

**The Historian's Craft: Methodology**  
**HIST 2302**  
**CRN 10961**  
**Spring 2007**  
**Pafford 208**  
**MWF 9:05 – 10:00 am**

Professor: Tim Schroer  
Office: Technology-Enhanced Learning Center (TLC) 3218  
Phone: 678-839-6040  
Email: tschroer@westga.edu  
Office hours: Mon. 3:30 to 5:00pm  
Wed. 3:30 to 5:00pm  
Fri. 10:00-11:00am  
or by appointment

**Course Description**

This course is designed to help students succeed as history majors at the University of West Georgia. We will focus on developing the skills necessary to think and work like historians. We will also sample the varieties of sources used in writing history and the varieties of history.

This is a required course for all history majors. **In order to graduate, history majors must earn a C or better in this course.**

**Learning Outcomes**

This class is designed to help students learn what historians do. In addition, the class is designed to help students to develop the skills necessary to succeed as history majors.

Those skills include the ability:

- to find useful primary and secondary sources;
- to read critically primary and secondary sources;
- to construct persuasive historical interpretations;
- to cite sources properly in such arguments; and
- to write clearly and persuasively.

**Required Materials:**

The following required books are available in the bookstore:

Mark Hellstern, Gregory Scott, Stephen Garrison, *The History Student Writer's Manual* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1998) ISBN 0-13-874728-8.

Davidson, James West, and Mark Hamilton Lytle. *After the Fact: The Art of Historical Detection*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2005.

Richard Handler and Eric Gable, *The New History in an Old Museum: Creating the Past at Colonial Williamsburg* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997). ISBN 0822319748.

## **Grading**

Class Participation:	10 percent
Two emails on readings:	5 percent
Research assignments:	10 percent
Short papers:	15 percent
Four writing quizzes:	20 percent
Book Review:	20 percent
Rewrites:	5 percent
Final Examination:	15 percent

Thoughtful contributions made in class discussions will be credited in the class participation grade. Behavior (such as tardiness) that impedes other students' learning will be penalized.

During the course of the semester, each student must send two email messages to the instructor reacting to readings for the course. The emails must be sent by 7:00 pm the day before the class meeting dedicated to the readings addressed in the email. The email should include a paragraph thoughtfully reacting to some aspect of the reading and a question related to the reading for class discussion. The emails should be written with the same care and formality as a standard undergraduate paper. The emails will be graded on the basis of the quality of the analysis and of the writing, including organization, grammar, punctuation and spelling. I plan to use the emails as a basis of discussion in the readings.

The three research assignments will be graded on the basis of the quality of the research. That is, did the researcher find a reasonable quantity of useful information?

The short papers and book review will be graded on the basis of the quality of the analysis and the writing, including organization, grammar, punctuation, spelling, and conformity with proper citation format.

The first short paper assignment calls for a 1-2 page summary of a document from the U.S. National Archives. The second short paper assignment calls for the student to use a novel as a primary source. Students must select a novel that they have not read before. The novel must have been published more than thirty years ago. It must be set in the same general period in which it was written. The 2-3 page paper should have a thesis that answers the question: what does the novel tell us about the period in which it was written? The paper must make proper use of footnote citation in accordance with the documentary-note system described in section 5.3 of *The History Student Writer's Manual*.

The book review is a 3-4 page review of a historical monograph published by a university press within the last thirty years. Students must have their choice of monograph to read approved in advance by the instructor.

The book review and the short paper on the novel must be rewritten. The revised short paper and book review must take into account the comments by the instructor and represent an improvement over the first version. (Note that the version submitted initially should *not* be a rough draft; it should be the final draft, as good as it can be, since it will be graded.) The rewrite will be graded on the basis of how far the revised version improves the initial version. The rewrite should address problems of writing as well as problems of analysis. The purpose of the rewrite is to learn from mistakes and to work on weaknesses. The original graded version must be submitted along with the rewritten version. The rewrite is due one week from the date on which the original graded version is returned.

The writing quizzes will test students' ability to write effectively. They will cover important matters of organization, grammar, usage, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and conformity with proper citation format.

It generally takes me one week to grade a set of papers or exams.

Late assignments will be penalized by deducting one letter grade for each day the assignment is late.

Students must take the assessment examination on March 26. The examination is not graded, but no student will pass the class without writing the examination.

No extra credit will be offered.

## **Policies**

I expect each student to understand and to comply with the University of West Georgia's policies on Academic Honor and Academic Dishonesty. They may be found in the Student Handbook, on the web at <http://www.westga.edu/documents/catalogs.php>. Academic honesty prohibits taking credit for someone else's work. Justice requires that punishment fit the infraction. Egregious academic dishonesty will result in failing the course and may also bring additional penalties imposed by the university.

I encourage any student who has questions or needs help with the course to come to my office hours or send me an email to set up a time to talk. In addition, students may wish to consult with the Writing Center (<http://www.westga.edu/~writing>).

