HIST 5370: ORAL HISTORY: TECHNIQUES AND PRACTICE
Fall 2013
Tuesdays, 7-9:30PM
BH 207

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This is a graduate seminar on the historiography, research methodology and practice of oral history. Historians, among other social science scholars, use oral interviews as one form of primary source evidence to corroborate historical research. The purpose of this course is to teach you the technique, to show you how scholars use interviews to write history, and to introduce you to the modern theoretical debates surrounding oral history.

PREREQUISITES:
I recommend that you speak with your graduate advisor to confirm that this course fulfills your degree requirements. This course is intended for graduate students in any TAMUCC master’s or doctoral program; however, priority is given to History M.A. students. Knowledge of U.S history is helpful, but there are no formal prerequisites. Please note that this is a discussion-based course. Attendance and professional collegiality are mandatory. I also expect you to work hard, read thoroughly, complete assignments in a timely manner, and discuss your interpretations of the readings at each class session.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Through research, reading and writing assignments, students will:

1. Practice oral history as a research technique by planning, conducting and transcribing an original interview.
2. Analyze how historians use oral history as historical evidence by interrogating the major concepts, themes, methods and theoretical approaches within the historiography.
3. Identify, synthesize and interpret historical arguments and explain these arguments cogently.
4. Learn about protection of human subjects and the protocols scholars must follow to conduct interviews.
5. Hone communication skills necessary to write M.A. exams and/or M.A. thesis.

REQUIRED READING:
Books in Reading Order (available for purchase at the university bookstore)

1. The Oral History Reader, 2nd edition by Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson
2. *We Will Secure Our Future: Empowering the Navajo Nation* by Peterson Zah and Peter Iverson
3. *We Will Dance Our Truth: Yaqui History in Yoeme Performances* by David Shorter
5. *¡Chicana Power! Contested Histories of Feminism in the Chicano Movement*

Optional

**EQUIPMENT:**
You will require a digital recorder or some way to record the oral history that you will conduct for the course. Tape recorders were commonly used for recording interviews in the twentieth century, but the advent of digital technology has changed the field. We will discuss these options in class, but I recommend that you review the following websites: [http://ohda.matrix.msu.edu/](http://ohda.matrix.msu.edu/), [http://digitalomnium.com/askdoug/](http://digitalomnium.com/askdoug/); and [http://ohda.matrix.msu.edu/askdoug/?question=0](http://ohda.matrix.msu.edu/askdoug/?question=0).

**ASSIGNMENTS, DEADLINES AND GRADE STRUCTURE**
Your course grade will be based on the combination of the following assignments, which are designed to meet the learning outcomes described on the first page of this syllabus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>10 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short Writing Assignments</td>
<td>30 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Oral History Project</td>
<td>25 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Oral History Project</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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In order to pass the course, you **MUST** successfully complete the “Short Writing Assignments,” the “Personal Oral History Project,” and the “Group Oral History Project.” I will assess all your composition assignments based on standard writing skills—your ability to craft topic sentences, identify arguments (theses) and explain them (evidence), and use correct grammar/punctuation.

I will use the following grading scale:

- **A** = 100-90% (+1170 points)
- **B** = 89-80% (1040-1169 points)
- **C** = 79-70% (910-1039 points)
- **D** = 69-60% (780-909 points)
- **F** = 59-0% (0-779 points)

**Class Participation 10 %**
As graduate students, you are expected to conduct the class discussion. These discussion sessions are intended to prepare you for future dialogues in your profession. In order for the sessions to be useful, you will need to complete the assigned readings and bring your notes and questions to class.
As part of your participation grade, each of you will lead one class discussion and each of you will give a short presentation on your personal oral history project. Assignments will be made on the first or second day of class. As the discussion leader, you will need to…

(1) prepare an introduction of the assigned readings for the seminar meeting,
(2) present the scholarly arguments and give your general impressions,
(3) prepare a set of discussion questions for dialogue, and
(4) meet with Dr. Muñoz in advance to discuss your strategy.

Attendance 10 %
Attendance is mandatory. I will allow one absence with advance notice for emergencies or illness. All other absences will reduce your attendance grade significantly.

Short Writing Assignments 30 %
The goal of these assignments is to learn how to assess historical evidence and how to write about it succinctly. I will provide instructions for these assignments separately.

Personal Oral History Project 25 %
You will produce an original oral history. This project is worth 25% of overall grade. It has 3 components: the proposal (5%), the interview (10%) and the transcript (10%). You will submit the proposal, a digital recording of the interview (-electronic sound file) and a typed interview transcript for credit (Word or PDF document). Since this is a graduate-level course, I will leave the selection of your interview subject up to you. Before you begin the process, however, we will discuss oral history procedures and conference about your proposal. I will provide instructions separately.

Group Oral History Project 25 %
You will produce an original oral history with a team of your colleagues based on two initiatives that I have begun in the local community. This project is worth 25% of overall grade. It will have multiple components, including a proposal, research plan, list of interview questions, a digital recording, interview transcript, and self-/group-assessments. Before we begin these projects, we will discuss them. I also will provide instructions separately.

COURSE POLICIES:

Please follow basic University policies as outlined in the TAMUCC Student Handbook and Code of Conduct, available at [http://www.tamucc.edu/~students/handbook.html](http://www.tamucc.edu/~students/handbook.html).

