

HIST 353: Historical Methods

Professor: Dr. Kelly Elliott
Office: Admin 324C
Contact: kelly.elliott@acu.edu, 501-593-0611
Office hours: MWF 8-9, 10-11 and by appointment

Fall 2013
TR 9:30-10:50
Admin 322
3 credit hours

Course Description: HIST 353 is a seminar in historical research and writing methods. It is a writing intensive course required for all History majors but can be used to fulfill a core or major requirement in history or social sciences depending on your degree plan. Writing intensive courses integrate instruction and practice in writing into upper-level content courses to assist students in becoming effective writers in a specific discipline. They provide a variety of contexts for writing, both formal (for example, research papers, laboratory reports, and book reviews) and informal (for example, journals, in-class responses to readings, and writing-to-learn activities). They help students to understand the writing process, expectations of writers in diverse settings, and key concepts about written discourse in their discipline—in this case, history. In sum, this course helps students acquire the skills necessary for the practice of history.

Purpose of this course: To cultivate in students a critical understanding of the techniques, methodologies, source materials, and creative processes through which historical narratives are made. Students in this course should emerge with a greater understanding of the historical profession, and should begin their own self-aware participation in that profession through the application of research, critical reading and review, and writing skills.

Course Goals: This course is designed to help students develop skills for investigation and composition by introducing them to historical research methods. The coursework attempts to sharpen the observational, critical, analytical, and literary capacities of the student. It acquaints the student with the problems of historical writing and develops skills through the process of research, writing, and provision of criticism. Additionally, in this service-learning course, the exercises allow the student to engage the community, connecting these experiences to the study of history.

Expected Student Competencies:

1. COMPETENCY: The student will illustrate a basic understanding of the fundamentals of research and incorporate evidence into a narrative form.

EVALUATION: The student will complete a research project that incorporates primary and secondary source materials and participate in weekly discussions driven by student responses to the assigned readings and other assignments.

2. COMPETENCY: The student will become familiar with ways in which historians observe present day issues and ask questions of the impact of the historical past.

EVALUATION: The student will keep field notes of community service and express in written form his/her observations of the contextualization of the historical past concerning the specific issue addressed by his/her community organization.

3. COMPETENCY: The student will become capable of quick and effective assessment

and analysis of scholarly sources.

EVALUATION: The student will submit précis and do an oral presentation demonstrating understanding of secondary scholarly source material, including book reviews, journal articles and monographs.

What I expect of you: This course is designed for sophomore level history majors who have already completed survey history courses. Prerequisites for the course are six hours of 000-299 history; nine to twelve hours preferred. As this class is a seminar, you will be expected to prepare for and participate in the discussions. Your attendance is necessary for the success of the course and there is a strict penalty for late work; plan your semester accordingly. If you are engaged with the material, the professor, and your classmates, you will get more out of the class.

What you may expect of me: I will come to class prepared to make the coursework as clear and as interesting as I can. I will listen willingly to suggestions or comments on the course, when appropriate. I will start class on time and let you out on time. I will endeavor to return your assignments to you with thoughtful, helpful comments on them, and in a timely manner. As well, I will always be available to assist you in any way that I can. Email is the best way to reach me. I will do my best to respond to emails within 24 hours. I am glad to meet with you during office hours or by appointment.

Mission Statements: The mission of Abilene Christian University is to educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world. ACU's College of Arts and Sciences mission is to educate students for worldwide Christian service and leadership through programs of study and other learning experiences that blend a liberal arts education with professional and career education. The mission of the Department of History is to provide a strong academic program designed to prepare students for Christian service through a knowledge of and appreciation for their own heritage and the heritage of peoples throughout the world.

Christian Perspective: This course is taught from a perspective of Christian faith. History students at Abilene Christian University should be able interrogate their own views of history and the role religion has played in it, while exercising cultural sensitivity to other systems of belief. As the professor, I will always try to be transparent about my own faith and how history informs that.

