HISTORY 5320.001 – RESEARCH METHODS
FALL 2013 – R 7-00-9:30, BH 126

Dr. Peter N. Moore
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Office: Faculty Center 279 – Ph: 825-3495
Office Hours: M 1:00-3:00, T 9:00-11:00, R 6:00-7:00

Course Description
This is a graduate research seminar. Its purpose is straightforward: to train students in the craft of historical research and writing. To that end, each student will write a 35-page research paper on a topic related to his/her exam field or master’s thesis. All papers must declare an original thesis, place the thesis in the context of the historical literature, develop an argument to demonstrate the thesis, ground the argument in primary source evidence, and follow the discipline’s rules for citation, bibliography, and format. This course fulfills a core requirement for the Master of Arts in History.

Student Learning Outcomes
Students who successfully complete this course will:
• Develop advanced skills in historical research by identifying relevant primary and secondary sources and processing evidence drawn from those sources;
• Demonstrate advanced writing skills by making original, well-organized arguments grounded in primary sources and connected to the historical literature; and
• Demonstrate proficiency in methods of historical citation and matters of writing style.

Texts
This course requires only two texts, both of which are essential tools for good historical writing. Both can be purchased in the university bookstore:


In addition, we will read a number of exemplary journal articles during the first two class sessions. Readings that are not available through the Bell Library will be posted on Blackboard.

Historical Writing
This class follows the “History Area Style Guide for Upper-Division and Graduate Level Papers,” which was adopted by the history faculty in 2009. Every written assignment you turn in for this class must conform to this style guide, so read it carefully. I will adhere to it strictly when evaluating your work. For any questions or issues not addressed in the style guide, refer to Turabian’s Manual for Writers. If you still have doubts, consult me.

You are graduate students, and you need to write well. Organize your paper carefully. Use complete sentences. Be clear and concise. Enrich your vocabulary. I am a stickler for good form, so edit yourself and polish those papers!
Sources and Resources
Secondary Sources: In accordance with the History Area Style Guide, all of the secondary sources you use in your research papers must be academic sources. These include books published by university or academic commercial presses, journals published by reputable academic societies, and internet sites hosted by government, university, or reliable private entities. As a general rule, do not use secondary sources that have not been subjected to a peer review process. You must apply to me in writing for permission to use any non-academic, non-peer reviewed internet source. As with all questions relating to your paper, when in doubt, ask the professor.

Forums and Blogs: although the listserves on H-Net have passed their heyday, they are still a good place to go to find book reviews, discussion threads, and links to reliable online resources. You can also post queries about sources to other specialists in your field. If you do so, I strongly encourage you to consult me or another professor first (professors frequently post queries on behalf of their students). As for blogs, be cautious: some fields have a crackpot fringe that ignores and distorts evidence to drive an agenda. To assure the viability of your sources, stick with bloggers who are connected to accredited academic institutions.

General Reference Works
As a general rule you may not use encyclopedias or dictionaries as secondary sources in your paper. However, such works can be a good resource for exploring and narrowing a topic or identifying key secondary works. The Bell Library holds a number of print and online encyclopedias on a wide range of historical fields, so feel free to use them as you develop your topic.

Books and Printed Primary Sources
Unless you are studying Texas history, you will find very few printed primary and secondary sources on the shelves of the Bell Library. However, the Interlibrary Loan office will do its best to accommodate your request for books. Be warned that ILL services can take up to three weeks to process, so plan accordingly.

Articles: The Bell Library holds the complete JSTOR Arts & Sciences series, where you can find articles from national and state journals published before 2008. As you begin your search for relevant articles, you should familiarize yourself with the library’s style guides (e.g., History, Texas History, Mexican-American Studies). The guides will link you to journal article databases like Project Muse, America: History and Life (for U.S. history), and Historical Abstracts (for non-U.S. topics). Some of these articles are available full-text online, but those from small or obscure journals may have to be ordered from Interlibrary Loan. ILL’s turnaround time for journal articles is usually just a few days.

