

History 2100 — The Historian's Craft – Fall 2009

Section One: 11-12:15, Monteith 217

Section Two: 2-3:15, Castleman 204

Prof. Peter Baldwin

Office Hours (225 Wood Hall): T & Th, 3:30 to 4:30; Wed., 10:30 to 11:30; and by appointment.

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Course Objectives:

This course introduces students to the goals, methods, and tools of the historical profession. We will consider the writing of history as an act of interpretation, and we will examine the kinds of sources that historians use in constructing an interpretive argument. Although most of the readings focus on the daily lives of ordinary Americans, the course is not "about" American history. It is about how history is written.

Course requirements:

Six Homework Assignments (15% of course grade): Students will complete at least six of the ten homework assignments (including at least two of the first three). If you do more than six you will be graded on your six best. Homework assignments will be marked as "full credit" (two points), "half credit" (1 point), or "no credit." Grades will be calculated as follows:

12 points = A.

11 points = B

10 points = C.

8 or 9 points = D.

Three short essays (35% of course grade)

Students will complete at least three of the five short essays (including at least two of the first three). If you write more than three, you will be graded on your three best and you will receive extra credit for the others. The best essay will count for 15% of the course grade; the others will each count for 10%.

Class Participation (15% of course grade)

Students are expected to participate regularly, actively, and constructively in class discussions. Their class participation will be graded. Students will receive high grades for class participation only if they express informed judgments, pose questions, and respond to other students' comments. Students who rarely speak, or who show a lack of familiarity with the material, will not receive high grades. Perfect attendance and complete silence will merit a grade of "D."

One Annotated Bibliography (9% of course grade). In this assignment, list the probable primary sources (original documents) and secondary sources (scholarly works of history) for your final paper. For each source you list, provide one paragraph describing that source and explaining why it will be useful for you.

One Final Paper (25% of course grade). The final paper will be a short research paper (6-8 pp) involving at least two different kinds of original source material and at least two scholarly works of history. It may be an expansion of an earlier essay for this class, using additional material.

Final Exam (1% of course grade). The final exam will be a test of your ability to submit the final paper on time. It will be Pass/Fail.

Books Available for Purchase:

- Nelson, *Steel Drivin' Man, John Henry*
- Williams, *The Historian's Toolbox*

Ground Rules:

- The syllabus sets out the basic requirements and schedule for the course, but students are responsible for any changes announced in class and on HuskyCT
- Attendance at every class is expected. Frequent absence will inevitably affect your grade for class participation.
- No disruptions, please. Students who create significant or repeated problems may be asked to leave the class session and will have their grades reduced.
 - **Courtesy.** Students are expected to behave themselves in a way that shows courtesy to the instructors and to fellow students. They are expected to be attentive and respectful. Language or behavior that demeans or harasses other students will not be tolerated; this includes sexual harassment.
 - **Punctuality** is important and expected. By arriving late, you cause a minor distraction for everybody. By doing so repeatedly, or by leaving before the end of class without notifying me in advance, you are likely to annoy me and reduce your grade for class participation.
 - **Wandering out.** Please don't wander out for a "personal break" unless absolutely necessary.
 - **Meals.** Drinks are OK, but please don't eat in class unless you bring enough for everyone. Otherwise I might take away your food and eat it myself if it looks good.
 - **Electronic devices.** Please turn them off. Class time is not to be used for talking on the phone, texting, playing games, listening to music, or using your computer in any way (unless otherwise directed).
- If you e-mail me with any questions, I will almost always respond within **twenty-four hours**. I will answer questions until 10:00 p.m. on the evenings before essays are due. Please be aware that e-mail is a form of professional correspondence that should be handled in a professional and courteous manner. Please address me by name ("Dear Prof. Baldwin"), and close by giving your own name. Try to write in full sentences, with correct punctuation and spelling. (This is good practice for the real world). Etiquette is important, so choose your words carefully. If you are upset about something pertaining to class, e-mail is probably not the best way to discuss it. Please make an appointment to see me in person. In order to preserve a positive relationship with students, I will not answer messages that I consider impolite.
- All assignments should be submitted on time. Students who encounter an emergency that prevents them from submitting any assignment on time are required to discuss the matter with me in advance, if at all possible, or to notify me by voice mail (486-3854). For each weekday that an assignment late without permission, the grade will be reduced by a third of a grade (for instance from an A- to a B+). No work will be accepted more than a week late without prior arrangement; students submitting work more than a week late will receive an F for that assignment.
- All written work except homework assignments must be typed, double-spaced, and in a normal-sized font. Title pages, footnotes and endnotes do not count in the suggested page limits. Homework assignments may be written longhand, but must be plainly legible.
- Please edit written work carefully for style, spelling, and grammar. Error-ridden writing will lower your grade.
- All written work must be fully footnoted; in-text citations are not acceptable. The preferred form is Turabian, and Babbidge Library's Research Guide, "Turabian Citations," [<http://www.lib.uconn.edu/using/finding/guides/turabib.pdf>] should be adequate for the needs of this course.
- Students must produce their own, original work for this course. They should not recycle any part of their own work produced for any other course. Re-use of work from other courses is grounds for failing either the assignment or the entire course.
- This should be obvious, but... plagiarism of any sort will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is the use of the ideas, organization, or words of another writer without giving proper credit. Any student found to have committed what I consider a serious act of plagiarism will fail the course. This rule is supported by the policy on academic integrity in the University of Connecticut's student code, and by the administration. I take this requirement very seriously and I actively hunt for plagiarism. A year ago, two students failed this course because of plagiarism and a third student failed one assignment. If I catch you, I will not care about any excuses you may have. Don't plagiarize in this course! It's not worth the risk.

