

History 201 - Introduction to Historical Methods

Spring 2010

Monday and Wednesday 3:00 – 4:15 pm, BAL 2058

Dr. Jane T. Merritt Office: BAL 8022

email: jmerritt@odu.edu

Office Hours: Mon. and Wed. 1:00 – 2:30 pm (or by appointment)

This course will help to prepare history majors for successful completion of their upper-division courses and introduce them to historical thinking on a variety of levels. We will examine the methods and mechanics of historical research, writing, and critical analysis, including the art of presenting your ideas in class. The course focuses on building basic skills for conducting historical research including locating, utilizing, and evaluating sources.

Required Texts: The following books are required and available for purchase at the bookstore

Dubois, Laurent, and John D. Garrigus, eds. *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean, 1789-1804: a Brief History with Documents*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2006.

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

Williams, Robert C. *The Historian's Toolbox: a Student's Guide to the Theory and Craft of History*, 2nd ed. New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2007.

In addition, there will be hand-outs in class, reading and research materials posted on BLACKBOARD, and internet web sites to view.

Recommended: Every student should have a good Dictionary and Thesaurus on hand. Spell-check and thesaurus software found in word-processing programs are often insufficient for the purposes of this course and other university classes.

Blackboard: This course has a web site on Blackboard, where course announcements, reminders, assignments, documents, etc., will be posted. Students are responsible for all information and material made available for this class. Check Blackboard regularly.

E-mail: It is University policy that students maintain and regularly access their ODU e-mail accounts (it's also free). You are responsible for any course information sent to your ODU e-mail. To activate your account go to <http://occs.odu.edu/accounts/>

Please use your ODU e-mail account to contact me, otherwise the school's system may identify your message as spam and block it. Use the subject line to identify the course and issue or question you wish to convey. Sign your e-mails. Despite filters, I receive dozens of spam messages a day, so might assume your note is junk mail unless it is clearly identified.

Assignments: Reading assignments provide necessary background for class discussions and written assignments. Required readings appear on the syllabus and should be completed prior to the day or week for which they are assigned. Handouts or postings on Blackboard will occasionally be given to supplement readings listed on the syllabus.

Writing assignments are essential to this course. They are designed to stimulate critical thinking and to enhance your organizational and communication skills. All essays and paper assignments for this class must conform to standard formatting practices including: Your name and class information typed on the first page of essay (longer papers often have a separate title page with this information); text is double-spaced, with proper margins (no more than 1 inch on all sides) and a standard size font (f.i. this syllabus is printed in Times New Roman, 12 pt. font. Another standard font is Courier, 10 pt.); and pages are numbered either at the upper right hand corner or bottom center.

All written assignments are to be handed in on the due date as a hardcopy at class time.

1. **Class Participation.** It is crucial to attend class. There will be substantial class discussion, which constitutes a portion of your grade.
2. **Five short 100-point assignments** will be due at various times during the semester. They include exercises in library research, source analysis, and historiographic interpretation. The assignments will be posted on Blackboard. See class schedule for due dates.
3. **Bibliography/Footnote Assignment.** This is an exercise in the mechanics of both bibliographic and footnote citation form, based on the style guide: Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007). It will also test your knowledge and use of Microsoft WORD's footnote function. (See separate guide for further instructions). Due February 15.
4. **Introductory Essay Review.** This assignment and the Final Paper will be based on Dubois and Garrigus, eds., *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean, 1789-1804*. (See separate guide for further instructions). Due April 14.
5. **Final 8-10 page Paper.** The final project for this course combines the mechanics of proper citation forms, interpreting and analyzing historical sources as evidence, writing descriptive historical narrative, and constructing a viable historical thesis or argument. (See separate guide for further instructions). Due Friday April 30.

Grading: The assignments for this class make up the following proportion of the semester grade:

Class Participation	100 points
Bibliography/footnote Assignment	50 points
Williams Task Paper (Source interpretation)	100 points
New York Times microfilm assignment	100 points
Historical Object Assignment (Source interpretation)	100 points

Library Database assignment	100 points
Pontiac's Uprising/Historical Interpretation	100 points
Introductory Essay Review	100 points
Final Paper	<u>250 points</u>
 Total	 1000 points

Final grades are based on the following scale:

A	=	1000-925 points	C	=	759-720 points
A-	=	924-890 points	C-	=	719-680 points
B+	=	889-860 points	D+	=	679-650 points
B	=	859-820 points	D	=	649-610 points
B-	=	819-790 points	D-	=	609-580 points
C+	=	789-760 points	F	=	579 and below

Course Requirements:

YOU MUST COMPLETE ALL ASSIGNMENTS - You will not pass the course if you fail to complete any assignment given. THE LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW FROM CLASS is Tuesday March 30.

ATTENDANCE - It is important to attend the class meetings since there will be substantial class discussion and some in-class assignments. You are responsible for any missed work. Excessive absences and lateness will affect your grade.

LATE PAPERS and incompletes - All assignments are due on the dates shown on the syllabus or paper guides. Late papers will not be accepted. Please plan your work schedule ahead of time and start assignments early to avoid these consequences. Incompletes will be granted only in the case of medical emergencies or major family crises. These circumstances must be verified.

