

History Research Seminar
HSTRY 596 – Winter 2021

Instructor: Josh Reid

Office: Virtual

Office Hours: Online by appointment

Office Phone: 206.616.3661 (not checked regularly this quarter)

Email: jlreid@uw.edu

Overview

Taught across two quarters (winter and spring), this seminar is designed to aid graduate students in producing a primary-source based, argument-driven, history research paper in the area of each student's expertise. The finished product should be article length (10,000-12,000 words, including footnotes) and of publishable quality. While researching, writing, and polishing such a project can be daunting—especially during a pandemic that has closed access to physical archives—this seminar will guide students through the relevant steps and skills, including historical inquiry, the conceptual design of a research project, conducting original research, interpreting historical evidence, writing, and revising. In this course, we will break down the overall process into smaller, more manageable steps, providing specialized, close guidance and feedback, while cultivating a supportive but constructively critical community of readers. This will be done with the guidance of both myself (as the instructor) and with a faculty advisor with relevant subject-area expertise.

Over the two quarters, students will share and reflect on the myriad challenges and opportunities of conducting historical research, interpreting sources, engaging with historiography, and writing. One key strategy will be to establish the necessary routine habits of doing scholarship, including reading in relevant fields, reviewing and interpreting primary sources, and writing and editing, appropriate to each person's individual circumstances. This course also seeks to disrupt the idea that historical research and writing are "individual" endeavors. The seminar will give students experiences with the collaborative nature of academic work. Short assignments as well as rough and final drafts of the papers will be circulated and critiqued in our seminar.

In this course, students will:

- Develop and hone research skills, working with a range of primary sources relevant for historical interpretation and analysis.
- Reflectively develop and practice writing skills and routine habits that will be the foundation for a productive career as a historian, broadly defined.
- Engage in historical writing as a specific genre of writing with discipline-specific conventions, while being expansive enough to broaden the intellectual reach of history writing in meaningful ways.
- Develop and practice skills in compassionate and constructive criticism.
- Develop and practice skills in public presentation of research findings.

Course Readings

During several of our sessions, we will discuss or share relevant secondary literature. On the course schedule (below), I have listed articles that we will engage and discuss. With the exception of the first reading, students will be responsible for using online resources to secure copies of these readings.

There are no assigned books for HSTRY 596. However, students will be expected to acquire the texts necessary for their research projects. Some will also find it helpful to purchase their own physical copy of *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 17th ed. This maps out the discipline-specific style and citation guidelines for writing history. An online version of this is also available through the UW Libraries (link provided on Canvas). Regardless of whatever format a student chooses, each individual should become familiar with this manual.

Additionally, **each student will be required to use bibliographic software**, such as EndNote or Zotero. These are also available through the UW Libraries (link provided on Canvas). However, if you choose EndNote or something else, more robust and complete editions are available for purchase.

Assignments & Evaluation

Each student earns one's own grade. My job as the instructor is to assess the work along clearly articulated guidelines and expectations. I also value and reward improvement. It is therefore critical that you do all the assignments, attend all the class sessions, and participate in the discussions. Unlike most courses, **the final grade for this two-quarter seminar is cumulative and based on student work over both quarters**. I will provide feedback at the end of this quarter as well, even if student transcripts will not formally retain that.

A student's grade will be determined by:

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| • Discussion Participation & Feedback | 15% |
| • Short Writing (proposal, prospectus, outline, drafts, grant proposal) | 10% |
| • Final Paper (grade determined jointly by faculty mentor and me) | 75% |

Paper

The primary purpose of this two-quarter seminar is the production of an argument-driven history paper in the area of each student's specialty. Due at the end of spring quarter, this paper should be 10,000 to 12,000 words in length (including footnotes). It should be of publishable quality and make a unique scholarly contribution. This means that the finished paper should be deeply researched, insightfully analytical, and highly polished, representing your best work. Please note that **all students should choose a project based on research to which they have access over the duration of the seminar**. This is even more important during the pandemic, which has closed most archival institutions and prevents us from conducting in-person oral histories or other site-based research.

