do not expect to assign pages in Turabian. I will make the following observations.
 - a. Turabian (the “ruler lady” of the University of Chicago) has an excellent index. If you encounter a problem when citing (or someone tells you that you have a problem), please consult her. Based on having read students’ and friends’ works, I particularly recommend reviewing the following sections (in the 6th edition): 2.26, 2.53-54, 2.60, 3.65-97 [on the use of commas, colons, semi-colons, and dashes], 3.106 [a MUST READ], 4.19, 5.11, 5.16-23, 5.30-38, 9.28, chapters 8-9; and chap. 11 [“N”s and “B”s].
Please be advised that we are using standard historical citation format—what Turabian calls N&B—not parenthetical references and reference lists (referred to as PR & RL).
 - b. Get in the habit of following the format laid out in the University’s *Guide to the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations*, esp. pp. 7-9.
http://www.iupui.edu/~gradoff/docs/theses_dissertation.pdf
3. Books, copies of articles, or any other reading material should be brought to class the day/s they are being discussed.

COURSE OUTLINE

The syllabus for this course will be on ONCOURSE. I will post additions, corrections, handouts, and other supplemental materials there as well announce them in class. It is the responsibility of the student to stay on top of changes.

- 1/8: Introductions and overview of the course objectives and design.
What is history (or History)? What do historians do? How do we do it?
*"Facts can be proved or disproved.
But as soon as you put two facts together you have a fiction."* –Paul E. Johnson
- Bertolt Brecht, "A Worker Reads History" (1935) – ONCOURSE.
Carl Becker, "Everyman His Own Historian" (1932) – ONCOURSE.
C. Wright Mills, "Intellectual Craftsmanship" (1959) – ONCOURSE.
Gary T. Marx, "Of Methods and Manners for Aspiring Sociologists" (1997) – ONCOURSE.
- 1/15: No class, but by Friday, 1/19, 12 noon, please email both Kristi Palmer and myself with a two-sentence description of the proposed topic for your project. *You can reach Kristi through ONCOURSE as well as regular email: klpalmer@iupui.edu*
- 1/22: *"No documents – No history."* –Charles Seignobos
The class will start off in the University Library—UL0106; we will be joined by Kristi Palmer, the subject specialist for History (and Women's Studies) for the Library.
- John Demos, *Unredeemed Captive* (1994).
plus a review (which will be handed out).
John M. Murrin, "Beneficiaries of Catastrophe" in FONER.
Susan Grigg, "Archival Practice and the Foundations of Historical Method," *Journal of American History* 78 (1991): 228-39 (access through J-Stor).
- 1/29: *"History is a fable agreed upon."* –attributed to Napoleon
- Joseph Ellis, *His Excellency* (2004).
Linda K. Kerber, "The Revolutionary Generation" in FONER.
Sample prospecti and guidelines for grant proposals.
- 2/5: No class, work on Topic Statement (you are encouraged to meet with me).
- 2/12: *"Behavior is less the product of new ideas than of the effects of old ideas operating in new or changing contexts."* –Joan Scott and Louise Tilly
- Paul Johnson and Sean Wilentz, *Kingdom of Matthias* (1995).
Sean Wilentz, "Society, Politics, and the Market Revolution" in FONER.
Due: Topic Statement (2-3 pages).
- *2/19: *"History is the artificial extension of social memory."* –Carl Becker

Thomas Dublin, *Women at Work* (1979/1993).
Preface to 2nd edition (1993) – ONCOURSE.
Leon Fink, “American Labor History” in FONER.
Alice Kessler-Harris, “Social History” in FONER.
Reread Wilentz essay in FONER.

*2/26: “*The Civil War is our felt history--history lived in the national imagination.*”
–Robert Penn Warren

Tony Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic* (1999).
Eric Foner, “Slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction” in FONER.
Thomas Holt, “African American History” in FONER.
Due: Annotated Bibliography (20 secondary sources, 5 primary sources).

*3/5: “*Making the world is undeniably a political act. Writing histories that imply alternative ways in which the world might have been made are also political acts.*” –Thomas Holt

C. Vann Woodward, *Strange Career of Jim Crow* (1955/1974).
Richard McCormick, “Public Life in Industrial America” in FONER.

3/12: Spring Break – no class.

*3/19: “*Well-behaved women seldom make history.*” –Laurel Ulrich

Angel Kwoleck-Folland, *Engendering Business* (1998).
Linda Gordon, “U.S. Women’s History” in FONER.
Due: Statement of problem & historiographical essay on secondary sources (6 pages).

3/26: “*History’s great tradition is to help us understand ourselves and our world so that each of us, individually and in conjunction with our fellow men, can formulate relevant and reasoned alternatives and become meaningful actors in making history. Considered in this light, history is a way of learning.*” –William Appleman Williams

Mary Renda, *Taking Haiti* (2000).
Walter LaFeber, “Liberty & Power: U.S. Diplomatic History” in FONER.

4/2: “*Lives are not stories. A day, a month, a year, or a lifetime has no plot. Our experiences are only the raw stuff of stories. The beginnings of our lives are arbitrary; usually their endings come too soon or too late for any neat narrative conclusions.*” –Richard White

James Goodman, *Stories of Scottsboro* (1995).
Alan Brinkley, “Prosperity, Depression, and War” in FONER.
James West Davidson, “The New Narrative History: How New? How Narrative?”
Reviews in American History 12 (1984): 322-34.

Due: Primary source essay and document analysis (6-8 pages).

4/9: “...the most elemental and important facts about society are those that are seldom debated and generally regarded as settled.”
-Louis Wirth

Karen Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folks* (1999).

James P. Shenton and Kevin Kenny, “Ethnicity and Immigration” in FONER.

William Chafe, “America since 1945” in FONER.

4/16: “A people without history/ Is not redeemed from time.”
-T.S. Eliot

John D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics. Sexual Communities* (1983/1998).

incl. preface and afterward to 2nd ed.

Estelle Freedman, “The History of the Family and the History of Sexuality” in FONER.

Due: Draft research design (from half of the class).

4/23: **Due: Comments on draft research designs (for one half).**
Draft research design (from the other half of the class).
DISCUSSION of projects.

4/30: “And the end of our exploring / Will be to arrive where we started /
And know the place for the first time.”
-T.S. Eliot

COURSE WRAP UP:

Reading: TBA.

Due: Comments on remaining draft research designs.
DISCUSSION of projects.

5/7: FINAL RESEARCH DESIGN DUE, 9 a.m. Please note that giving the timing of when grades are due to the Registrar, it will be difficult to grant extensions on this deadline.