HIST 4484W Senior Seminar

Spring 2017
Tuesday 5:30-8
Pafford 206

Dr. Michael de Nie
TLC 3204
Office Hours: T 10-11, 1-5:00; R 10-11, 1-3:30, and by appointment
Tel.: 678.839.6033
Email: mdenie@westga.edu

Course Description
This course provides students with the opportunity to conceive and execute their own original historical study. It thus represents the capstone of the history major’s course of study at the University of West Georgia. The work in this course is the apex to which the history program at West Georgia has been building. In the first part of the course we will do some common readings together. Our analysis of each of these readings will focus on examining what evidence the historians found and how they used that evidence to construct an original historical argument. These readings will offer models and guidance for students’ own research projects. In the second part of the course, the focus shifts to the research and writing of those student projects. Along the way, there will be several milestones that must be reached.

This course is writing-intensive. Effective writing is essential to the historical discipline and to a liberal education. The “W” designation for this course indicates that it is a Discipline-Specific Writing course.

Prerequisites
Each student must have already completed HIST 2302 and have senior standing. Any student registered for the course who has not completed the prerequisites must see the instructor.

Required Reading:
Hellstern, Mark, Gregory Scott, and Stephen Garrison. The History Student Writer’s Manual

Learning Outcomes
This course is designed to provide students with the opportunity to conceive and execute their own original research project. As part of that work this course is designed to permit students actively engaged in the learning process with the opportunity to develop further the following skills:

· to recognize and to pose significant historical questions;
· to find useful primary and secondary sources;
· to analyze sources critically;
· to cite sources properly;
· to write and to speak clearly;
· to construct a persuasive historical argument based on evidence; and
· to think historically.

Thinking historically requires one:
· to seek to understand the people of the past;
to seek to understand the perspective of historical actors and to view those historical actors from a critical, scholarly perspective;
· to recognize that people, events, ideas, and cultures have influenced later people, events, ideas, and cultures;
· to recognize that history involves both change and continuity over time; and
· to draw and to explain connections between particular people, events, ideas, or texts and their historical contexts.

Grade
Participation - 5%
Resume - 5%
Topic statement - 5%
Question and bibliography - 5%
Primary source presentation - 5%
Introduction and historiography section - 10%
Final presentation - 10%
Paper - 50%
Reflective essay - 5%

I do not accept late or electronically submitted assignments.

Students, please carefully review the following information. It contains important material pertaining to your rights and responsibilities in this class. Because these statements are updated as federal, state, and university accreditation standards change, you should review the information each semester.

Each student will write an original, typed, double-spaced research paper of 20-25 pages in length examining some question of interest related to the course. The paper must assert a thesis and sustain it on the basis of evidence drawn from both primary and secondary sources. The paper must incorporate at least six primary and ten secondary sources. The paper must cite its sources in footnotes and list works consulted in a bibliography according to the documentary note style specified in section 5.3 of The History Student Writer’s Manual. That citation style is based on documentary note style of the Chicago Manual of Style.

The paper will be graded according to the standards created by the History Department for use in HIST 4484 and other upper-level graduate courses. You can find these standards posted here: http://www.westga.edu/dsw/index_10083.php

The paper is due at the beginning of class on April 18. Each student must submit two copies of the final paper.

Each student is required to consult with a professor who specializes in the field that the student is researching. Students will submit a written draft bibliography to an expert professor for advice and heed that advice in researching their questions.

Topic Statement
On January 31 each student must submit a topic statement. The topic statement should consist of a short paragraph that clearly and succinctly outlines the topic that your research paper will examine. The topic should be sufficiently interesting and important to merit at least a twenty-page paper yet sufficiently narrow to be answerable adequately within at most a twenty-five-page paper.

**Question and Bibliography**

On February 7 each student must submit a statement of the question to be addressed and a bibliography. The written statement of the question to be addressed should represent a refinement of the paper’s topic. A research question, in other words, must be narrow and precise, and it should give you a clear framework for writing a thesis statement after you complete your research.

The bibliography should be divided into two sections – primary and secondary sources. The bibliography should list at least ten major and relative recent secondary sources on your topic, primarily if not exclusively monographs. It should also list at least six primary sources that you have confirmed are accessible to you. Your must consult with the appropriate member of the History Department in crafting your bibliography and acquire their signature before turning it in.

Be prepared to discuss your question and sources in class.

**Primary Source Presentation**

In the primary source presentations, each student will pick one important primary source from among the primary sources used for the paper. The presentation will describe the source to the class and explain how the paper will make use of the source in its argument. Students should come to class with copies of the source or relevant extracts of the source for everyone in the class. The presentation should address questions such as: Who wrote the document? Who was the audience of the document? What was the purpose of the document? What does it say? Why is it significant? Each student will also answer questions from the group about the source.

**Introduction and Historiography Section**

On March 21 students will turn in the introduction and historiography section of their papers. That section should be about three pages in length. It should introduce the historical question the paper examines and briefly state the paper’s answer to that question. It should also place the paper in its historiographical context and identify the paper’s original contribution to the existing historical writing related to the question under examination. Note that the section handed in should *not be a rough draft*. It should be a polished draft, as good as it can be, since it will be graded, and that grade will weigh 10% the final grade for the course.

I will comment on the introduction and historiography section and assign it a grade. Each student should take into account those comments in the final paper and incorporate a rewritten introduction and historiography section in the final paper. The final paper should represent an improvement over the earlier version of the section. The marked-up draft of the introduction and historiography section must be turned in along with the final paper.

**Final Presentation**

In the final presentations, each student will describe the paper’s argument and supporting evidence to the class in a ten-minute talk. The presentation should be a formal, academic presentation that is similar in nature to a paper presentation at an academic conference. Students should prepare a conference
presentation script that presents the main argument and highlights of your paper in a clear and engaging manner. Students will then answer questions from the group.

Reflective Essay
The reflective essay due at the end of the course should be 2-3 pages in length and it should address the following question: What have you learned during your time as a student at West Georgia?

Statement on Plagiarism
Please note that anyone committing plagiarism in any written assignment will earn an F for the course and may face further disciplinary action. Plagiarism is defined in the University of West Georgia Handbook as “representing the words or ideas of another as one’s own. Direct quotations must be indicated and ideas of another must be appropriately acknowledged.” Please see the UWG’s History Department statement on plagiarism at http://www.westga.edu/~history/plagiarismhtm.htm and the UWG English Department’s guide for avoiding plagiarism at: http://www.westga.edu/~engdept/Plagiarism/index.html.

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.

Course Schedule
Jan. 10 Introduction

Jan. 17 Conducting Research through UWG Databases
Presentation by Jessica Critten, Associate Professor, Instructional Services Librarian
Meet in Library at the Circulation Desk

Jan. 24 How do I make an original argument? How do I structure my paper?
Writer’s Manual, pp. 118-22, chapters 2 and 10

Jan. 31 Strengths and weaknesses
One paragraph topic statement due

Feb. 7 Statement of question to be addressed and bibliography due

Feb. 14 Individual meetings

Feb. 21 Presentations of primary sources

Feb. 28 Presentations of primary sources
Resume due

Mar. 7          Discussion of use of primary sources
Introduction and historiography section due

Mar. 14        What can I do with a History degree? - Presentation by Wes Moran, Career Services/
Discussion of introduction and historiography sections

Mar. 21       Spring Break-write!
Mar. 28       No class – write!
Apr. 4        Final presentations
Apr. 11       Final presentations
Apr. 18       Final presentations

Paper due

Apr. 25       Reflective Essay due