Each student needs to arrange for a faculty mentor to guide them through this project. Usually this is the chair or a co-chair of a student's MA and/or PhD committee. This person should be a subject expert in the field of the student's specialty. Please **confirm faculty mentors by Friday, Jan. 8**, by emailing me. Most faculty members are willing and effective mentors, but their time

is very limited. I expect students to be respectful of their mentor's time by keeping up with appointments and with the work plan both have agreed upon, preparing questions ahead of meetings, taking short but precise notes during consultations, meeting deadlines, and making conscientious use of email and Zoom sessions.

Because writing a research paper of this length can be such a daunting task, I have broken this process into several discrete tasks. Please note that for each step, I have identified a due date. This is when the item gets turned in to peer reviewer(s), faculty mentors, and me for feedback. Further instructions about turning work in will follow. Except where noted, all assignments should be in Times, Times New Roman, or Arial font (12 point) and double spaced, thereby allowing room for substantive feedback.

Proposal (due noon Jan. 17, discussed Jan. 19)

This 500- to 700-word document (roughly two to three pages) is designed to get students thinking concretely about their research projects. This short document should include:

- Research question(s)
- Explanation as to why the question is significant: what we often call the big "so what?"
- Preliminary answers to the research question(s)
- Relationship of the question(s) to broader historiography: what unique interventions will the project possibly make?
- Methodological considerations, especially in light of pandemic realities
- Brief description of the planned primary sources to consult, with special attention to pandemic realities

Prospectus (due noon Jan. 31, discussed Feb. 2)

This kind of document is an early step in the process of research-based, argument-driven historical writing. Written for historians outside the area of expertise, the 1,200- to 1,500-word prospectus (roughly five to six pages) should elaborate on the topics covered in the shorter proposal. This document should include:

- A clear statement of the problem or question, along with possible subordinate questions
- Description of the new contribution(s) this project will make
- Explanation of why the topic is relevant ("so what")
- Relationship of the topic to existing historiography (intervention)
- Brief description of sources
- Brief outline of how the work will be done, with special attention to pandemic realities

The prospectus should also include a preliminary bibliography of primary sources (one page) and secondary sources (two pages, and formatted to *Chicago Manual of Style*). Please format the bibliography with single spacing, but use a line break between each item. The bibliography is in addition to the prospectus itself.

Outline (due noon Feb. 14, discussed Feb. 16)

This roughly two- to three-page, double-spaced outline offers the sequence of ideas in the development and support of the larger argument being made in the paper. The outline should break the larger project into sections. The overall argument (single sentence in length) of the

paper should be articulated in the outline, along with the supporting or subordinate arguments of each section.

Drafts (due Feb. 28 [1,200-1,500 words] & Mar. 7 [2,500-3,000 words], discussed Mar. 2 & Mar. 9)

This quarter, each of the drafts is meant to be precisely that—a rough draft. These are important milestones in the writing process. Each of these drafts will be workshopped in class and reviewed by each student’s faculty mentor and me.

Discussion Participation & Feedback (weekly)

As participation is fundamental toward the seminar’s success, students will earn a portion of the overall grade through regular and active participation during the weekly sessions. This includes coming to class having digested the readings and being prepared to contribute questions and comments; having read and offered constructive criticism on peer work; and bringing required material to class, as defined by the instructor or outlined on the syllabus.

All the short writing assignments will be evaluated by peers in this seminar, along with the instructor (and in many instances, the faculty mentor). Each peer evaluator should offer constructive feedback designed to improve the quality of the piece. Offering and receiving constructive feedback are important skills we will practice in this seminar. Students will be expected to be open about their ideas and to respond constructively to the ideas and work of others. While freedom of expression is essential to any meaningful discussion, students should always be respectful and be prepared to defend assertions.