I will be happy to meet with students to discuss issues of faith and ethics, church, plans for jobs, internships, or graduate school, or other topics.

"Come now, let us reason together," says the Lord. Isaiah 1:18

Required texts:

-Martha Howell and Walter Prevenier, *From Reliable Sources: An Introduction to Historical Methods* (Cornell UP)

-William Kelleher Storey, *Writing History: A Guide for Students* (Oxford UP)

The class will also read one historical monograph as a group, and students will write a précis for the book. We will choose the text together during the first week, and students should purchase a copy online or from a bookstore. Options include:

-Steven Shapin, *The Scientific Revolution*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

-Linda Colley, *Captives*. New York: Pantheon, 2002.

-Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*. London: Penguin, 1985.

*Note: I am not requiring that students purchase their own copies of a style manual, such as Chicago or Turabian, for this course, because the Chicago Manual of Style is available in full text on the Brown Library Website. Students ARE expected to consult the manual early and often.

Additional readings and media will be available on OpenClass or through the Brown Library website and online databases, such as J-stor. These may include:

William Cronon, "A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative," *The Journal of American History* 78 (March 1992), 1347-1376.

Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America," *Signs* 1 (Autumn 1975), 1-29.

Mrinalini Sinha, "Britishness, Clubbability and the Colonial Public Sphere," *Journal of British Studies* 40 no. 4 (October 2001), 489-521.

Linda Colley, "Europe, not empire: Britain's foreign policy challenge," *The Guardian* (5 January 2012).

Charles Upchurch, "Who Could Vote in *Downton Abbey*?" *Huffington Post* (29 December 2012).

Paul Gilroy, Speech on the 200th Anniversary of the Abolition of Slavery (YouTube). PBS Newshour: Writing History (January 2002).

American Historical Association report on *The Education of Historians for the Twenty-First Century*.

The syllabus schedule and/or assignments may be altered at any time, according to my discretion, and with due notice to the students.

Attendance/Participation: In-class discussion is a major component of this course; therefore, regular attendance is crucial. Habitual absences will result in loss of participation points. *Any student who misses more than twenty percent of the course (six absences, excused or unexcused) may be dropped with a grade of WF.*

Be advised that students who do not participate in discussion, or who fail to contribute substantively to discussion, will lose participation points (e.g., "I agree with what Jack said," is not a substantive contribution.) Please be aware that the participation section of your grade is based on my observation, throughout the semester, of your attendance, contribution to discussion, and overall engagement in the class. Reading quizzes may be given over assigned texts; these points also go towards the participation grade. Habitual

talking, cell phone disruption, texting, and/or internet surfing will result in loss of participation points.

Grading:

Final grades for the course will be based on the percentage of points earned out of total possible points. Note that in this course, *you must make a grade of 70 to be considered passing.*

Breakdown of grading, for 1000 total points:

Written reading responses and contribution to discussion – 100 points

Précis – 200 points (four précis over journal articles, two over monographs)

Book Reviews Oral Presentation – 50 points

Formal Book Review – 150 points

Service Learning Hours and Field Notes – 100 points

Annotated Bibliography – 150 points

Research paper – 250 points

Grade scale (%):

A = 100-90 B = 89-80 C = 79-70 F = 69 and below

Assignments:

Book Reviews Oral Presentation: Students will choose a scholarly monograph, skim it, and locate and read two book reviews—one scholarly, and one non-scholarly—of the monograph. Students will give a presentation to the class that provides a brief overview of the book, and then an analysis of the two book reviews. What does each reviewer criticize and praise? What differences do you identify between the two reviews? What is present in the scholarly review that we do not see in the non-scholarly review? Presentations should last approximately ten minutes. *Note: You may choose a monograph with which you are already familiar for this assignment!