Primary Sources
The Bell Library’s collection of published primary sources is growing, mainly through the acquisition of online databases. See the “Primary Source Inventory” handout for an up-to-date and comprehensive list of the library’s collection. This inventory also includes the major collections in the Special Collections department. These archives are especially important if you are interested in a local topic.
Archival research is the heart of original historical writing, yet even as archives digitize more and more of their holdings, they also face significant budget cuts, and some only allow access to their digital documents to on-site visitors. Assess your archival sources carefully before committing to a topic. If you use online primary sources, either printed or manuscript, avoid non-academic or non-governmental websites. If you have a Texas topic, I strongly encourage you to visit the state archives in Austin. Pending availability of funds, the History area will provide up to $250 toward your travel expenses. See me or Dr. Munoz, the History Graduate Program Coordinator, for more information.

If you are using oral interviews, you must complete paperwork (release forms and interview agreements) for each interview you conduct, before conducting the interview. I will deduct points from papers that incorporate undocumented oral interviews. Please see me for details.

**Policies**

**Assignments:** all written work must be completed in accordance with the History Area Style Guide and Turabian’s *Manual for Writers*, 7th edition. Follow these guidelines carefully for issues relating to citation, bibliography, organization, formatting, style, and plagiarism. I will deduct points from work that does not conform to these guidelines.

**Attendance:** graduate study is a serious undertaking. As professional historians in training you are expected to attend class, and as students you are required to do so. Excessive absences (more than one per semester) will result in deductions from your final grade, though in the case of extenuating circumstances exceptions may be made at the discretion of the professor.

**Late work:** late assignments (those turned in after class on the due date) will be penalized one-half letter grade for each day they are late. If you have extenuating circumstances, you may ask for an extension.

**Plagiarism** is unacceptable in a graduate course. Confirmed cases will receive a zero on the plagiarized assignment and will be reported to the Office of Student Engagement and Success. Severe or repeated violations will result in an F in the course. See the History Area Style Guide for detailed information on plagiarism.

**Graded Work**

In addition to the final paper, you will be responsible for completing the following graded assignments. You will be given more detailed separate handouts for each element.

- **Class Participation (10 points):** Professional historians must be able to confidently discuss issues in their field and orally defend their positions; accordingly, oral communication is an important part of your graduate training and a key element in this class. Each week we will either discuss an assigned reading, give progress reports, evaluate papers, engage research and writing problems, or make student presentations. You are expected to come to class, be prepared, and make regular, high-quality contributions to class discussions. The two Article Analysis assignments will also be included in this portion of your grade.

- **Topic Selection (5 points):** use the topic assignment worksheet to identify a manageable and relevant topic, to explore its broader significance, and to make a list of preliminary primary and secondary sources. *Due September 19.*
• **Bibliography (5 points):** develop a preliminary bibliography of no less than thirty sources. At least fifteen of these sources must be primary sources, and they must be distinct. For example, multiple issues of the same newspaper only count as one source. At least fifteen of your sources must be secondary sources. Of these, most should be recently published (no more than fifteen years old), and at least five must be academic journal articles. *Due October 10.*

• **Literature Review (5 points):** submit a 3-4 page review of the historical literature relating to your topic. Do not merely describe the literature, but analyze it: identify and evaluate differences in method, sources, and the kinds of questions the authors are asking. Look for ways to connect the works to one another, and as clearly as you can, establish how your own thesis or approach makes a unique contribution to the literature on your subject. *Due October 24.*

• **Writing Segment (5 points):** it’s time to stop procrastinating and start writing! Submit a seven-page segment of your paper. This does not have to be the introduction; start in the middle if you like; any segment will do. Be sure to use proper citation and formatting, proofread carefully, and polish things up before you turn it in. *Due November 7.*

• **Complete Draft (10 points):** submit three clean copies of a complete draft of your paper. Proper citations, bibliography, formatting, and page numbers are required. We will share these drafts with each other and evaluate them in class the following week. See the separate handout for details. *Due November 16.*

• **Final Paper (60 points):** due in my office no later than Monday, December 14 at 7:00 p.m.

**Tips for Success**

- **Visit me frequently.** You have the benefit of a small class and an instructor who wants to see you learn. Take advantage of it. It takes time to digest your topic, and nothing facilitates that like talking about it. At the very least you should attend the two scheduled individual conferences, but you are invited to come as frequently as you like, either during office hours or by appointment.

