

HISTORICAL METHODS

HISTORY 2004, CRN 93358 (11:00AM- 12:30 PM T, R) Fall Semester 2009

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Office Hours: 12:30-1:45 PM, Tuesdays, and by appointment. (I am often available many other times of the week. Simply email me near the time when you'd like to meet.)

Course website: Readings and other materials available on Scholar.

Classroom: Pamplin 2001

This course will help prepare students to become better analytical thinkers, writers, and communicators. It focuses on developing skills necessary for historical scholarship, but these skills will be equally useful in other fields of work. In particular, people should be able to use the lessons learned in this course in any activity that requires analysis, judgment, and communication, such as in the business world and in the practice of law.

Unlike other history courses, this class resembles a laboratory course in the sciences. Students will participate actively in discussions (rather than just listen to lectures), and they will make two presentations to the entire class. Written work will be extensive, with many formal assignments to be handed in—the first one due on the second day of class. The course will culminate with a research paper (about 8 pages long) that will demonstrate what students have learned in the class.

While learning the tools and techniques of the historical trade, we will focus on two specific fields: the history of atomic power and the history of space exploration. You do not need any special training in either of these fields. During the first part of the course, you will pursue preliminary research in both topics. You will then choose one topic and write a research paper. As you will realize, writing in these specialized areas requires the same broad historical skills you will use when studying other topics. Moreover, you may be pleasantly surprised about how interesting these fields can be when approached from a humanistic perspective. For example, a good explanation of the development of both atomic power and space exploration requires an understanding of government policy, organizational bureaucracies, party politics, individuals' behavior, diplomacy, and military strategies—themes common in the study of more traditional history topics.

I have structured the assignments to help you learn how to put together a good research paper. You will start by becoming familiar with resources in the two fields and by choosing a topic for a research paper. Next, you will propose a preliminary thesis for your paper, present that idea to the class, and refine it until you have a final idea for your paper.

In general, this course will help you develop several skills necessary for successful work in history and many other fields. They include:

- developing skills of critical reading;
- knowing how to frame (and analyze) historical topics, questions, arguments, and interpretations;
- locating print, microfilm, and online sources (and understanding the difference between primary and secondary sources);
- finding and retrieving library resources—in the library and online; and
- using and correctly citing quotations and sources.

Tips for Passing this Course

1. Read carefully and understand this syllabus and all assignments in it.
2. Attend all the classes and take note of my instructions and advice.
3. Pay attention to rules of grammar, proofreading, and good writing.
4. Take advantage of the offer to have the GTA read drafts of your papers.
5. Read and understand all the comments made on your assignments when they are returned to you. Don't make the same mistakes again.
6. Take all the quizzes, and turn in all assignments on time.
7. Take responsibility for all your actions.

If, by the end of the course, you cannot accomplish these skills, as demonstrated in your assignments (especially your final paper), you will not receive a grade of “C” or better. Please remember that history majors must receive a grade of a "C" or better (not a C-minus) in this course to graduate with a history degree.

NOTE: This is a highly structured and demanding course. If you do not commit yourself to doing everything required in this class, you will not succeed. Do not fool yourself into thinking that late and mediocre work will enable you to pass the course. I will not assign a passing grade simply because you need a certain grade to graduate or to remain a history major.

TEXTS

- William K. Storey, *Writing History, A Guide for Students*, 2nd or 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004 and 2008), paperback. This book (referred to as *WH* in the schedule, below) will help you develop an appreciation for the craft of historical research. Be sure to read (and understand) this short treatise. Required text.
- Jules R. Benjamin, *A Student’s Guide to History*, 10th ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s Press, 2007). This book (referred to as *ASGH* below) offers specific advice about how to perform research and how to write college history papers. Required text.
- Diana Hacker, *A Pocket Style Manual*, 4th or 5th edition (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2004 and 2008), paperback. More of a reference than a primer, this book (referred to as *APSM* below) nevertheless provides a huge amount of information about good writing in a succinct form. It also contains information on evaluating research sites on the Web. Even if you are already a good writer, you should review sections 1 through 24, which deal with clarity, grammar, punctuation, and mechanics. Required text.
- Articles and chapter extracts from books are available on Scholar. Required readings.