Grant Proposal

Applying for and securing outside funding are critical for doing the research for nearly all projects. Grants are used to finance research trips, to pay for others to do targeted research or for digital copies of archival documents, or to provide honoraria to community members for oral history work. Therefore, an important assignment in 596-97 will be to identify and apply for an outside research grant. Early during the winter quarter, I will set up a collaborative Google doc that we can use to identify and organize potential research grants and fellowships. During the spring quarter, we will dedicate at least one of our workshops to reviewing and editing research grant applications. More information about this component will come later.

Grading Scale

4.0-3.7 (100%-93%)	2.5-2.7 (82%-80%)	1.2-1.4 (69%-67%)
3.5-3.6 (92%-90%)	2.2-2.4 (79%-77%)	0.8-1.1 (66%-63%)
3.2-3.4 (89%-87%)	1.8-2.1 (76%-73%)	0.7 (62%-60%)
2.8-3.1 (86%-83%)	1.5-1.7 (72%-70%)	0.0 (59% and below)

Class Format & Expectations

Due to the continued pandemic restrictions, this is an online course and is likely to be so for both quarters; so, having reliable and regular access to a computer and the Internet will be necessary. This course will be run in a seminar format and will meet online on Tuesdays from 1:30 to 3:20 P.M. (PST). Like many of our courses this academic year, we will be using the Zoom platform. I have set up a recurring meeting through Zoom, which students can access through the course

Canvas site. You can also schedule one-on-one Zoom sessions (office hours) with me. The first time you use Zoom, you will probably need to download and install it—this is fairly intuitive, but if you are having trouble with this, the university has robust tech support that you can rely on. If you have any problems with this, please let me know right away so that we can resolve this.

I prefer if you use Zoom on a laptop, computer, or tablet rather than a smartphone. Sometimes we will need to share screens in order to display something generated during a discussion activity. Because this is a small seminar during which we will engage in discussions and workshop-style activities, it would be best if you have your camera turned on—this is particularly important in cultivating an intellectual community. If this is going to be an issue, please let me know. Even more critically, you do need to be heard by the rest of the class and to hear us during the Zoom discussions, so when you use Zoom, be sure to enable your computer's audio features, including speakers (or headphones) and microphone.

Because participation is fundamental toward the seminar's success, I expect each of you to come to class having digested the readings and having prepared helpful, constructive feedback on each other's work. Be prepared to contribute questions and comments. Everyone should make several significant contributions to each week's discussion and listen critically to one's peers. If you feel uncomfortable participating in class, please discuss the matter with me, and we can work out a strategy to help you improve this situation.

The classroom—even (perhaps even *especially*) an online classroom—is a professional space where we come to work. It does not mean that we need to be impersonal, inflexible, or unfriendly. However, we all are expected to come prepared with reading and written assignments done, to behave diligently, and to engage our peers attentively and with respect. Please arrive on time to every class session. Late arrivals are inconsiderate and distracting to one's classmates and the instructor. No one should miss class except under extraordinary circumstances. If you must miss class, please contact me beforehand, if possible. Please be particularly mindful that this class is taught as a workshop; planned reading and feedback of each draft depends on the full availability of students for the scheduled class sessions and for work to be submitted on time.

Accommodations

Please let me know if you anticipate any barriers to your full participation in this course so that we can discuss possible accommodations. If you have, or think you have, a temporary or permanent disability that impacts your participation in any course, please also contact Disability Resources for Students (DRS) at uwdss@uw.edu. More information and resources can be found at <http://www.uw.edu/students/drs>.

On Academic Integrity

Please note that plagiarism or cheating will result in a zero for that entire assignment. If a student is caught plagiarizing or cheating repeatedly, further consequences will be applied. For more detailed information on and definitions of plagiarism and cheating, see the Student Governance Policy, Chapter 209, Section 7.C.