Formal Book Review: Students will write a formal academic book review over a scholarly monograph of their choice. (It is recommended that you choose a monograph that forwards your research for the paper. Students may not use the same book that they used for the oral presentation.) Book reviews should be 1000 words in length and should include evaluation of the monograph's thesis, historical problems, sources, intended audience, strengths and weaknesses, and historiographical contributions.

Annotated Bibliography: This assignment is intended to assist students in gathering appropriate sources for the research paper. The bibliography should be formatted according to the Chicago Manual of Style and should include a paragraph of annotation for each source. Annotation should explain the source's thesis, context, and possible bias, and indicate the source's usefulness to the larger paper. The Annotated Bibliography must include at least four primary and nine secondary sources. It is

recommended that students consult with the research librarians and make use of the course LibGuide as they compile sources for this assignment.

Précis: Students will write précis of four journal articles (25 points each) and two monographs (50 points each). Each précis should include discussion of the following:

- Author background and reason for writing
- Historical problems/questions
- Thesis
- Sources
- Historiographical context/contributions
- Significant findings
- Historical approach
- Ideological orientation
- Strengths and weaknesses

Three of the journal articles and one monograph will be assigned, so that all of us may discuss the précis in class; for the remaining two précis, students may choose their own article and monograph (again, it is recommended that students choose secondary sources that will forward their research for the paper for this assignment.)

Reading responses: Occasionally, students will be asked to come to class with brief written responses to assigned readings. These responses will prepare students to participate actively in class discussion and debate.

Service Learning and Field Notes (15 hours): Students will complete 15 hours of service learning in the Special Collections of our Brown Library. The Special Collections staff will introduce us to their collections and to your assigned work during the first week of class. We will spend one class period working as a group on service learning, and you will also be given several days of reciprocated time. You are expected to make the necessary arrangements to complete your 15 hours of service. Students will make journal notes after each session in Special Collections, explaining the tasks they worked on and reflecting on the sources they handled, the organization of the archives, and how such work supports the creation of historical narratives. Journals should also include reflection on our visit to the Grace Museum, comparing the Special Collections to the Grace. All service learning must be completed, and field notes turned in, by class time on Thursday 14 November.

Research paper: The research paper is the most important and heavily weighted assignment in this course. Many of our class discussions, and most of the assignments in the course, will be geared towards the topic of how to conduct good research and write it up in a convincing and engaging way to craft an argument or form a narrative. In this research paper, you will employ all of the source gathering and evaluation you have been doing throughout the semester to do just that. Write a ten- to twelve-page research paper on a historical topic of your choice (within either American or European history since

1500), using at least five primary and twelve secondary sources. Format your footnotes and bibliography according to the Chicago Manual of Style.

No extra credit is offered in this course.

Course Policies:

Make-ups: Discussion/quiz grades cannot be made up except under special circumstances and at my discretion. **Late assignments and papers will receive a 10-point deduction per school day for each day they are late.** Assignments turned in on the due date, but after the class period, will be considered one day late. Assignments turned in the day after the due date will be considered two days late, and so on. **No assignments will be accepted more than two weeks after the due date. Assignments turned in more than two weeks late will receive zeroes.**

Students are responsible for getting notes/course information for days that they miss. Absence does not excuse ignorance about what is due or what was said in class.

Schedule of Topics/Assignments:

Week 1: Introduction

Tuesday 27 August – Introduction to course and each other; vote on class monograph

Thursday 29 August – Introduction to Special Collections and Service Learning (meet in Brown Library)

Read: Howell and Prevenier, 1-16

Week 2: Evidence

Tuesday 3 September – Overview of History as a Discipline

Thursday 5 September – Primary, Secondary, Scholarly, and Non-scholarly Sources

Read: Howell and Prevenier, 17-42; begin class monograph

Week 3: Reading and Using Sources Critically

Tuesday 10 September – In-class exercise: journal article précis (Smith-Rosenberg)

Thursday 12 September – How to find a topic: Meet with research librarians

Read: (for Tuesday) Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, “The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America,” *Signs* 1 (Autumn 1975), 1-29; (for Thursday) Storey, 1-30; continue monograph

Due: Smith-Rosenberg article précis (turn in final hard copy on Thursday after Tuesday’s in-class exercise)

Week 4: Reading and Using Sources Critically

Tuesday 17 September – In-class exercise: class monograph précis

Thursday 19 September – Book review oral presentations

Read: finish class monograph for Tuesday’s class

Due: Oral presentations and hard copy of monograph précis due Thursday

Week 5: History as Story or Science?