GRADING FORMULA

	Assignment	Grade value
1	Personal history paper	0% (unless not submitted)
2 & 3	Primary resource papers (9% + 11%)	20%
4	Active voice and citation exercise	2.5%
5	Internet resource assignment	2.5%
6	Book review	10%
7	Preliminary thesis statement and outline	4%
8	Preliminary presentation to class	3%
9	Final thesis statement and outline	5%
10	Final presentation to class	3%
11	Final research paper	35%
	Participation (based partly on attendance)	5%
	Quizzes (1% each)	10%
	Total:	100%

SPECIFIC ASSIGNMENTS

Grading

To encourage compliance with the terms of each assignment, I will grade as follows: I will read each assignment and give it a tentative numerical grade based on its content, interpretation, writing style, etc. Then I will deduct points if certain specific guidelines have not been followed. The deductions are listed as part of each assignment and in the “General Instructions” section below.

Common Typographical Marks

- Start a new paragraph ¶
- Make lower case / Personnel Officer
- Make upper case civil war
- Delete Acknowledge
- Move ↻
- Full stop. Ex. : This is the end of the sentence ⋮
- Incorrect spelling: sp
- Wrong word: ww
- Awkwardly written sentence/phrase: awk

1. A Personal History of your Experiences in History. Write an integrated essay that answers these questions:

- Tell me of your interest in history? I.e., which fields do you enjoy most (American, colonial, European, social, science, etc.)?
- Which history courses have you taken? (Don't give me course numbers. Tell me the course titles and why you liked or disliked them.)
- What themes of the courses interested you the most?
- What are your personal goals, and how do you think your history education will help you reach those goals?

This first paper will give me an idea of your writing skills and your interests in history while giving you a sense of my expectations. It will be graded as if it were a regular assignment, but the grade will not count toward your final grade unless it is handed in late or not at all. In that case, it will count as a zero for 3% of your course grade. Due on the second day of class, **Aug. 27**, the paper should contain only 200 words. Read the “Grading” and “General Instructions” sections below so you understand how papers should be written.

2 and 3. Primary Source Document Interpretations

You will read a few primary source materials and answer questions based on your reading and a small amount of outside research. These exercises will give you experience identifying and interpreting primary sources. They should also help you gain critical skills. In other words, you should not necessarily believe everything you read, even if the sources are reputable and convincing.

2. Read “The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb” by Henry Stimson and “Why the United States Dropped the Bomb” by Gar Alperovitz (both available on Scholar). Write an integrated essay that describes the arguments made by Stimson and the counterarguments made by Alperovitz. In the process of writing the essay, answer **all** the following questions. Include an introductory paragraph that gives the reader a sense of the documents and the major points of your essay. (By the way, the Alperovitz piece summarizes research presented by the author in other forms, such as a book and research articles. Assume that all his claims have legitimate references and are well documented. You may disagree with his arguments, but know that they draw on real source materials. Additionally, you may also gain insight into Alperovitz’s article by reading his piece, “Hiroshima: Historians Reassess,” also available on Scholar.)

- What was Stimson’s job during World War II? What role did he play in the decision to use the atomic bomb?
- When did Stimson publish this article? What were the circumstances of his publication? To answer this question, find other information to describe the nature of the debate soon after the end of World War II over the use of the atomic bomb. Use footnotes or endnotes (employing the “Chicago” style) to credit your sources.
- According to Stimson’s article, what were the primary reasons for using the atomic bombs against Japan?
- According to Alperovitz’s interpretation, what were the primary reasons for using the atomic bombs?
- Given your knowledge of history and your research performed in writing this paper, whose arguments (Alperovitz’s or Stimson’s) arguments appear most convincing? Can you provide other interpretations that are equally credible?
- Paper length: 400 words. Due date: **Sept. 3**.