Emergencies

In the event of illness, a death in your family, or other catastrophic, personal crisis—especially in the midst of this pandemic—I will be sympathetic and flexible, provided that you alert me as soon as possible and preferably in advance of an assignment's due date. Belated excuses will not account for poorly done or late work. Considering our current situation, I will be even more flexible than usual; however, I ask that you always strive to keep open the lines of communication so that I can best support you.

Communication

Emailing me or meeting with me online through Zoom are the best ways to communicate. Feel free to contact either me via email (jlreid@uw.edu) to set up a Zoom session.

Every Sunday, I send out a class announcement via Canvas. This reminds everyone what they should be working on for the next week, including readings, discussions, material to bring to class, and assignments. Additionally, I will notify you if there are any changes to the schedule.

Please be sure to set up your Canvas preferences so that you receive course announcements through your email.

Seminar Schedule

Below is the schedule for the quarter. I expect you to complete all readings and reviews of peer assignments and drafts before class begins.

Week 1

- Jan. 5 Session
 - Introductions: “I am a historian of...”
 - Andrews, Thomas and Flannery Burke. “What Does It Mean to Think Historically?” *Perspectives* 45, no. 1 (January 2007). [Note: available through Canvas.]
- Jan. 8: please let me know via email who your faculty advisor will be for this project – CC me (jlreid@uw.edu) on your initial outreach email to your advisor, so that I can follow up as needed

Week 2

- Jan. 12 Session
 - Lee, Robert. “Accounting for Conquest: The Price of the LA Purchase.” *Journal of American History* 103, no. 4 (March 2017): 921-942.
 - Arch, Jakobina. “Whale Meat in Postwar Japan: Natural Resources and Food Culture.” *Environmental History* 21, no. 3 (July 2016): 467-487.
- Begin assembling or updating the list of primary and secondary sources for your research project
- Draft **project proposal: due noon Jan. 17**

Week 3

- Jan. 19 Session
 - Workshop project proposals.
- Continue assembling or updating the list of primary and secondary sources for your research project
- Work on secondary reading and conduct research
- Building on the proposal feedback, begin drafting prospectus

Week 4

- Jan. 26 Session
 - Ransel, David L. "The Ability to Recognize a Good Source." *Perspectives* 48, no. 7 (October 2010).
 - Walkowitz, Judith. "On Taking Notes." *Perspectives* 47, no. 1 (January 2009).
 - Introduce class to both a promising primary source (or collection) and a critical piece of secondary literature (book) relevant for your project.
- Continue secondary reading and conduct research
- Finish **prospectus and preliminary bibliography: due noon Jan. 31**

Week 5

- Feb. 2 Session
 - Workshop prospectuses and preliminary bibliographies.
- Continue secondary reading and conduct research

Week 6

- No class session this week
- Schedule a one-on-one session with instructor this week (required)
- Draft **outline: due noon Feb. 14**

Week 7

- Feb. 16 Session
 - Workshop outlines.
- Continue secondary reading and conduct research
- Begin writing draft of paper

Week 8

- Feb. 23 Session
 - Hunt, Lynn. "How Writing Leads to Thinking." *Perspectives* 48, no. 2 (February 2010).
 - Harkness, Deborah E. "Finding the Story." *Perspectives* 47, no. 1 (January 2009).
 - Chakrabarty, Dipesh. "Crafting Histories: For Whom Does One Write?" *Perspectives* 48, no. 3 (March 2010).
 - Report: what is working well? Any challenges?
- Continue secondary reading and conduct research
- Continue writing **draft of paper: 1,200-1,500 words due noon Feb. 28**

Week 9

- Mar. 2 Session
 - Workshop short drafts.
- Continue secondary reading and conduct research
- Drawing from workshop feedback, continue writing **draft of paper: 2,500-3,000 words due noon Mar. 7**

Week 10

- Mar. 9 Session
 - Workshop longer drafts.

I RESERVE THE RIGHT TO AMEND THESE POLICIES AND THE SCHEDULE AT MY DISCRETION AND WILL GIVE ADEQUATE NOTICE OF ANY CHANGES.