

History 4xxx Senior Capstone Seminar

SPRING 2014 / INSTRUCTOR / OFFICE HOURS: TTH: 2:30-4
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Course Overview: The Senior Capstone Seminar is designed to bring together the reading, research, and writing skills you've learned as a history major to focus on producing a final "capstone" project. Just as artisans in the past produced "masterpieces" to display the skills they had learned as apprentices and journeymen, the Senior Seminar project will allow you to display the skills you've learned as a history major. Your project can be on any historical topic that interests you so long as it has an established body of writing and clearly definable and different approaches to the topic. Thus the fall of the Roman empire would be a workable topic while the history of lacrosse likely wouldn't be.

This course meets the **2003 USP W3** requirement and the **2015 USP COM3** requirement. Your project must include a substantial research and writing/performance component in order to meet the University Studies W3 or COM3 requirement. This requirement will be met by a 500 to 750-word Historiography Essay, a 600 to 800-word Theory Essay, an audio/video presentation, two drafts and a final version of a 4000 to 5000-word paper or alternative media production due at the end of the semester that will incorporate the Historiography and Theory essays. Depending on your topic and personal preference, you can follow the traditional paper track or, alternatively, present your final project in digital (web site/pages, for example), video, graphic (a graphic novel approach, for example), or some other medium. You are encouraged to experiment with different modes of work and production and I will be happy to work with you whichever mode you choose. Full COM3 outcomes are included on page 3 of the syllabus.

Theory: The History Department faculty recently decided to move the introduction to historical theory from the Methods course (History 3xxx) to the Senior Seminar. Thus we will spend the first half of the course reading about and discussing some of the major theoretical approaches used in current historical writing. Theories are tools that both organize historical materials and point to useful places to look for new evidence. With this pragmatic approach in mind, our theory readings will give you the opportunity to consider how theory can have a positive impact your Senior Seminar project.

Historiography: History is an interpretive discipline and historiography--the major ways in which historians have approached and written about a topic--is an integral part of historical writing. Thus one of your early tasks will be to investigate the various ways in which historians have interpreted your topic and to write an essay that discusses these interpretations. This essay will also be the place for you to put forward your own approach to the topic. You will be writing an historiographical introduction when you reach the draft-writing stage of your project paper and will be using what you discover in this exercise to complete that part of your paper.

The Changing Meaning of Communication: Throughout our school and professional lives we are taught that written work is the "right" way to present serious work. That's why we write "papers" for our courses or, at the professional level, publish articles (which are really papers) and books. There are many good things to be said about this logo-centric approach to scholarship, but in recent years many scholars have begun reconsidering the traditional divisions of reading/writing, digital consumption/production, and oral listening/production, calling instead for a more expansive view of "communication." This is not just a matter of combining these three modes under a new label, but represents a new way of thinking about what we do when we research, collaborate, and produce scholarly work. Cognitive psychology has long shown us that we take in, process, and create information in a variety of different ways and the new "communications" approach to research and reporting recognizes this multiplicity and seeks to expand research and production beyond the written-only horizon. We will explore the

most important of these new horizons this semester by focusing on new ways to research, compile, analyze, and present material for your projects. By the end of the course, you will all be accomplished and up-to-date researchers and, especially, communicators.

Written and Digital Sources: Most 4xxx students use a combination of written and digital sources in the projects and, while the proportion of each varies, one purpose of 4xxx is to demonstrate your ability to deal with each of these sources at a sophisticated level. You were introduced to these sources in 3020 (Methods) and thus have a good foundation for more advanced work as you compile sources for your capstone project. With this in mind, this semester you'll learn how to use sophisticated digital tools such as Evernote, Google Scholar, Endnote, Gliffy Diagrams, Drive, and Slides to find sources, compile reading lists, save and sort what you find using digital metadata, and present your findings in digital, graphical, and oral formats.

Online Participation and Workflow: The Senior Capstone Seminar will involve a great deal of independent work, but one virtue of the online platform is that we can discuss our projects on a continuous basis. One of the seminar members' favorite aspects of this course when I teach it on campus is our group discussions of the progress we're making on our projects and the problems we've encountered. I want to carry this feature over to the online version of the class and as you'll see below, regular participation is not only encouraged, but is required. While this course is taught online, it is not a self-paced course and you will be expected to contribute weekly to class discussions and to submit your work for class discussion on schedule.