Resources

You will be using the library frequently in this course. If you are unfamiliar with the library, take one of several tours offered by librarians early in the semester. While in the library, get acquainted with reference librarians, who are invaluable (and generally cheerful) resources. Mr. Bruce Pencek, the College Librarian for Social Sciences, provides wonderful assistance. He can be reached at 231-2140 for appointments. (bpencek@vt.edu) Also feel free to take advantage of the resources offered by the Writing Center, housed in the English Department (340 Shanks). Writing Center personnel will read drafts of your papers and help you organize them better. You can call the Center for appointments at 231-5436. More information can be found on the Writing Center's website, http://www.composition.english.vt.edu/wc/WC_Home.html. Don't forget that you can also make an appointment with this course's GTA to help you prepare your papers. Finally, take a look at my “Writing Tips” at <http://www.history.vt.edu/Hirsh/writtips.html>. It provides some ideas for how to write better papers. Since I will be grading your papers, you will definitely find these tips useful! In fact, I suggest you print out the Web page and refer to it whenever you write a paper for this class.

3. Read the speech given by John F. Kennedy on "Urgent National Needs" (*Congressional Record—House*, 25 May 1961, p. 8276), which can be obtained on Scholar. I want you to focus on section IX, "Space," but you need to read the entire speech to get a sense of Kennedy's goals. (The website contains an 8-minute sound excerpt of the "space" section of the speech. Read it, and listen at the same time if you like.) Write an integrated essay that answers all the following questions. Include an introductory paragraph that gives the reader a sense of the document and the major points of your essay.

- Explain briefly the historical framework for the speech. What was the "Cold War" all about? Who were the "adversaries of freedom" that the United States fought against?
- Why did Kennedy make such a big deal about American accomplishments in space? What space event occurred on 12 April 1961 that probably spurred Kennedy into action on space? Who was "astronaut Shepard," and what feat had he accomplished? (And when did he accomplish the feat?)
- What goal did Kennedy propose for the new space program? Did the United States accomplish this goal? When?
- What other geopolitical/military event occurred (on 17 April 1961) that may have motivated Kennedy's speech and his desire to do something spectacular in space? (The answer is NOT given in the speech. Try to determine the answer based on the date clue and a modest amount of research.)
- Why do you think Kennedy portrayed the proposed space program as he did, without referring to other geopolitical concerns?
- Paper length: 400 words. Due date: **Sept. 17.**

4. **Active voice and citation exercise.** This assignment will help you become more familiar with good historical writing using active voice (rather than passive voice) and avoiding the verb "to be." It will also introduce you to proper footnote and bibliography styles.

- Read Wheeler, "Passive Voice: Why it is Evil," and reread the "To Be" article by Good. For more reasons NOT to use passive voice, read Grammar Girl's discussion at <http://grammar.quickanddirtytips.com/active-voice-versus-passive-voice.aspx>.
- Download (from Scholar, Resources, Assignment 4 downloads) the "Passive-to-Active Voice and Citation" exercise sheets (in .doc format) and follow the directions listed on them. (I have provided the file as a PDF document in case you can't read the .doc file.)
- Due date: **Oct. 1.**

5. **Resources from the Internet.** Good historical research often depends on the creative use of resources. Happily, many of these resources can now be found on the Internet. In this assignment, you will locate some relevant primary resources (most likely newspaper articles) that relate to your research project. The assignment will help you become familiar with some online databases and (if nothing else) help you find good primary resources for your final paper.

- List the topic of your research (i.e., "Topic: The Political Response to *Sputnik*").
- Use the ProQuest Historical Newspapers database and find at least two articles that relate to your research topic. These articles can be either "straight" news stories or editorials/op-ed pieces from the period you are studying.
 - List the articles using proper "Chicago" bibliographic style.
 - Write a two-sentence annotation for each article explaining the content of the article and its value for your research paper.
- Use any other proprietary academic database (through the Tech library website) to find at least two secondary sources that provide insight to your research topic.
 - List the articles using proper "Chicago" bibliographic style.
 - Write a two-sentence annotation for each article explaining the content of the article and its value for your research paper.
- Due date: **Oct. 13.** No word count requirement.

