

**PRELIMINARY SYLLABUS  
HISTORICAL METHODS  
HISTORY 2004**

Fall 2009  
Hours: TTH 3:30-4:45  
MJWMS 434

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Major Bill 404  
TTH 2-3, after class, and by appointment, x15670

Welcome apprentice historians! Your professor is a practiced professional with more than thirty years of research experience in foreign and domestic libraries and archives. She designs this course to assist novice scholars apply the sources, methods, and skills of the professional historian. These include the ability read, write, speak, and think in the grand tradition of critical, rational Western thought. Each student will have the opportunity to develop and write a research paper based on original research and original thought. Each student will be expected to become familiar with the craft of the historian while enhancing written communication, oral communication, and analytical skills.

The course will be conducted as a pro-seminar in which students will converse with one another and the professor. Each student will prepare and submit: (1) three reflective critiques of articles and documentary films; (2) a preliminary thesis statement, a preliminary outline, and a preliminary bibliography; (3) a final thesis statement, a final outline, and a final bibliography; (4) two 500-1000 word critiques or reviews, one on each of two groups of presentations; (5) a 15-18 page original research paper based on primary and secondary sources, complete with formal footnotes or endnotes. Each student will present in class a 15 minute preliminary and a final dialogue on the research paper; and each student will participate in lively discussions about the three films and about the several topics.

Your final grade depends greatly on patient persistence throughout the semester. You are encouraged to use a word processor. Notes will be of value in preparing the critiques, reviews, and essays. Second and third drafts usually get better results than first drafts; this is most assuredly true of a research paper. The professor admires hard work, organization, clarity of expression, reflective thought, and a sense of humor.

**You can find substantial advice on how to read, write, critique, and prepare an oral presentation on the web at: <http://www.history.vt.edu/UDGSuggestions.htm>**

**GRADING**

Written work and bibliographies will be graded on content, organization, style, grammar, clarity of thought and expression, and an appreciation for the dynamic of time. A = 93 and above, A = 90 92, B+=89 88, B=83 87; B =80 82 , C+=79 78, C=77 73, C =72 70, D+=69 68, D=67 63, D =62 60, F=59 or lower.

**The Honor Code will be strictly enforced in this course in so far as it does not interfere with collaborative development and mutual learning. All assignments submitted shall be considered graded work, unless otherwise noted. All aspects of your coursework are covered by the Honor System. Any suspected violations of the Honor Code will be promptly reported to the Honor System.**

**REQUIRED TEXT**

Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed.

## REQUIREMENTS

(15% [3 @ 5% each]): Three 500-750 word (2-3 pages) critiques. Due: **Aug 27, Sept 1, and Sept 1** respectively.

(21% [7 @ 3% each]): Required lively discussions: SEP 3, SEP 8, SEP 22, NOV 3, NOV 6, NOV 20 12, and DEC 8.

(9%): A preliminary thesis statement, preliminary outline, and preliminary bibliography of primary and secondary sources. **DUE SEP 22.**

(5%): A final thesis statement, final outline, and final bibliography of primary and secondary sources. **DUE on or before NOV 10.**

(10% [2 @ 5% each]) Two 500 1000 word critiques or reviews, one on each of the other two groups of presentations. These critiques will be due on the day of class discussion of the topic.

(20%) A 15-18 page research paper, complete with a formal bibliography and formal footnotes or endnotes, as illustrated by Kate Turabian, on any aspect of the history of the Vietnam War, Civil Rights, or Latin America **DUE IN CLASS WHEN CLASS BEGINS, DEC 8.**

(10%) A 15 minute preliminary presentation.

(10%) A 15 minute final presentation.

## **ON RESEARCH and PRELIMINARY AND FINAL PRESENTATIONS**

Your job is to write a research paper. While doing that job, remember that history is not the past but the study and analysis of the past: historians ask questions; search for evidence that will help them answer questions; develop theses; and report, interpret, and analyze on the basis of the historical evidence and their own considered opinions. Historians use a wide variety of sources.