Citation Format: As you learned in Hist 3020 (Methods), historians use the Chicago Manual of Style citation system. It's a good system, however, many historians have found the heavy use of *ibid.* and *loc. cit.* in a text both cumbersome and confusing. I agree. Thus we will amend the Chicago Manual when it comes to more than one citation from the same source. The clearest way to do this following the initial citation (which is full), is to use the author's last name, brief title, and page number. This way if your reader wants to look up something you've cited several times, they won't have to reconstruct your trail back to the original citation. In nearly all cases, you can safely eliminate the publisher's name too. Thus:

Original citation

Ida Altman, *The War for Mexico's West: Indians and Spaniards in New Galicia, 1524-1550*.
(Albuquerque, N.M.: 2010), p.81.

Subsequent citations

Altman, *War*, p.96.

Class Requirements: Your progress in the course will be measured by the completion of several project tasks, listed below, and by weekly answers to the theory readings in Tosh scheduled for weeks 1-6. You will prepare and submit a Preliminary Research Report on 2/21, a Project Planning Report on 3/14, and two drafts of your paper, along with an oral presentation of your project to the class using the course website during the last three weeks of the semester. A final paper, which will include revised versions of the historiography and theory essays, will be due 5/9. Twenty percent (50 points) of your grade will also be based on your active participation during the semester. This will be measured by your posting on all "Discussion" questions and by thoughtful comments of more than two sentences posted on the course website for each of the course assignments. The Preliminary Research Report/Historiography essays and the Project Planning Report/Theory Essays are each worth 50 points and each of your two project paper drafts is worth 25 points. The oral presentation is worth 50 points and your Final presentation/paper is worth 100 points, for a total of 350 possible points. **All final versions** of the course assignments (Historiography Essay, Theory Essay, and your Final Paper) should be submitted through the WyoCourses site under "Assignments". Your Preliminary Research Report and Project Planning Report should be submitted through the WyoCourses site under "Discussions."

Grading Scale: Your final grade will be determined as follows:

A= 319 points and above

B= 280-318 points

C= 245-279 points

D= 210-244 points

F= 219 points and below

IMPORTANT! All official course information (class cancellations, changes in assignments and due dates, study suggestions, and weekly announcements) will be transmitted electronically via the course website. You will be responsible for all information on the course website, so be sure to check the site several times each week.

Required University Statements. This course will follow all current University Regulations concerning Academic Dishonesty (UW Regulation 6-802) and Student Disability Support Services (<http://uwadmnweb.uwyo.edu/UDSS/>). Plagiarized essays in whole or in part will receive a score of 0/100.

University Studies 2003 Statement: This course meets the University Studies 2003 WC writing requirement, a requirement designed to “assist students to achieve competence in rhetorical knowledge, composing processes, knowledge of conventions, and critical thinking, reading, and writing.”

University Studies 2015 Statement: This course fulfills the University Studies Communication 3 (COM3) requirement of the 2015 University Studies Program. Students will develop skills in written, oral, and digital communication as appropriate to specific disciplines and courses at the introductory, intermediate, and advanced level. Through repeated instruction, practice, and feedback, the communication sequence will emphasize and progressively develop transferable skills for students’ academic work and future professions. Advanced courses (COM3) will emphasize using the discourse of a discipline or interdisciplinary field to communicate to academic or professional audiences through written, oral, and digital communication.

Upon Completion of This Course, You Will:

1. Use the disciplinary discourse of history to communicate the discipline's subject matter to academic or professional audiences through written, oral, and digital communication.
2. Find, analyze, evaluate, and document information appropriately as applicable to the historical discipline by completing a substantial communication project that requires appropriate research skills.
3. Recognize and evaluate more advanced aspects of communication that respond to the purposes and needs of audiences in an historical setting.
4. Make effective use of multiple drafts, revision, computer technology, peer and instructor comments, and collaboration to show understanding of communication standards in the history discipline.
5. Observe the accepted conventions of spelling, grammar, organizational structure, punctuation, delivery and documentation expected in historical work.
6. Deliver presentations in a confident and professional manner, consistent with the standards of the historical discipline.
7. Interact effectively with fellow proseminar members, engage opposing viewpoints constructively, and demonstrate active listening skills.