Schedule

Sept. 1: Primary and Secondary Sources

Sept. 3: What is this “History” of which you speak?

- Williams, *The Historian’s Toolbox*, Part 1 (pp 3-46)
- Sam Wineburg, "Crazy for History," *The Journal of American History*, March 2004
<http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/jah/90.4/wineburg.html>
- **Homework #1:** Questions of evidence.

Sept. 8: Originality and Plagiarism

- Williams, *The Historian’s Toolbox*, Chapters 8 and 10.
- Richard Wightman Fox, "A Heartbreaking Problem of Staggering Proportions," *The Journal of American History*, March 2004 <http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/jah/90.4/fox.html>
- Patricia Nelson Limerick, "Dancing With Professors: The Trouble with Academic Prose," *New York Times*, Oct. 31, 1993 (via HuskyCT)

Sept. 10: Historical Argument

- Williams, *The Historian’s Toolbox*, Chapters 11 and 12.
- "Historians and Textbooks: The `Story' of Reconstruction," in John Hollitz, ed., *Thinking Through the Past: A Critical Thinking Approach to U.S. History*, Vol. II, second edition (Boston : Houghton Mifflin, 2001), 9-23. (via HuskyCT)
- **Homework #2:** Historians’ interpretation of Reconstruction.

Sept. 15: The Research Process

- Williams, *The Historian’s Toolbox*, Chapter 9.
- Nelson, *Steel Drivin’ Man, John Henry*, chaps. 1 and 2
- Jimmie Owens, “[John Henry](#)” (click to hear the 1936 recording)
- **Homework #3:** Questions on Nelson.

Sept. 17: Newspapers as Primary Sources

- Patricia Cline Cohen, *The Murder of Helen Jewett*, chapters 1 and 2. (via HuskyCT)
- **Homework #4:** Questions on Cohen.

Sept. 22: Locating Source Material

- **Class Meets at Library, 2nd floor Electronic Classroom (across from elevators)**

Sept. 24: Letters

- **Short Essay # 1:** Analysis of two newspaper articles

Sept. 29: Using Archives

- **Class Meets at Dodd Center, Room 162**

Oct. 1: Letters and Diaries

- Patricia Cline Cohen, *The Murder of Helen Jewett*, chapter 12 and Epilogue. (via HuskyCT)
- **Homework #5:** Questions on Jewett-Robinson love letters

Oct. 6: Library Day

- **Class Meets at Dodd Center Reading Room (Optional)**

Oct. 8: Selecting Secondary Sources

- **Short Essay #2:** Analysis of a letter or diary

Oct. 13: Travel narratives

- Keyes, “**Like a Roaring Lion’: The Overland Trail as a Sonic Conquest,**” *Journal of American History*, June 2009.
- **Homework # 6:** Questions on Keyes

Oct. 15: Government Documents

- **Class meets at library with Steve Batt, 2nd floor Electronic Classroom**

Oct. 20: Library Day.

- **Class meets in Government Documents Reading Area, Level B**

Oct. 22: Cultural History

- **Short Essay #3:** Analysis of a government document

Oct. 27: Reviewing a Monograph

- Reviews of Cohen, *The Murder of Helen Jewett*. (via HuskyCT)

Oct. 29: Reform Literature

- Nelson, *Steel Drivin' Man, John Henry*
- **Short Essay #4:** Book Review of Nelson, *Steel Drivin' Man, John Henry*

Nov. 3: Photographs

- Jacob A. Riis, *How the Other Half Lives* (Introduction, Chaps. 1-6, 25). Hyperlink via HuskyCT
- **Homework # 7:** Questions on Riis

Nov. 5: Postcards

- Isenberg, excerpt from *Downtown America* (via HuskyCT)
- **Homework # 8:** Questions on Isenberg

Nov. 10: Advertisements

- Daniel Pope, "Making Sense of Advertisements"

Nov. 12: Cartoons

- **Short Essay #5:** Advertisement analysis

Nov. 17: Library Day

- **Class meets at Babbidge, Level 1 (Optional)**

Nov. 19: Maps and Panoramas

- **Annotated Bibliography Due**
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Dec. 1: Material Culture

- Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *The Age of Homespun*, chap. 6 (via HuskyCT)
- **Homework # 9: Questions on Ulrich**

Dec. 3: The Internet

- **Homework # 10: Website analysis**

Dec. 8: Library Day -- Meet at Babbidge, Level 1 (Optional)

Dec. 10: Revising an Argument

+Dec. 15:

- **Final Paper Due in the regular classroom.**
(Section One: 11:00 a.m.; Section Two: 2:00 p.m).