

**Senior Seminar in History**  
HIST 452, Fall 2013  
Wednesdays, 2:00 – 4:30 pm

Professor

Office Hours: By Appointment, or

Office:

Phone: x

Email:

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The senior seminar, which is designated as writing-intensive, asks senior history majors to enter fully into the field of history by making a coherent, well-researched, and well-supported contribution to the field in the form of a substantial (7,500 word minimum) research paper and bibliographical essay that a) advances a lucid argument, b) engages with a body, or several bodies, of historiography, and c) interrogates deeply a wide range of primary sources. This seminar will guide students towards this goal, through individual, group, and class work, by emphasizing the multiple steps required in such a serious undertaking. These steps include the articulation of a clear and effective research question, the gathering of secondary and primary sources, the choices and opportunities involved in different writing styles, and the necessity of multiple drafts, especially a formal rough draft that will be due two thirds of the way through the semester. To encourage professionalization, there will be opportunities to work on revision, to present and discuss work orally, as well as to offer critical analysis of colleagues' work.

**Research Groups:**

After you identify a question within your topic and a body of source material to work with, you will be assigned to a small research group. These groups often will meet during class time in order to allow for more focused discussion of individual projects. Every effort will be made to assign you to a group where the topics overlap at least somewhat. You will be helping each other through the research and writing process and also preparing to present your work at a mock conference that our seminar will hold at the end of the semester.

**Senior Thesis DOs and DON'TS:**

**\*Do** produce an article-length paper: 7500 words minimum not including notes, bibliography, maps, photos etc. (standard, 12 pt font, 1 inch margins). This paper should contain a clear and well-supported argument that makes a meaningful contribution to the field. Remember, you are going to have to defend this contribution to pass the major!!

**\*Do** provide original insight grounded in a body of primary source material in this paper. [Aim for at least 6 substantial sources. **Don't** rule out newspapers and archival documents, interviews, or oral history sources. **Don't** rely too heavily on only one or two sources.]

- \***Do** provide a thorough survey or discussion of your primary source material, including the challenges involved in working with it and how it made your original insight or fresh perspective possible.
  - \***Do** provide evidence that you have engaged with a variety of relevant secondary sources, including journal articles and monographs [but **don't** rely too heavily on general textbooks, encyclopedias or Wikipedia!]
  - \***Do** include a bibliographical essay that surveys this secondary literature [This essay should contain a justification for secondary sources older than 30 years old.]
  - \***Do** use footnotes; **don't** use endnotes. Aim for at least one footnote per paragraph.
  - \***Do** provide a complete bibliography divided into two parts: part one will list all primary sources and part two will list all secondary sources.
  - \***Do** make sure all documentation is in Chicago (Turabian) style—use your manuals!
- \*Students must earn at least a C or above on their senior thesis papers in order to be allowed to take their comprehensive exams. This exam will consist of an oral presentation and defense of the seminar paper in front of a panel of history department faculty.
- \*Students must earn at least a B+ on the senior thesis paper to be **eligible** to apply for the Honors Seminar.

**Required Text:**

William Storey, *Writing History: A Guide for Students*

**Course Requirements:**

Participation (including class discussion, class exercises, project proposal, and presentations)	20%
Working Draft	10%
Bibliographic Essay for Final Paper	10%
Final Paper (with an additional bibliographic essay)	60%

**Class Schedule**

\*Please note that not all classes meet in the same place. Check the schedule carefully to see when we are not meeting in our regular classroom.

**(Week 1) August 28: First Day of Class**

- Introduction

**(Week 2) September 4: Effective or Enjoyable Writing (or both!)**

- Project Ideas due (Project Ideas to be presented orally and in the form of a question)

- Bring paragraph of good historical writing to class and be prepared to talk about why you consider it to be good.
- *Read Storey, 5-11 on developing a project question*

**(Week 3) September 11: Discovering sources**

- Library session. **Meet at library at 2:30.**
- *Read Storey 12-30 on finding sources*

**(Week 4) September 18: Individual Consultations**

- Individual meetings about paper topic and research methods
- Bring three primary sources to individual consultations and be prepared to talk about them in **my office**
- *Read Storey 31-38 on interpreting source materials*

**(Week 5) September 25: Senior Seminar Joint Session**

- All sections meet in **Walsh-Ellet 210**
- Presentation by professors of a primary source from their research
- *Read Storey 59-74 on using sources to make inferences*

**(Week 6) October 2: Project proposal presentations**

- Project proposal (minimum five pages) due + bibliographic essay (minimum five primary and ten secondary sources) due

**(Week 7) October 9: Primary source presentations in class**

- Be prepared to talk in front of the class about the most interesting primary source of your paper, how (a) secondary source(s) have talked about the source, and how you will be using it in your paper.
- *Re-read Storey 59-74 on using sources to make inferences*

**(Week 8) October 16: Research Group Meetings**

- **START WRITING! (if you haven't already)**
- Student groups meet outside class to discuss each other's research progress and report back in an email (by 10/20) to the professor on their progress
- *Read Storey 39-58 on Writing History Faithfully*

**(Week 9) October 23: MANDATORY Research Group Conferences**

- Student groups meet in **my office** to discuss their research projects
- *Read Storey 75-98 on organizing your writing and developing a narrative*

**(Week 10) October 30: Senior Seminar Joint Session**

- All sections meet in **Walsh-Ellet 210**
- Presentation on professor's research

**ALL ROUGH DRAFTS (20 page minimum) DUE by 7PM, Wednesday, October 30<sup>th</sup> (hard copy due in box outside office)**

**(Week 11) November 6: Individual Draft Conferences**

- Students meet with professor to discuss their first drafts  
*Read Storey 99-118 for advice on improving writing*

**(Week 12) November 13: Draft Workshop**

- Peer Evaluations and DISCUSSION OF ROUGH DRAFTS outside of class
- *Read Storey 115-119 on revising and editing*

**(Week 13) November 20: NO CLASS**

- Work on revisions

**(Week 14) November 27: THANKSGIVING**

**(Week 15) December 4: SEMINAR CONFERENCE (ORAL PRESENTATIONS)**

- Students will present 10-15 minute talk on their paper in order to prepare for oral presentations in the spring

**FINAL PAPERS DUE by 5pm on **TUESDAY DECEMBER 10TH** in both hard copy and email (.doc) format**