Assignment List

Tasks submitted to Discussions are part of your Participation grade

Project Tasks

What Makes Good History?	Post to Discussions by end of first week
Topic(s) why is it interesting?	Post to Discussions by end of second week
What's Been Done?	Find historiographic essay on topic
Using Digital Resources	Part of the Historiography assignment due 2/21
Preliminary Bibliography	Post to Discussions by end of third week
Preliminary Research Proposal	Post to Discussions by 2/21
Historiography Essay	Post to Assignments by 2/21
Hypothesis Formation	Post to Discussions by end of fourth week
Digital Organization	Post outline to Discussions
Project Planning Report	Post to Assignments by 3/14
Weekly Progress Reports	Post to Discussions by end of Weeks 13-16
Draft 1 Using Digital Tools	Post to Assignments by end of Week 14
Draft 2	Post to Assignments by end of Week 15
Oral presentations	Post audio/video files to Assignments during weeks 14 and 15 according to schedule posted in week 13
Final Version	Post to Assignments by 5/9

Theory

Tosh chs. 6-11	Post Responses to Assignments each week
Theory Essay	Post to Assignments by 3/14

Reading and Work Schedule

All Tosh chapters can be found at the "Files" link on the left

Week 1 : Introduction: What Makes Good History?
(1/13-1/17) Review Tosh, ch. 6 on Methods

Week 2 : Projects: Choosing a Topic and Planning Your Digital Research Strategy
(1/20-1/24) Theory: Tosh, ch. 7 The Scope and Limits of History (Due 1/29)

Week 3 : Projects: Digital Tools for Defining Your Topic's Historiography
(1/27-1/31) Theory: Tosh, ch. 8 Social Theory (Due 1/30)

Week 4 : Projects: Positions: The Major Debates in Your Topic Area
(2/3-2/7) Theory: Tosh, ch. 9 The Cultural Turn (Due 2/7)

Week 5 : Projects: Historiography Essay Preparation and Discussion
(2/10-2/14) Theory: Tosh, ch. 10 Gender and Postcolonialism (Due 2/14)

Preliminary Research Report and Historiography Essays Due 2/21/2013 (Note that each goes to a different course site)

Week 6 : Decisions: Matching Digital Tools to Your Project: the Project Planning Report
(2/17-2/21) Theory: Tosh, ch. 11 Historical Memory (Due 2/21)

Week 7 Projects: The Role of Theory in Historical Research and Writing
(2/24-2/28)

Week 8-9 Projects: Theory Essay Preparation and Discussion
(3/3-3/14)

Project Planning Report and Theory Essays Due 3/14/2013 (Note that each goes to a different course site)

Weeks 11-14 : Weekly Progress Reports and Discussion
(3/24-4/18) Digital Organization and Mind Maps
Digital Presentation of Data: Graphs and Beyond

Weeks 15-16: Oral Project Presentations
(4/21-5/2) Four Oral Presentation Rules to Remember
Guides to Using Slides for Organization, Clarity, and Audience Interest

Final Paper Due: 5/9/2013

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

HISTORY 4xxx: THE PRELIMINARY RESEARCH PROPOSAL

One of the first tasks in any writing project is to determine whether the project is feasible. Is there enough resource material? Is the material available? Can I get it in enough time to complete the project on schedule?

In most writing projects outside the classroom these questions are answered in a formal proposal. The purpose of the proposal is three-fold: 1) to tell others what you want to write about; 2) to tell them what's interesting, important, and new about the project; and 3) to convince them that the project is doable. If you were applying for a grant, you'd also attach a budget to the proposal.

No money is changing hands here, but the Preliminary Research Proposal is our equivalent to a formal project proposal. Like a formal proposal, your Preliminary Proposal should be a brief written statement which should begin with your name, a working title (it can always change later), a paragraph or two discussing what the project is about and why it interests you, and lastly, a list of sources that you plan to use (this is a preliminary list and will undoubtedly change as you work on your project).

Please post your Preliminary Research Proposal on the Discussions site by 2/14

THE HISTORIOGRAPHY ESSAY

As you have learned by now, history is an interpretive discipline with historians as much concerned about interpreting events and processes as with facts themselves. With this in mind, it will come as no surprise that historians disagree about how to interpret specific events or processes. Your task in the historiography essay is to locate and discuss the major historical interpretations and debates that have formed around your topic.

What is Historiography? Most historical topics have two to three major interpretations and these are what your essay should discuss. Begin by clearly defining the different approaches, then discuss the arguments put forward by each proponent, paying particular attention to the conceptual framework of the disagreements. For example, there have been many interpretations of the Great Depression of the 1930s, but these interpretations fall into three schools depending on the authors' economic viewpoints. Thus monetarists see the Depression as a problem of monetary policy and money supply, while Keynesians view it as an issue of decreased demand and public spending by government. Marxists, on the other hand, view it as an issue of systemic collapse brought on by the falling rate of profit. These are the sorts of issues you should be looking for in your essay. Another way of looking at this would be to examine where the different interpretations base their arguments. To take another example, do the different interpretations of the American Civil War look to economic, political, or cultural variables to explain the war?

