HIST 5370: ORAL HISTORY: TECHNIQUES AND PRACTICE
Fall 2017
Wednesdays, 7-9:30PM
BH 202

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Phone: 361-825-3975
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 3-5pm; or by appointment as requested
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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 produce history in various forms, and to introduce you to the modern theoretical debates surrounding oral histories.

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:

4. Additional reading and/or documentaries may be assigned.

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://digitalomnium.com/askdoug/; and 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 this syllabus.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation &amp; Discussion Lead</td>
<td>10 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historiography Exam</td>
<td>30 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Oral History Project</td>
<td>30 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Oral History Project</td>
<td>30 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100 %</td>
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Due dates for these assignments are listed on the last page.

Grading Scale
In order to pass the course, you MUST successfully complete the “Historiography Exam,” the “Personal Oral History Project,” and the “Team Oral History Project.” I will assess your exam 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 assess your oral histories on the standards established by the profession.

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 & Discussion Lead (10 %)
As graduate students, you are expected to attend class and conduct the 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. On occasion, I will ask you to complete short homework assignments and these activities will be credited toward your participation.

As part of your participation grade, each of you also will give a short presentation on your personal oral history project at the end of the semester and lead one class discussion. Class discussion 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.

Oral History Historiography Exam (30 %)
The goal of this assignment is to learn how to assess the theories and arguments associated with the field of oral history. You will submit two drafts of this historiography essay. I will provide separate detailed instructions.

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.

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

UNIVERSITY COURSE POLICIES:

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. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA
Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466 or log onto http://cla.tamucc.edu/advising/.

Disability and Veterans Services: 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.

Grade Appeals: As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, 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. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures (available at http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C2.01_student_grade_appeal_procedure.pdf). For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES:

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. 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.

Attendance: Attendance counts! Come to class!

CASA: The Center for Academic Student Achievement (CASA) helps students develop skills necessary to be successful learners. CASA offers tutoring in a variety of subjects, has a writing center to help with composition papers, and has a computer lab. CASA’s goal is to help you succeed and excel in all of your classes. If you need help with anything, CASA is a good place to ask for help. For more information and for tutoring schedules, please visit the CASA website at http://casa.tamucc.edu/.

Class Websites: I will establish a Blackboard site for this course.

E-mail: You may contact me via e-mail through Blackboard or at laura.munoz@tamucc.edu.

Electronic Devices: Use your technology wisely. Computer use during class will be monitored.

Extra Credit: None. I deny requests for extra credit. You should be able to pass this class by passing the exams.

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.
**Grading:** I will grade all assignments for this course. If you have a concern about your grade, please see me. I take grade challenges seriously and I will personally re-grade the assignment and record a new grade, which may be higher or lower than the challenged grade. If you are still unsatisfied, you may pursue the university policy on formal grade appeals (explained above).

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

**Office Hours:** I have set aside three hours per week to meet with students, including you. I listed my office hours on the first page of the syllabus. No appointments are required. I meet with students on a first-come, first-serve basis. If you cannot meet during these times, please see me after class to schedule an appointment.

**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](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 for the due dates and procedures for withdrawing from this course or the university.

**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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 8/30</td>
<td>Introductions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 9/6</td>
<td>Read <em>Fundamentals of Oral History: Texas Preservation Guidelines</em> and Web Guides to Doing Oral History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 9/13</td>
<td>Discussion on selections from <em>Oral History Reader (OHR)</em>; OH proposal due.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 9/20</td>
<td>Discussion on selections from <em>Oral History Reader (OHR)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 9/27</td>
<td>Discussion on selections from <em>Oral History Reader (OHR)</em></td>
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<td>Wednesday 10/4</td>
<td>Discussion on selections from <em>Oral History Reader (OHR)</em>; OH due.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 10/11</td>
<td>Discussion on selections from <em>Oral History Reader (OHR)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 10/18</td>
<td>Discussion on selections from <em>Oral History Reader (OHR)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 10/25</td>
<td>Discussion on selections from <em>Oral History Reader (OHR)</em>; historiography essay draft due.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 11/1</td>
<td>No class meeting. Please use this time to work on your team project.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 11/8</td>
<td>No class meeting. Please use this time to work on your team project.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 11/15</td>
<td>Discussion on selections from <em>Oral History Reader (OHR)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 11/22</td>
<td>(Thanksgiving Week) No class meeting. Please use this time to work on your project.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 11/29</td>
<td>Student Presentations (day 1); team projects due.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 12/6</td>
<td>Student Presentations (day 2); team projects due.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 12/13</td>
<td>Final Exam; historiography essay due.</td>
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