HONOR CODE - All students are expected to abide by Old Dominion University's Honor Code, which states: "We, the students of Old Dominion University, aspire to be honest and forthright in our academic endeavors. Therefore, we will practice honesty and integrity and be guided by the tenets of the Monarch Creed. We will meet the challenge to be beyond reproach in our actions and our words. We will conduct ourselves in a manner that commands the dignity and respect that we also give to others." (Old Dominion University Catalog, p. 14).

Plagiarism is a serious offense, and will not be overlooked in this or in other classes. Students who cheat or plagiarize on any assignment will fail the course.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week One – Introduction: History as Story and Craft

January 11 and 13

Reading: Robert Williams, *The Historian's Toolbox*, xiii-xv, 3-19; "The History Guide: What is History?" (see Blackboard)

NO CLASS: January 18

Week Two - Library Orientation – from the classroom

January 20

Reading: Turabian, *Manual for Writers*, Chap. 1, 2, and 3 (especially Chap. 3)

Week Three – Sources and Evidence I

January 25 and 27

Reading: Turabian, *Manual for Writers*, Chap. 1, 2, and 3; Williams, *Historian's Toolbox*, 47-78.

Assignment #1: Williams, *Historian's Toolbox* assignment, due Wednesday January 27

Week Four – Sources and Evidence II

February 1 and 3

Reading: Turabian, *Manual for Writers*, Chap. 4 and 5; Scott Carlson, "The Uncertain Fate of Scholarly Artifacts in a Digital Age," *Chronicle for Higher Education* 50, no. 21, January 20, 2004, A25. (see Blackboard)

Assignment #2: New York Times microfilm assignment, due Wed. February 3

Week Five – Basics of Citation

February 8 and 10

Monday Feb. 8, class meets in **Special Collections of the Library** with archivist Sonia Yaco.

Reading: Williams, *Historian's Toolbox*, Chap. 10, "Credit and Acknowledgment," 79-83; Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*, Chapters 15 and 16; browse Special Collections <http://www.lib.odu.edu/special/index.htm>

Assignment #3: Bibliography/footnote assignment, due Monday February 15

Week Six - Writing and Narrative

February 15 and 17

Reading: Williams, *Historian's Toolbox*, 90-109; Selection from a well-crafted narrative history.

Week Seven – Writing and Citation

February 22 and 24

Reading: Turabian, *Manual for Writers*, Chaps. 20-24 (style); Eric Foner, “American Freedom in a Global Age,” *American Historical Review* 106, no. 1 (Feb. 2001): 1-16. (See Blackboard)

Assignment #4: Library database Assignment, due February 24

Week Eight - Interpreting the Past

March 1 and 3

Reading: Williams, *Historian’s Toolbox*, 20-44; and “Pontiac’s Rebellion: Analyzing Variant Historical Interpretations,” posted on Blackboard.

Assignment #5: Pontiac’s Uprising, analyzing historical interpretations, due March 15.

NO CLASS: March 7-13, Spring Break

Week Nine - Historiography and schools of thought

March 15 and 17

Reading: Williams, *Historian’s Toolbox*, 110-125; Robin Blackburn, “Haiti, Slavery, and the Age of Democratic Revolution,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 63, no. 4 (October 2006): 643-674. (See Blackboard).

Week Ten - Alternative Approaches to History

March 22 and 24

Reading: Williams, *Historian’s Toolbox*, 149-176; Bob Thompson, “History for Sale,” *Washington Post Magazine*, January 20, 2002; (See Blackboard)

Assignment # 6: Historical Object Assignment/Family Tree. Due March 24.

Week Eleven - The Ethics of Writing History

March 29 and 31

Reading: Turabian, *Manual for Writers*, Chap 25; Williams, *Historian’s Toolbox*, 83-89; Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct, American Historical Association (see Blackboard); Nathan Williams, “Ann Lane’s Dissertation,” and “Ann Lane’s Response,” accessed at History News Network at <http://hnn.us/articles/1097.html>; and “Historians on the Hot Seat,” accessed at History News Network at <http://hnn.us/articles/1081.html>.

Week Twelve - Historical Film, Historical Fiction, and Speculation

April 5 and 7

Reading: Williams, *Historian's Toolbox*, 126-145; Paula Rabinowitz, "Wreckage upon Wreckage: History, Documentary, and the Ruins of Memory," *History and Theory* 32, no. 2 (May 1993): 119-137. (See Blackboard)

Week Thirteen - Preparing a Research Paper

April 12 and 14

Reading: Dubois and Garrigus, *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean, 1789-1804*, especially the Introduction, 7-42; Turabian, *Manual for Writers*, Chap. 6 and 7

Assignment #7: Introductory Essay Review, due April 14.

Week Fourteen - Preparing a Research Paper

April 19 and 21

Reading: Dubois and Garrigus, *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean, 1789-1804*; Turabian, *Manual for Writers*, Chap. 6 and 7

Week Fifteen - The Future of History

April 26

Final Paper Due: Friday April 30 at 3:45 pm.