Using Digital Resources. Finding relevant historiography essays used to involve several hours of searching through printed article indexes, but today this task is accomplished much more easily by using digital resources. It's very likely that you already use Google, Wikipedia, and a few other online search and information sources, but there are a great many others that you probably don't know about. Google Scholar, for example, is an excellent place to begin as are the online resources at Coe Library. Coe Library spends large sums of money each year for digital subscriptions and they (and I!) want you to use them. Google Scholar can be accessed at: <http://scholar.google.com/> while the best way to approach the Coe databases is through their research page at: <http://www-lib.uwyo.edu/>. Try both the "Super Search" feature and the "Find + Research" pull-down menu. There are plentiful and clear instructions embedded throughout the Coe website and Coe also has a number of friendly and helpful Reference Librarians. They can be found "live" on the first floor of the library 90-degrees to the right of the Circulation Desk. If you're not in the library, you can get the same help through chat, text, email, and

phone--just look at the "Help + Ask a Librarian" pull-down menu on the research page above. In addition, please feel free to contact faculty who work in your area of interest. They usually have several historiography essays readily to hand and are a wonderful resource. And, yes, they are more than willing to help. Once I have your project topics in week 2, I will make faculty suggestions in my comments on the assignment.

Essay Requirements Your essay should be between 500 and 750 words and should be written in your own words--no quotes from any text, please. The essay should be submitted as part of the Preliminary Research Proposal, not as a separate document.

Please submit your Historiography Essay on the Assignments site by 2/21.

HISTORY 4xxx: PROJECT PLANNING REPORT

Now that we've all chosen topics and have gathered materials, it's time to plot out a schedule for researching and writing. The Project Planning Report is a brief written report that seeks to accomplish three things.

- 1) For those unsure about the viability of their projects, this is the decision point. If you haven't found enough research material at this point, it's unlikely that you will in time to digest the material and write your paper. This means that you should be thinking about a new topic and moving quickly toward compiling a bibliography.
- 2) For the rest of us, it's time to report on what we've found thus far in our research. Some questions to ask: have you found enough material to complete your project? If not, NOW is the time for locate what else you need. Has the material you've gathered led you to think about narrowing or broadening your focus? Does it support your original hypothesis? If not, what changes have you made in structuring your argument?
- 3) If you have any questions or would like some suggestions about what you've found or haven't found, briefly discuss them here. This is your opportunity to get feedback from the other members of the class. I've found that this is one of the most useful sections of the course, especially since many class members know of sources about your topic that I'm unaware of. Take advantage of this opportunity!

Digital Research and Project Management Resources. You will have been introduced to and likely used some of the digital information management systems in your Methods course (Hist 3020). So that everyone is on the same page, we will also be discussing some of the more useful of these systems (Evernote, MS OneNote, Google Keep, Dropbox, and EndNote for example) in our Week 6 discussions. I encourage everyone to experiment with these free resources and find the one that suits your cognitive style best. Using these digital resources will immeasurably speed up the research process and give you more time for analysis and presentation of your project.

Please post your Project Planning Report on the Discussions site by 3/14.

THE THEORY ESSAY

In the past three decades, historians have made increasingly use of social theory in their work and today it is no longer possible to be a competent reader of history without an understanding of some basic theoretical perspectives. This is the purpose of the assignments in John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*. Having read Tosh, your next job is to apply one or more of the theories he discusses to your own project.

The theory essay has two parts. The first part asks you to evaluate a common argument about the need (or lack of need) of theory for historians. The second part asks you to evaluate and discuss the theory or theories you will use in your project paper. This part of your essay will become part of your final project paper along with your

historiography essay.

Here's the first part:

Evaluate the following statement in light of what you've read in Tosh: "All that historians need to do in their research is look at their sources using a little common sense and the sources will 'speak to them,' i.e., will tell what is true and hence what the historian should write."

What do you think about this statement? Are sources transparent and the historian merely a reporter of what she finds? Specifically, what would **postmodernists** say about this statement? What would **cultural** historians say? What about historians of **gender**? Or **post-colonial** historians? Would historians of **memory** agree? Would they all agree? What might their differences be?

This part of your essay should be between 300-400 words and should consider all five approaches noted above. Your essay should include a brief (1-3-sentence) definition of each of these approaches.