6. Book Review Assignment. Using whatever resources you choose, locate and read one book in either of the two research fields. Choose a book that will give you a quick understanding of some broad aspect of the history of space exploration or the history of atomic power. You will then write a review of this book. This assignment should give you an idea that you can pursue in your term paper.

Choose a book that concerns the history of atomic power or space exploration. Though not absolutely required, the book can be one that you will use for your research paper.

The review should contain the following components:

- 1) The title, author, and bibliographic information listed at the beginning of the review. (Do NOT include this information as part of your word count.)
- 2) A brief statement of the book's contents. This statement can be integrated into the entire review and not simply stated in the review's initial paragraph.
- 3) An analysis of the book's "message," thesis or interpretation. Use comparisons with other books or articles. This comparison may require extra research in journals and other sources.
- 4) An evaluation of whether the author succeeds in doing what he or she proposes to do. (A good author will state the book's purposes in the preface or introduction.)
- 5) A thoughtful criticism of the book in two or three sentences (minimum). Though reviewers in the "real world" do not always need to point out a book's deficiencies, I want you to consider (and write about) some features of the book that you did not like. Did the author write with a dull style (using too much passive voice, for example)? Did he or she neglect to consult some important sources or misuse a valid historical methodology? (You may become sensitive to these deficiencies by reading other similar books or articles. See item 7 below.)
- 6) A well-reasoned recommendation (either positive or negative) for your audience or a special subgroup of it.
- 7) A list of at least 3 other books or historical articles that relate to the same subject. These sources may be those that you used to make an informed assessment of the reviewed book. (Do NOT include this information as part of your word count.)
- 8) A catchy title for the paper. Look at book reviews in the popular press for ideas of how to title your review.

Paper length: 400 words. Due date: **Oct. 22.**

(I adapted this assignment from one given by Prof. Raymond H. Merritt, Univ. of Wisconsin, Milwaukee.)

7 to 11. Thesis Statements/Outlines, Presentations, and the Final Research Paper

I want you to master techniques for writing a historical research paper—your final assignment. However, you should not wait until the end of the course to begin work on it. To provide incentives for you to work on the paper, you will be required to prepare preliminary and final outlines and present your ideas to the class.

As we will discuss in class, the historian tries to interpret past events in a way that makes sense to other people. He or she uses many forms of evidence and may employ explanatory techniques from several disciplines (psychology, economics, etc.). In short, historians ask questions that have broad significance to others; they seek evidence to help them answer questions; they develop theses to help them understand events; and they present evidence and interpretations within an analytical framework that has relevance to others.

Purpose of a Book Review

A book review is a standard way for an academic to analyze and criticize the work of other scholars. It is not, however, a "book report," which simply re-tells the story contained in the book. The review should summarize the book's contents, but more importantly, it should review the book's thesis and interpretations.

The purpose of a review is:

- to analyze the validity of the work's main concepts;
- to criticize (positively or negatively) the book's main thesis. For the scholarly community, the review serves as a major tool by which research is assessed.

The student must not be afraid to evaluate a respected author even though he or she appreciates the effort that has gone into a major work. One can evaluate a book by many methods, of which comparison is the most common. In other words, the reviewer can compare one work to another which has a related thesis, interpretation, or subject matter. Praise or criticism should be backed up with relevant support from these other works.

You will benefit by reading other book reviews in periodicals and on the Web. A simple Web search for "How to write a book review" will also provide useful advice.

