

**HIGR 267B**  
**Research Seminar in United States History**

Spring Quarter 2012: Thursday 9 am- 11:50 (April 5, May 24, May 31) HSS 4025

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Office Hrs: W 10:30-11:30 am ; Th 1-2 p.m.

**Spring Quarter Schedule**

*Welcome to the most important and precious stage of your creative process. Get your game on; be present and reflective of your creative and writing process. The more deeply you appreciate your own creative process and are willing to transform your habits of work and analysis, the more likely you will feel empowered in your writing and thinking.*

**Week 1 April 5 Research Reports Meeting (IN CLASS MEETING)**

Students make an oral presentation of approximately 5 minutes on their research progress and development of their thesis. Each student will submit a 3 page typed report that outlines your progress with archival research.

Provide a precise listing of archival collections (name of the collection or printed source), what you have researched, how you hope to employ the research and what processing of data work is pending. You should identify manuscript collections, periodicals and digital databases as distinctive sources.

This is a good time to also address any larger methodological or interpretive problems you have identified and any approaches you feel will address this problem. Don't wish the problem away, rather tease it out and make it part of the strength of your argument and analytical approach.

**Week 2-3 Here are three items that you must complete and email me as a package no later than Wednesday April 18<sup>th</sup>.**

**1) Outline**

Finish all research and create a 6-8 page detailed outline of your essay. This outline should develop key thesis points, engage historiography and connect evidence to your argument. A good outline identifies and connects different kinds of source material that you want to use in the overall development of your thesis. The more detailed the outline the better for your purposes of organizing your research and developing a strong argument.

**2) Aspirational Article**

**Select an aspiration essay model, download it as a PDF from a digital source or scan it yourself and send it to me to upload onto the online site and respond to the questions below in Q&A format (no more than 3 pages).**

Model your essay on journal articles that appear in top-tier journals – Journal of American History, American Quarterly, Gender and History, American Historical Review, Journal of Women’s History, American Quarterly, William and Mary Quarterly, Pacific Historical Review, Hispanic American Historical Review etc....

Select an aspirational model – you like it because of its writing and style not because it is on your topic. (Stretching is good for you!)

Respond to all of these questions with an interest in the craft of writing rather than reproducing the content for us:

Ask yourself what is the form that the essay uses to introduce the problem and draw the reader in? What rhetorical strategies or devices does the writer use? How does s/he introduce, develop and use historiographical debates and contributions? What key concepts drive the essay? What is the argument for change and how is it made? How is the archival material distributed in the article? How does the writer use the conclusion to push the argument and contribution beyond the confines of the essay?

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**3) IDENTIFY a faculty member who will act as a second reader for your essay.**

***Weeks 3-7 Prepare First Draft – Meet with me individually to discuss writing plans and challenges. Share your outline with me in advance of our meeting.***

***Below is guidance on developing a vital and vigorous writing life. This is both an intensely personal journey but one that can also be enhanced by the creation of collective and collaborative community.***

- 1) Writing Communities – please create amongst yourselves communities that support your writing, where you can share ideas, writing strategies and drafts. This is a voluntary activity but I strongly recommend cultivating a writing buddy or two or three. The goal of the group is to support your writing process. This can be a friendly group who can give you constructive feedback. They don’t have to be your pals.
- 2) Writing Strategies:
  - a. Free-writing daily – take 30-45 minutes each day to write out ideas, concepts, organization thoughts, analysis of documents
  - b. Draft based on the outline – use the outline as a guidepost to analyze specific documents and put them in conversation with each other. When you don’t know where to begin, just start drafting to connect the ideas and themes that develop from specific documentary sources. Aim for a certain amount of text (i.e. 500 words or 3 pages) for a writing day

- c. Complete footnotes/bibliography – when you are procrastinating, feel less inspired to write imaginatively. Complete the footnote and bibliography citation in the proper format.
  - d. Take notes of what you need to check in terms of references, citations, other sources and create a running list for further research – don't waste time internet searching while you are in drafting mode.
  - e. Integrate the different sections recognizing that transitions are the most difficult and require the greatest ingenuity
  - f. Draft out as much as necessary of historiographical debates and issues to understand the problem and why it is important. What you are doing here is learning to handle ideas and other scholars' arguments. The challenge comes later with editing down significantly these sections so that the key ideas come through and your own approach is visible to the reader.
- 3) Your overall goal is to write a analytically sophisticated exploration of your thesis problem in a text that analyzes original primary source research findings and contextualizes these findings both in historical/temporal/geographic context and within the historiography you have identified.

