

RESEARCH METHODS

History is always written wrong, and so always needs to be rewritten.

--George Santayana

History is not a science; it is a method.

--Charles Seignobos

History is neither watchmaking nor cabinet construction. It is an endeavor toward better understanding.

--Marc Bloch

Nothing is easier to teach than historical method, but, when learned, it has little use.

--Henry Adams

Revisionism is a healthy historiographical process, and no one, not even revisionists, should be exempt...

--John Lewis Gaddis

History is, indeed, an argument without end.

Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.

History 5984: Research Methods (CRN 16438) Spring 2007, Major Williams 427, Tuesday 2-5 pm

Instructor: Associate Professor Tom Ewing

Office hours: Tuesday, 10:00-12:00, Wednesday, 1:15-2:15 pm, and by appointment

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Research methods is designed to teach the skills necessary for successful research at the M.A. level in History. Through engaged discussions, critical readings, and informed analysis around common themes and individualized topics, the class will identify, develop, and reinforce the methods of historical research. A selection of theoretically informed readings will provide the common discourse for historiographical analysis. During the semester, each student will work on the necessary parts of a thesis proposal, including analysis of a variety of primary sources, review of relevant secondary literature, exploration of an appropriate theoretical framework, and development of analytical questions.

Objectives:

- To identify, recognize, and develop skills of historical research
- To build a theoretical vocabulary relevant for historiographical discussions
- To work collaboratively with classmates to strengthen analytical capacities
- To develop an individual topic of original research suitable for an M.A. thesis
- To complete the component parts of a thesis proposal

Course requirements:

Class participation, leading seminars, weekly writings, and in class exercises	30%
Analytical papers 3 @ 4-6 pages, due February 2, February 23, and March 23	30%
Final paper, including outline, draft, and presentation, 15 pages, due May 3	40%

Papers may be submitted electronically to the instructor's email. Please send your paper as a pdf file. Weekly writing assignments are due by 9 am on the day of class. Please submit them using the course list-serve available through Blackboard. All assigned readings will be available through the course documents section of Blackboard. In addition to the readings listed on the syllabus, significant readings will be provided for the class by each student throughout the semester. Each student will lead discussion of one concept reading and a particular type of primary source. In the spirit of creative and critical engagement, readings and assignments are subject to change during the semester.

Date	Topics	Readings
January 16	Introduction to Research Methods Primary source: Spaces and Places	
January 23	Concepts: Power Primary source: Cartoons	Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," <i>Critical Inquiry</i> (1982)
January 30	Concepts: Agency Primary source: Diaries Paper due Friday, February 2	William Reddy, "Logic of Action," <i>History and Theory</i> (2001)
February 6	Concepts: Gender Primary source: Letters	Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category," <i>American Historical Review</i> (1986), and "Fantasy Echo," <i>Critical Inquiry</i> (2001)
February 13	Concepts: Structure Primary source: Newspaper articles	William Sewell, "A Theory of Structure," <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> (1992)
February 20	Concepts: Resistance Primary source: Government documents Paper due Friday, February 23	James Scott, "Resistance without Protest and without Organization," <i>Comparative Studies in Society and History</i> (1987)
February 27	Concepts: Identity Primary source: Speeches	Judith Butler, "Performative Acts & Gender Constitution," <i>Theatre Journal</i> (1988)
March 3	Spring Break: No Class	
March 13	Concepts: Culture Primary source: Photographs	Clifford Geertz, "Ritual and Social Change," <i>American Anthropologist</i> (1957)
March 20	Concepts: Discourse Primary source: Advertisements Paper due Friday, March 23	Jay Smith, "Between Discourse and Experience," <i>History and Theory</i> (2001)
March 27	No Class	
April 3	Presentations	Primary Sources and Secondary Studies relevant to presentation topics
April 10	Presentations	Primary Sources and Secondary Studies relevant to presentation topics
April 17	Presentations	Primary Sources and Secondary Studies relevant to presentation topics
April 24	Panel: The Uses of an M.A. in History	American Historical Assoc., <i>Retrieving the Master's Degree from the Dustbin of History</i>
May 1	History's Future Final paper due May 3	Eric Foner, "American Freedom in a Global Age," <i>American Historical Review</i> (2001)