7. Preliminary thesis statement and outline

For the first assignment relating to the research paper, you will provide information on the following:

- A preliminary thesis statement (or hypothesis) of your topic. The statement should be phrased in the form of a question, and it will describe your paper's major research thrust. (No question: 5 point deduction.)
- Detail the chronological parameters (i.e., the dates) of your research topic, and explain how you chose the periodization. (Lack of periodization will result in a 3 point deduction.)
- Write a full (though admittedly tentative) introduction in one or two paragraphs. The introduction should provide some background to your subject area and explain the historical significance of your research. Why would anyone be interested in learning the answer to your question? (An inadequately detailed introduction will cost you 3 points.) Likewise, include a similarly tentative conclusion (one or two paragraphs long).
- Provide an outline of the proposed paper. To be sure, this early outline will be tentative, but it should force you to develop a systematic approach toward answering your thesis question. The outline should contain at least five Roman numeral headings, including an introduction and conclusion. Make sure you include sub-headings that provide more detail about each heading. (Note: Good practice consists of including at least two items under each heading.)
- Provide an annotated bibliography (using "Chicago" style) that lists your primary and secondary sources. (Separate your listings as primary and secondary. Failure to do so will result in a 5 point deduction.) Explain in one or more sentences what each source will offer to your study by explaining the strengths and weaknesses of each piece of evidence.
- See Chapter 1 of *WH* for more information on forming a hypothesis and writing an annotated bibliography. Chapter 5 will help you build an outline.
- Due date: **Nov. 3**. (Bonus: Students volunteering to do preliminary presentations before this due date will benefit from comments made by the professor and class members. See Ass. 8.)

8. Preliminary Presentation

In the class presentation:

Free PowerPoint Course

Most people will use PowerPoint for their presentations. If you are not familiar with the software, you can take a free online course produced by Element K. Go to <https://gateway.edtech.vt.edu/login.jsp>.

- Explain your thesis statement and amplify upon why the thesis is significant.
- Describe your research to date by telling your "story." Also describe how you plan to pursue the research (what kind of resources you are using, etc.). The rest of the class will comment upon your presentation.
- Make copies of your preliminary thesis statement (assignment 7) and list of sources for distribution to other students. (Deduction for failure to make copies: 5 points.)
- Make your presentation as stimulating and interesting as possible. Incorporate pictures, audio, and video into your presentation if appropriate.

The presentations should last about 15 minutes. (Deductions for length of presentation: 12 to 18 minutes-0 points; 10 to 11.9 minutes-5 points; 7 to 9.9 minutes-12 points; etc.) Presentation dates will be assigned randomly if students do not ask for specific dates. The order of preliminary presentations will determine the order of final presentations.

9. Final thesis statement and outline

For the final thesis statement, you will prepare another document similar to the preliminary thesis statement and outline (Ass. 7). However, you will add information on how your research program has changed since your initial presentation. You will also include a draft conclusion.

- Use the same guidelines as above, in assignment 7, and add the following:
- Describe new pieces of information that have altered your view of the subject. How has your thesis statement changed?
- Explain your conclusions and how your research led to development of new questions and possibilities for further work.

- Aside from the introduction and conclusion, revised in light of new research, you must also include two or more paragraphs of ANY section of your research paper. I want you to start writing.
- Attach a graded copy of the preliminary thesis statement. I will be eager to see differences between the two statements. (Deduction of 20 points for failure to include the graded copy. Please note that the preliminary thesis statement is NOT the same as the preliminary presentation outline. I want to see the graded preliminary thesis statement, which some of you wrote after doing your presentation.)
- Follow all the rules (except for the word count requirement) as discussed in class and listed below in “General Instructions.” Due date: **Nov. 19.**

10. Final presentation

The final presentation will take the same format as the preliminary presentation, but it should include information from your final thesis statement. The same guidelines apply for this presentation as for assignment 7, the preliminary presentation assignment.

11. Research Paper

The final research paper should reflect your learning experiences during the entire term. It should be organized around your final outline.

Guidelines

To aid the reader, the paper should be sectioned off like your outline. In other words, the first section should be headed "Introduction." The body should contain two or three sections with appropriate titles, and the final section should be headed "Conclusion." Sometimes, an author ends (or begins) an introductory paragraph with an explicit statement concerning the paper's argument, such as “This paper will explore...” or “In this paper, I will explain...” By doing so, the author alerts the reader to the main thrust of the paper. Please write such a statement in your paper's introduction. (In other assignments, you highlighted the thrust of your research with a thesis question. Do not include this question in your introduction or elsewhere in your final paper; rather, include a thesis statement like one of these. A missing statement will cost you 5 points.)