***FIRST DRAFTS: My expectations for an acceptable draft***

- *25-30 page text that develops your thesis argument,*
- *Contextualizes your topic both historically and historiographically (clear identification of key concepts that you are engaging)*
- *Demonstrated working through primary source evidence in your analysis.*
- *Footnotes will be complete and clear.*
- *Header and/or footer must clearly mark your name, title, first draft and pagination.*

**Week 7 Monday May 14th All first drafts are due at 5p.m.**

Please upload a version for all students to access on the course site. Please send me a version by attachment (MS Word) and also a hardcopy in my department mailbox

**May 14-23rd Read Peer Papers and Prepare Responses**

Each student paper will have two dedicated readers. And each student will be assigned 2 papers to review.

Students will carefully read the paper and offer a two page single spaced assessment that addresses the following:

- 1) Is the thesis clearly and boldly articulated?
- 2) Is the organization of the argument clear and effective?
- 3) Is the use and analysis of evidence persuasive?
- 4) Is the historiographic literature succinct and relevant?
- 5) Prioritize 2 key issues for revision.

**Week 8 and 9 May 24<sup>th</sup> and May 31 – Marathon Discussion of drafts and comments, IN CLASS MEETING**

9 am -12 noon

Readers must give written responses to the author and give a copy to me.

We will devote approximately 20 minutes to each author's paper. The reviewers are each responsible for providing 5 minute presentation.

**Week 9-10 Revisions and Redrafting**

**Week 10 FINAL DRAFT DUE Monday, June 4th 3 p.m. I expect MS Word Attachment and Hardcopy.**

**You must give a hardcopy to your second faculty reader on June 4th.**

***FINAL DRAFT***

*\*(Minimum 35 -Maximum 40) double-spaced pages, Times 12 point font, exclusive of bibliography*

*\*Footnotes must all be clear and complete in Chicago Manual of Style format*

*\*Any images or graphs must be clearly identified and labeled*

*\*Bibliography must list all primary source collections and all secondary sources. Use format of bibliography from University of California Press books.*

*\*Clear and consistent format, headings, pagination, header and footer*

*\*On the title page in addition to your own identification and title please identify the course, the Second Reader and your aspiration for which journal you would submit the essay.*

*\*\* A piece of friendly advice, take care of formatting, correct bibliographic and footnote style in your rough draft and well before your final version for submission.\*\**

*My evaluation is based on*

- 1) the clarity and sophistication of your argument*
- 2) the sharpness of your identification of historical problems and questions*
- 3) the analysis of primary sources which includes your ability to quote sparingly and powerfully to forward your argument*
- 4) the creative and judicious use of secondary sources and historiography (both in its specific detail but also in the able use of key concepts and methodologies).*
- 5) Effective response to the critiques you received from your peers and the faculty in your revisions.*
- 6) How effectively you have followed instructions on format set above*
- 7) The professionalism and responsiveness you have demonstrated in all the required tasks for the quarter and especially in your oral and written responses to your peers writing.*

**Resources:**

I recommend the following useful research and writing guides:

William Strunk and E.B. White, *The Elements of Style*

Kate Turabian, *A Manual for the Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*

-- a short paperback version of the *Chicago Manual of Style*

Anne Lamott, *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*

Mary Lynn Ramponella, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*

Stephen Pyne, *Voice and Vision*

Wayne Booth et al, *The Craft of Research*