The most practical suggestions that I can offer you as you develop your presentations are:

**1. Ask a good question.**

2 Create an outline in which you identify your topic, its chronological parameters, and periodization. (Hint: If there were a book on your topic that responded to your question, what would be covered in five or six chapters?)

3. Develop a thesis statement the simple one sentence response to your question.

4 Identify your primary and secondary sources. (Books, articles, newspapers, professional journals, magazines, documentary or commercial films, newsreels, letters, reports, public documents, fiction or nonfiction literature, music, photographs, etc.)

5. Identify the origin/author and dates of the sources you have reviewed.

6. In your dialogues you might consider answering the following questions:

a) What is the subject matter of principle sources?

b) What can we learn about the subject from these sources?

c) If a professor who knew nothing about your topic were to ask you why these sources are important, what would you say to convince him/her to consult them?

d) What from your perspective as an apprentice historian are the main strengths and weaknesses of the sources you reviewed?

e) Might these sources be useful for one of the other topics being researched in this class?

7. Remember, because you have done the research for your paper, you know more about your subject than do your fellow students. Therefore, if everyone approaches the presentations in a similar fashion, all will gain a much clearer and deeper understanding of these topics and the available sources.

**Students are encouraged to seek the aid and advice of reference librarians, their professor, and others with knowledge of their research question.**

**Finally, students in this course have blanket permission to consult a tutor in the Writing Center; all students are encouraged to seek the advice of a tutor.**

## THE PRELIMINARY CALENDAR

AUG 25: Introduction and Documentary: **Americas in Transition, video 5969**

**Reading:** Max Holland, "Private Sources of U.S. Foreign Policy: William Pawley and the 1954 Coup d'Etat en Guatemala," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 7, no. 4 (Fall 2005) : 36-73. Project Muse.

AUG 27: Documentary: **Vietnam: A Television History. America Takes Charge, video 1794, pt 3**

### **First critique due**

**Reading:** David Milne, "'Our equivalent of guerrilla warfare': Walt Rostow and the Bombing of North Vietnam, 1961-1968," *The Journal of Military History* 71 (January 2007): 169-203. Project Muse.

SEP 1: Documentary: **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: An Amazing Grace, video 2703**

### **Second critique due**

**Reading:** Annelieke Dirks, "Colored People and the Emergence of Armed Self-Defense in Clarksdale and Natchez, Mississippi, 1960-1965," *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 1, no. 1 (2006): 71-98.

SEP 3: **DISCUSSION** of documentaries and research questions

### **Third critique due**

SEP 8: **DISCUSSION: The Basics:** How to write a research paper and format bibliographies and footnotes and how to make an oral presentation. **Bring to class Turabian, A Manual for Writer's**

**SEP 10: Newman Library: Finding resources, meet at main entrance, across the street near the Torgersen bridge**

**SEP 15: Newman Library: Accessing electronic databases, meet in Torgersen 3310**

**SEP 17: Newman Library: Online resources, meet in Torgersen 3310**

SEP 22: **DISCUSSION. Preliminary thesis statement, outlines and bibliographies DUE**

SEP 24: Preliminary Presentations - Civil Rights

SEP 29: Preliminary Presentations - Civil Rights

OCT 1: Preliminary Presentations - Vietnam

OCT 6: Research day, no class

OCT 8: Research day, no class

OCT 13: Preliminary Presentations - Vietnam

Oct 15: Preliminary Presentations - Latin America

OCT 20: Preliminary Presentations - Latin America

OCT 22: Preliminary Presentations: Latin America

Oct 27: Final Presentations: Civil Rights

Oct 29: Final Presentations - Civil Rights

Nov 3: **Civil Rights, Review Essay Due & Discussion**

Nov 5: Final Presentations - Vietnam

NOV 10: Final Presentations - Vietnam

**Final thesis statement, outlines and bibliographies due**

NOV 12: **Vietnam, Review Essay Due & Discussion**

NOV 17: Final Presentations - Latin America

NOV 19: Final Presentations - Latin America

NOV 24-26 THANKSGIVING BREAK

Dec 1: Final Presentations - Latin America

DEC 3: **Latin America, Review Essay Due & Discussion**

DEC 8: **Final Discussion, final paper due**