References to other works must be cited with footnotes or endnotes. See *APSM* for information on note styles and techniques using the "Chicago" style. For the body of the paper (i.e., the part of the paper exclusive of the introduction and conclusion), you should use at least two reference notes per paragraph. The absence of notes suggests plagiarism, which constitutes a violation of good historical standards as well as the Virginia Tech Honor Code. (Missing notes will result in a 10-point deduction and possible Honor Code sanctions.)

Only use direct quotations of sources when they add greatly to your own commentary. Writers often use quotations to suggest understanding, but they more frequently hide one's misunderstanding of a concept. Paraphrase what the author has written. You can probably say it better in your own words. An eight-page paper should have no more than one long (block) quote. (Deduction for more than one long quotation: 5 points each.)

Your bibliography should include at least 12 sources; at least 3 should be primary sources. (Deduction of 5 points per source below the minimum in each group.) Though you may consult encyclopedias, do not include any in the bibliography. (Be especially wary of wiki-type encyclopedias. They may provide basic information and insights, but you should realize that articles in them may not be written by “experts,” and they may therefore contain misinformation.) For the final paper, do not include the annotations that accompanied your presentation outlines, but list your primary and secondary sources separately.

To ensure that you've learned something from comments made on previous assignments, please submit copies of your graded preliminary **and** final thesis statements and outlines along with the final paper. (In other words, turn in your entire assignment 9.)

Remember to follow all the rules listed below in “General Instructions.”

The final research paper, due on the final exam date, **Dec. 14**, should contain 2,000 words (about 8 pages), exclusive of the bibliography, notes, and pictures (if used). (Deductions: 5 points for each 200 words fewer than 1,800 or more than 2,200.)

Quizzes

There will be short quizzes based on chapters in the required texts and other readings. The quiz questions will be simple and can be easily answered if you read the assigned materials. No makeup quizzes will be offered unless you can document a valid excuse for your absence.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Good writing style. As university students, you should already know how to write competently. "Competently" means that you know the rules of grammar and capitalization, you know how to organize written arguments, and you know how to spell properly (or at least how to use spell-checkers). Because I want to focus on teaching how to perform historical research and how to communicate rather than things that you should have learned years ago, I will **ruthlessly** deduct points for frequent grammatical mistakes, spelling errors, typos, and other miscellaneous errors that show up on papers. If you have problems with basic writing skills, you should seek help from the Writing Center and exploit other resources. (See "Resources" box.) Feel free to ask the GTA and friends (in and out of the class) to read drafts of your papers as a way to discover errors, poor organization, etc. Make sure you read *ASPM* (or another similar manual) cover to cover to remind yourself of grammatical rules and common writing problems.

Word counts. Include a word count at the end of each written assignment. (Missing word count: 5 point deduction. Word count beyond plus-or-minus 10% will result in a 5-point deduction for each 10% increment.) This strict word-length requirement will help you write clearly and concisely—something greatly appreciated in the "real world."

Using the verb "to be." In each of the shorter assignments (400 words or less), you will lose 0.5 point for using the verb "to be" in any of its forms more than twice. ("To be" is the infinitival form of "am," "is," and "are" in all tenses.) In longer assignments, you may use the verb three times per 500 words. (Hence, in the final 2,000 word paper, you can use the verb 12 times without penalty.)

Why do I make such a big fuss about the verb "to be"? The readings by Good and Wheeler will help answer that question, but to be brief, I argue that by consciously avoiding the verb, you will choose more active verbs that yield more interesting papers. Sure, your efforts to eliminate the verb constitute an academic exercise (to an extent), but you may be surprised to find how much better your papers read when you write without "to be."