Tuesday 24 September – Service learning work day: Meet in Special Collections

Thursday 26 September – Narrative in history

Read: (for Thursday) William Cronon, “A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative,” *The Journal of American History* 78 (March 1992), 1347-1376; Storey, 93-98

Week 6: History as Story or Science?

Tuesday 1 October – The Objectivity Question

Thursday 3 October – Service Learning work day (individual work - no class meeting)

Read: Howell and Prevenier, 119-150

Week 7: Doing History

Tuesday 8 October – In-class exercise: journal article précis (Cronon article); evaluating primary sources

Thursday 10 October – Careers in History: Museum Studies – class trip to the Grace

Read: Storey, 31-38

Due: Formal book review due at the beginning of class on Thursday

Week 8: Doing History

Tuesday 15 October – Incorporating Quotations; Make an Argument, Tell a Story

Thursday 17 October – Careers in History: Archives and Academia (conversation with archivists in Special Collections)

Read: Storey, 59-74; “Careers in History” from the AHA

Due: Cronon précis (final hard copy) due Tuesday

Week 9: Doing History

Tuesday 22 October – In-class exercise: journal article précis (Sinha article); discuss bibliographies

Thursday 24 October – Service Learning work day (no class meeting, Dr. Elliott at NAVSA)

Read: Mrinalini Sinha, “Britishness, Clubbability and the Colonial Public Sphere,” *Journal of British Studies* 40 no. 4 (October 2001), 489-521

Due: Annotated Bibliography due at the beginning of class on Tuesday

Week 10: History as a Profession

Tuesday 29 October – “We Historians” from the AHA

Thursday 31 October – Historians in Public Debate and Pop Culture

Read: (for Thursday) Linda Colley, “Europe, not empire: Britain’s foreign policy challenge,” *The Guardian* (5 January 2012); Charles Upchurch, “Who Could Vote in *Downton Abbey*?” *Huffington Post* (29 December 2012)

Due: Sinha précis and Fourth article précis due at the beginning of class on Tuesday

Week 11: Citing Sources

Tuesday 5 November – In-class exercise: citing sources

Thursday 7 November – Plagiarism; discuss PBS segment “Writing History”

Read: Storey, 39-58

Week 12: Paper Conferences

Tuesday 12 November – sign up for a time to meet with Dr. Elliott

Thursday 14 November – sign up for a time to meet with Dr. Elliott

Read: Storey, 107-118

Due: Second monograph précis due to Dr. Elliott’s box by class time on Tuesday;
service learning field notes due to Dr. Elliott’s box by class time on Thursday

Week 13: Editing and Peer Review

Tuesday 19 November – In-class peer review of paper drafts

Thursday 21 November – In-class peer review of paper drafts

Read: Storey, 119-123

Due: Rough draft of research paper due in class on Tuesday

Week 14: Research Papers Due

Tuesday 26 November – Research papers due; in class, reflect on research and writing process

Thursday 28 November – **Thanksgiving holiday, no class**

Due: Final Research Paper due Tuesday 26 November

Week 15: An Introduction to Historiography

Tuesday 3 December – the variety of historical approaches

Thursday 5 December – context’s influence on historical storytelling

Read: Howell and Prevenier, 69-118

FINAL EXAM: 10-11:45am, Friday 13 December (The university requires that classes meet during this time. Because this course is driven by skills rather than content, we will not have a traditional final exam. Instead, we will meet to reflect as a group on the ideas and skills acquired in the class.)