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and university policy, I will make reasonable accommodation for any recognized disability. Students should contact me during the first three weeks of the course and present documentation from the University's Student Development Center.

I strongly encourage students to attend class. Students who attend class tend to learn more and get better grades than those who do not. Class discussion sometimes affords new insights that cannot be planned or even predicted. In case of absence, it is the

responsibility of the student to obtain notes from a classmate covering what was missed. I do not penalize students for absences, but students receive no credit for participating or on any tests or quizzes on missed class days. A student who does not take a quiz or test in class with the rest of the class receives a zero. I do not permit students to take any test, quiz, or other graded work at any time other than in class as administered except in rare cases of prior approval by the instructor or with a physician's note.

Students should regularly check their University of West Georgia email account.

## Course Schedule

Students are expected to have mastered the assigned readings and assignments before each class meeting.

### Week One

- Jan. 8 Introduction
- Jan. 10 On learning  
Reading: "What do they know about how we learn?" (Reserve)
- Jan. 12 On history professors and getting good grades  
Reading: "Deciding on an academic career" (Reserve)  
*Getting Good Grades* (Reserve)  
Research assignment: Research one professor in the history department  
**Class meets in TLC computer lab**

### Week Two

- Jan. 15 No class in observance of Martin Luther King Day
- Jan. 17 Intellectual honesty and plagiarism  
Reading: Benjamin, "Avoiding Plagiarism" (Reserve)  
*Writer's Manual*, pp. 121-22
- Jan. 19 Effective writing  
Reading: *Writer's Manual*, Ch. 3  
Wallace on effective writing (Reserve)  
**Writing quiz on commonly confused words**

### Week Three

- Jan. 22 Finding primary sources on the internet  
Research Assignment: Bring to class the address of one good website containing useful primary sources.  
**Class meets in TLC computer lab**
- Jan. 24 Finding primary sources in the library  
**Class meets in TLC computer lab**

Jan. 26 Reading archival sources  
Reading: reserve document from U.S. National Archives  
*Writer's Manual*, 54-56, 119-21  
One-page paper due summarizing source. Paper should include one block quotation, one shorter quotation, and one paraphrase

Week Four

Jan. 29 Using archival sources

Jan. 31 Using archival sources cont.  
Reading: reserve excerpt of manuscript using primary source

Feb. 2 Novels as sources

Week Five

Feb. 5 newspapers as sources  
Students must identify in writing the novel to be used in the short paper

Feb. 7 Quoting and citing sources  
Reading: *Writer's Manual*, Ch. 5

Feb. 9 **Writing quiz on citing sources**

Week Six

Feb. 12 Historical explanation and its limits  
Readings: Ch. 2 Salem in *After the Fact*  
**Short paper on the novel due**

Feb. 14 Theory and history  
Readings: Ch. 5 Turner thesis in *After the Fact*

Feb. 16 Environmental history  
Readings: Ch. 6 "The Invisible Pioneers" in *After the Fact*

Week Seven

Feb. 19 Secondary sources

Feb. 21 Finding secondary sources  
**Class in TLC computer classroom**  
Students must identify in writing the book to be reviewed

Feb. 23 Military history  
Reading: Introduction to John Keegan's *The Face of Battle* (reserve)

Week Eight

Feb. 26 Evaluating secondary sources  
 Reading: *Writer's Manual*, Ch. 9  
 Research assignment: Find a good scholarly historical book review and bring it to class

Feb. 28 **Third writing quiz**

Mar. 2 individual meetings with instructor

Week Nine

Mar. 5 individual meetings with instructor

Mar. 7 **Book reviews due**

Mar. 9 Reading: *The New History*, 1-77

Week Ten

Mar. 12 *The New History*, 78-169

Mar. 14 *The New History*, 170-end

Mar. 16 Advising

March 19-23 Spring Break

Week Eleven

March 26 Assessment exam (mandatory, not graded)

Mar. 28 Documentary film

Mar. 30 Documentary film

Week Twelve

Apr. 2 Film and history  
 Readings: Ch. 16 in *After the Fact*

Apr. 4 Working in history

Apr. 6 Working in history

Week Thirteen

Apr. 9 Women's history  
 Readings: *After the Fact*, "From Rosie to Lucy," ch. 14

Apr. 11 Gender

Readings: Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis" (Reserve)

Apr. 13 History of sexuality  
Readings: Victoria Thompson, "Creating Boundaries: Homosexuality and the Changing Social Order in France, 1830-1870" (Reserve)

Week Fourteen

Apr. 16 Objectivity  
Evans reserve reading

Apr. 18 On history lectures

Apr. 20 **Fourth writing quiz**

Week Fifteen

Apr. 23 Those who do not learn from history . . .  
Readings: Steinweis, "The Auschwitz Analogy: Holocaust Memory and American Debates over Intervention in Bosnia and Kosovo in the 1990s," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 19 (2005): 276-89 (Reserve)

**Mandatory Final Examination**

Wednesday, May 2, 8:00 – 10:00 am