Spacing, fonts, margins, pagination, titles and staples. Double-space all documents. Use type fonts of at least 12 points and margins of 1.5 inches on all sides of your text (so I can make comments and corrections in margins and between lines). Put page numbers—and your name—at the bottom or top of each page. **Do not staple** you sheets together. Rather, **use a paperclip**. Finally, every paper should have a title, even a simple one, such as "My Life as a History Major." (Five points will be deducted for failure to abide by each of these rules.)

Bibliographic and footnote reference style. For notes and bibliographies in all your papers, use the "Chicago Style" of citation, which is discussed in chapter 5 of *ASGH* and *APSM* in sections 39-43. Be aware of the difference between note style and bibliography style. For research assignments in which you use several resources, I expect to see at least one reference per paragraph. Use full and proper citations for Internet resources; don't just provide a URL.

Due dates. Due dates for assignments are strict. Late work will be penalized 10 points per calendar day (weekends included) unless extenuating circumstances have been discussed with me before the due date. (Obviously, some extenuating circumstances cannot be foreseen. I will deal with these on a case-by-case basis.

But please realize that a disk-drive failure that wipes out your paper does not constitute an extenuating circumstance. Make sure you keep backup copies of your work on memory sticks, CDs, etc.) Put due dates on your calendar and plan your lives accordingly. In the "real world," missing a deadline often means losing one's job.

EXCEPTION TO DUE DATE RULE: If your presentation date is the same as another assignment (quiz or paper), you will be allowed one extra class period to complete it. In other words, I prefer that you spend time working on your presentation and not worry about another assignment.

World Wide Web. In recent years, the World Wide Web has become a marvelous resource for obtaining useful information. This course will encourage you to take advantage of that resource. Through Virginia Tech, we have access to subscription-only (proprietary) databases as well as free sites open to anyone. Please realize that not everything "published" on the Web is reliable! Use your critical skills.

Participation: Your grade for participation will be derived partly from your attendance in class, especially during presentations. It will also be affected by the quality and quantity of your comments made about the presentations.

Don't throw it out! You will benefit from looking at my comments on early assignments, especially at the end of the course when you write your final paper. Moreover, you will be required to turn in graded copies of assignments 8 and 9 when you submit your final paper. Make copies (or scans) of these marked-up assignments, and don't discard them.

Honor code. The honor code will be strictly enforced in this course. All assignments submitted shall be considered graded work unless otherwise noted. All aspects of your course work are covered by the honor system. Honesty in your academic work will develop into professional integrity. The faculty and students of Virginia Tech will not tolerate any form of academic dishonesty.

Disabilities: I am happy to make accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Please contact me privately so we can discuss your situation.

Peer (and GTA) review. I encourage you to employ your colleagues in this class (and the GTA) to read drafts of your papers before submitting them. An extra set of eyes might catch some errors or alert you to poor logic, bad grammar, etc. Of course, to benefit from such a review, you cannot wait until the last minute to write the paper, so plan accordingly.

Use of electronic devices in class: Please turn off (or mute) your cell phones and other electronic devices during class. If you bring your laptop computer to class, use it ONLY for class business, such as to find resources relevant to a discussion, or for taking notes. Do not check your email, buy concert tickets, update your Facebook pages, etc. during class. You may think that you're fooling the old professor since he can't see your screen, but he will know when you're doing non-class work, and he won't appreciate it.

For the fun of it! It may be difficult to believe, but good writing can be fun—and funny. Go to the website, <http://grammar.quickanddirtytips.com>, and read (or listen to) commentary on writing by Grammar Girl. She uses a witty style to answer questions about writing, the origins of words, neologisms, the proper use of “y'all” and “all y'all,” serial commas, and lots of other neat things.

Extra credit opportunity (and more fun): Think you can do better than Grammar Girl? Here's your chance to earn up to three (3) extra points by making a similar podcast (or YouTube-like video) that deals creatively with a writing or grammatical topic. The final product will be exhibited to the class (and future classes). Start thinking about this opportunity soon, however. I don't want it to interfere with your more substantial assignments, so the deadline for submission of this extra-credit task is **29 October**. Ask for details if you want to try something different.