Academic Honesty: The University does not tolerate plagiarism or cheating in any form. If I can verify that you plagiarized or cheated on any assignment, you may earn an F for the course and I may file a complaint with Student Affairs. For graduate students, an “F” in any course may result in your dismissal from your graduate program. The term cheating includes, but is not limited to: (1) use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; (2) dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; or (3) the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the University faculty or staff.
The term **plagiarism** includes, but is not limited to, the use by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling or distribution of term papers or other academic materials. You may locate these definitions in the Student Handbook.

**Classroom Etiquette and Basic Respect:** It is important that we are all able to stay focused on the discussion, and that we give each other the courtesy and respect to speak and to be heard.

If I feel that your classroom behavior violates general professionalism and/or the Student Handbook and Code of Conduct, I will ask you to leave class. I also reserve the right to refer you to Student Affairs and to file a complaint documenting your behavior and academic performance.

**Electronic Devices:** You are welcome to use technology in this course as long as you follow general rules of courtesy.

**E-mail:** I encourage you to stay in contact with me by email for any questions.

**Freedom of Speech:** The 1st Amendment of the U.S. Constitution promises each of us the Freedom of Speech. The success of universities is based on this promise as the process of learning requires that we ask questions and discuss ideas. During class, please feel free to raise your hand at any time to make a comment or to ask a question. If my lecture does not make sense, please ask me to clarify my ideas or to explain a topic again.

**Grade Appeal Process:** As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that she or he has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, fair 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. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the appeal, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at [http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html](http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html). For assistance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Division of Student Affairs.

**Incompletes:** If you have completed 75% of the assignments and extreme personal circumstances prevent you from completing the course, I will consider a request for an incomplete. I may consult with the graduate faculty or other college officials before making a decision. Documentation of your situation may be required. Please consult the Student Handbook for the policy.

**Late Work:** Late assignments will be docked 10 points per day up to seven days including weekends. After seven days, late assignments will be assessed as “zero” grades unless you contact me about your extenuating circumstances. I will review extenuating circumstances on case-by-case basis.
Office Hours: I have set aside six per week to meet with students to answer any questions or concerns you might have about the course content and assignments. I listed my office hours at the top of the syllabus. If you cannot meet during these times, please see me before or after class to make an appointment.

Punctuality: Come to class on time! Please make every attempt to attend all class sessions, to arrive early and to stay until the class ends. If you are unavoidably late, please enter quietly and with respect toward your colleagues.

Scholarly Citation: Please refer to the History Area Style Guide for guidance on how to use Turabian or Chicago style in your papers. This document is attached at the back of this syllabus and is also available online at http://cla.tamucc.edu/history/resources.html.

Syllabus and Schedule Changes: I reserve the right to change the schedule of reading assignments at any time during the semester. If I change items on the syllabus, I will notify you in advance.

Withdrawals: The University has specific policies in place for dropping a course. Please consult the Office of Admissions and Records in the Student Services Center (Round Building) for the due dates and procedures for withdrawing from this course or the university.

UNIVERSITY SERVICES:

Academic Advising: The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The CLA Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.

Students with Disabilities: Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you suspect that you may have a disability (physical impairment, learning disability, psychiatric disability, etc.), please contact Disability Services located in Driftwood 101, at 825-5816. If you need disability accommodations for any Triad K course, please see one of the Triad K instructors. The web link is http://disabilityservices.tamucc.edu/.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

I have provided you with an outline of the weekly class schedule. You are responsible for completing the weekly readings and expected to discuss them as part of your class participation grade. I will provide you with additional instructions regarding assignments and homework. This schedule is subject to change at my discretion; however, you will be notified of those changes as they occur.

Tuesday 9/10
Discussion: Selected readings from The Oral History Reader.
Discussant: Laura Muñoz
Tuesday 9/17
Discussion: Selected readings from *The Oral History Reader.*
Discussants: To be determined (TBD)

Tuesday 9/24
Discussion: Selected readings from *The Oral History Reader.*
Discussants: To be determined (TBD)

Tuesday 10/1
Discussion: *We Will Secure Our Future: Empowering the Navajo Nation*
Discussants: TBD

Tuesday 10/8
Discussion: *We Will Dance Our Truth: Yaqui History in Yoeme Performances*
Discussants: TBD

Tuesday 10/15
Discussion: *¡Chicana Power! Contested Histories of Feminism in the Chicano Movement*
Discussants: TBD

Tuesday 10/22
Discussion: *Mabel McKay: Weaving the Dream*
Discussants: TBD

Tuesday 10/29
Groups Oral History Projects – IRB and planning.

Tuesday 11/5
Group Oral History Projects – Off-campus interviews.

Tuesday 11/12
Group Oral History Projects – Off-campus interviews.

Tuesday 11/19
Group Oral History Projects – Transcribe interviews.

Tuesday 11/26 (Thanksgiving Week)
Personal Oral History Projects – Conduct Interview.

Tuesday 12/3
Personal Oral History Projects – Transcribe Interview.

Tuesday 12/10
Discussion: Personal Oral History Project presentations. Submit interviews.
Discussant: Everyone

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