- **Keep up with the work.** The heaviest assignments all come due after the mid-point of the semester, making it tempting to put off your research. This is a large project, and you cannot throw together quality work in a few days or even weeks. Students who fall behind find it very difficult to recover. Establish a rigorous research and writing schedule and stick to it.

**General Information**

**Academic Standing:** in accordance with university policy, graduate students are required to maintain a minimum Grade Point Average of 3.0. Any student whose GPA falls below 3.0 at any point in the program will be placed on academic probation. Students placed on probation will be given one semester to raise their GPA above the 3.0 threshold or will be dismissed from the program. Further, any student who makes more than one “C” in his or her graduate history courses will be dismissed from the program.

**Students with Disabilities and Veterans**
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that
provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room 116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

Academic Advisement
Academic advisors are available to assist students with course selection, degree plans, graduation, and other academic matters. Each college has an academic advising center, staffed by full-time, professional advisors. Rachelle Stanley is the adviser for graduate students in the College of Liberal Arts. You should also seek advising from the History Graduate Program Coordinator, Dr. Laura Munoz, and maintain regular communication with your thesis or exam committee adviser.

Grade Appeal Process
As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. If the problem cannot be resolved at this level, the student may take the steps below.

1. Presentation of grievance to instructor. (This step must be taken within fourteen calendar days after the beginning of the next term.)
2. Appeal to department chair or area coordinator.
3. Written appeal to the University Academic Standards Grievance Committee.
4. Preliminary review and advising by an ombudsman appointed by the Provost.
5. Submission of file by department chair to the chair of the University Academic Standards Grievance Committee.
6. Review of file by committee chair and submission of case to committee.
7. Proceedings of the University Academic Standards Grievance Committee.
   (Committee holds hearing, reviews data, presents findings to all parties, and makes recommendation to Provost.)
8. Decision by Provost.
9. Final appeal in writing to the Provost if student or instructor thinks appropriate procedures have not been followed.

For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.
Course Schedule
Please consult the following tentative class schedule for assignments and due dates. It is subject to change. Note: some weeks we will not meet as a group but will have individual conferences instead. I will be in my office during these times. These individual talks are critical to your success in this course. If you cannot make your individual conferences or if my schedule fills up during these set times, you must schedule a separate time to meet.

September 5  Introduction: The Research Paper/Getting Started

September 12  Topic Development
   • Reading: Turabian, 1-11 and 12-20 (esp. 2.1.0, 2.1.2, and all of 2.2)
Article Analysis
   • Reading: TBA
   • Writing: Turn in Article Analysis Papers

September 19  Sources and Note-taking 101
   • Reading: Turabian, 24-35 (esp. 3.2.2, 3.4.2 and 3.4.3) and 36-47 (esp. 3.2.2, all of 4.2, 4.4)
Article Analysis
   • Reading: TBA
   • Writing: Turn in Article Analysis Papers

September 26  Building a bibliography
   • Reading: remaining JSH essays

October 3  Tour of archives and library
Discussion: developing an argument
   • Reading: Turabian, 48-61

October 10  Quotes, footnotes, and plagiarism
   • Reading: Turabian 4.2.2, 6.4, 7.5 (quotes); 4.2.3 and all of 7.9 (plagiarism); 3.2.1, 133-140 (the footnote)

Bibliography due

October 17  Individual conferences

October 24  Oral progress reports
   Literature review due

October 31  Individual conferences

November 7  Individual conferences
   Seven-page writing segment due

November 14  The Elements of Style
Reading: Turabian 102-119; A.1, A.2.3
Reading: Strunk and White (read ix-xviii and 66-85 carefully; skim the rest and identify some areas that are especially relevant to you)

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>November 21</td>
<td><strong>Complete drafts due</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>November 27</td>
<td>Complete drafts returned (NOTE: this is a Wednesday, so you will need to pick up your paper from my office if you want it before Thanksgiving).</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 28</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 5</td>
<td>Workshop drafts</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 12</td>
<td><strong>Final papers due in my office by 7:00 p.m.</strong></td>
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