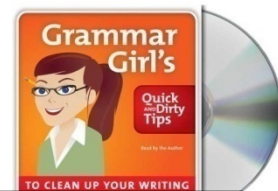


Image from Amazon.com

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND ASSIGNMENTS

- Aug. 25. Introduction to class. (for discussion): Making Presentations. (Internet resources, Ass. 5.)
- Aug. 27. Further introductions and discussion. (Read Finn, "Geeks," Carrier, and Osborn articles; *ASGH*, ch. 1. Personal history paper due, Ass. 1. Listen to the podcast on the "Value of History" on Scholar [in podcast section].)
- Oct. 15. Another look at primary sources. Readings to be announced.
- Oct. 20. Preliminary Presentations.
- Sept. 1. History of Atomic Power I lecture. (Read *WH*, Introduction, and chs. 1-2, and Gilderhus, "Aims and Purposes." Quiz 1 on readings.)
- Oct. 22. Preliminary Presentations. (Book review, Ass. 6.)
- Sept. 3. History of Atomic Power II lecture. (Primary source paper, Ass. 2.)
- Oct. 27. Discussion: Novel Themes and Approaches to History. (Read Tosh and *ASGH*, ch. 5.)
- Sept. 8. Critical analysis and plagiarism. (Read Marius and Blum pieces.)
- Oct. 29. Preliminary Presentations. (Podcast extra credit opportunity deadline.)
- Sept. 10. Discussion: Rational Actors and Methodologies. (Read Davidson, "Decision to Drop the Bomb" and Good, "To Be," and Grammar Girl "Do You Overuse 'Of'?" Quiz 2.)
- Nov. 3. Preliminary Presentations. (Preliminary thesis statement and outline, Ass. 7.) Election Day. Vote!
- Sept. 15. Discussion: Controversies in History—The *Enola Gay* exhibit at NASM (Read Gilderhus, "Culture Wars" and *ASGH*, ch. 2.)
- Nov. 5. Preliminary Presentations.
- Sept. 17. History of Space lecture. (Primary source paper, "Urgent National Needs," Ass. 3.)
- Nov. 10. Preliminary Presentations. (Read *WH*, chs. 3-4. Quiz 6.)
- Sept. 22. Forces that create historical events. (Read Furay, "Continuity and Change" and Grammar Girl, "Does Grammar Really Matter?" Quiz 3.)
- Nov. 12. Discussion: To be announced. Or presentations. (Read *WH*, chs. 5-7. Quiz 7.)
- Sept. 24. Discussion: Multiple Causality in History. (Read Furay, "Multiple Causality." Quiz 4.)
- Nov. 17. Final Presentations. (Read Gilderhus, "Reading, Writing, and Research." Quiz 8.)
- Sept. 29. Flexible day. Events to be announced.
- Nov. 19. Final Presentations. (Final thesis statement and outline, Ass. 9.)
- Oct. 1. Using the Internet for historical research. (Wheeler, "Passive Voice," and active voice & citation exercise, Ass. 4.)
- Nov. 24, 26. Take-home exams. No studying or preparation permitted.
- Oct. 6. Discussion: Reading History. (Read Furay, "Reading History" PDF file and Blackey, "Words to the Whys," *ASGH*, ch. 3. Quiz 5.)
- Dec. 1. Final Presentations.
- Oct. 8. Flexible Day.
- Dec. 3. Discussion or presentation. (Read *WH*, chs. 8-10. Quiz 9.)
- Oct. 13. Primary sources and writing actively. (Read Rampola and Presnell; *ASGH*, ch. 4.) Also
- Dec. 8. Final presentations and general conclusions. (If you want the GTA to review your draft paper, turn it in before this class. It will not be reviewed during exam week.) (Read Furay, "Interpretation" PDF file. Quiz 10.)
- Dec. 14, Monday, 3:05 PM. Scheduled Final Exam. (Final paper due, Ass. 11.)