The second part:

Again using what you've learned from Tosh, write a 300-400-word essay discussing the theoretical approach you think most appropriate for your own project, explaining what you expect this theoretical approach to add to your paper and how it will do this?

Please submit your Theory Essay on the Assignments site by 3/14.

History Department Writing and Oral Presentation Rubrics (for HIST 3xxx and 4xxx)

Writing

	Excellent 4	Good 3	Fair 2	Poor 1
Presentation of Work as Scholarship	The writer develops a specific thesis that controls the paper, develops clear logic with good organization.	There is a consistent thesis but it may not be developed fully.	The thesis is unclear or implicit, and may change throughout the paper.	The thesis is unclear or difficult to identify.
Organization and Logic	The organization is clear and there is a logical progression of ideas. The conclusion is purposeful and perceptive.	The organization is generally clear and ideas generally flow in a logical manner. The conclusion provides satisfactory closure to the argument.	The organization is somewhat unclear and the progression of ideas is often not logical. The conclusion summarizes previously stated information.	The organization is unclear and does not capture the purpose. The ideas are not presented logically. The conclusion is absent, incomplete, or unfocused.
Use of Concepts and Theories	The author constructs a clear and thorough review of appropriate literature and concepts to be discussed, and develops appropriate research questions/hypotheses to test.	The author constructs a generally clear and solid review of appropriate literature, explains most central concepts thoroughly, and develops appropriate research questions/hypotheses to test.	The author's literature review, research questions and hypotheses are somewhat unclear. There is a discussion of some relevant concepts.	The author's literature review is incomplete, stated research questions are unclear, and hypotheses underdeveloped. Relevant concepts are not discussed.
Use of Methodology Appropriate for Particular Project	Excellent use and justification of multiple methods or appropriate methodology.	Good use and explanation of multiple methods or appropriate methodology.	Fair use of multiple methods or appropriate methodology. Explanation could have been more clear.	Use of methodology chosen was unclear.
Quality of Evidence and Information	Claims and ideas are supported by a variety of relevant facts, examples and details. The writer consistently integrates sources to support, extend and inform, but not to substitute the writer's own development of ideas.	Claims are supported by facts, examples, and details. The writer generally uses relevant sources of support, to extend or inform, but not to substitute the writer's own development of ideas.	Some claims and ideas are supported by facts, examples, and details. The evidence/information are uneven and may be inaccurate. The sources are not well integrated.	Claims and ideas are supported by few facts, examples, and details. Evidence/information is vague, missing or inaccurate. Details and facts are in appropriate and/or off-topic. The writer neglects important sources and/or substitutes sources for original ideas.
Synthesis of Arguments	Alternative perspectives and conflicting arguments are presented and assessed. Judgments are reached concerning the relative accuracy of arguments.	Alternative perspectives and conflicting arguments are presented and assessed.	Alternative perspectives and conflicting arguments are presented.	Alternative perspectives or conflicting arguments are not presented.
Theoretical or Empirical Contribution to the Field	The paper represents an innovative design and clear independent contribution to the theoretical discussion or empirical debate in a given area.	This paper presents a clear independent contribution.	This paper presents some independent contribution to the theoretical or empirical debate in a given area.	Little independent work is apparent.

Oral Presentation

	Excellent 4	Good 3	Fair 2	Poor 1
Presentation of Work as Scholarship	The student develops a specific thesis that controls the presentation with clear logic and good organization.	There is a consistent thesis but it may not be developed fully.	The thesis is unclear or implicit, and may change throughout the presentation.	The thesis is unclear or difficult to identify.
Organization and Logic	The organization of the presentation is clear and there is a logical progression of ideas. The conclusion is purposeful and perceptive.	The organization is generally clear and ideas generally flow in a logical manner. The conclusion provides satisfactory closure to the argument.	The organization is somewhat unclear and the progression of ideas is often not logical. The conclusion summarizes previously stated information.	The organization is unclear and does not capture the purpose. The ideas are not presented logically. The conclusion is absent, incomplete, or unfocused.
Audience	The student speaks clearly and directly to the audience, paying attention to audience reception, adjusting the presentation when necessary.	The student mostly speaks clearly and attends to the audience most of the time. May miss some audience reaction and makes little adjustment in presentation.	The student reads part of the presentation from a script, seldom looks at the audience, and is seldom aware of the audience reaction.	The student reads all of their presentation from their paper, never looking at the audience. Is unaware of the audience reaction and makes no adjustment.
Use of Supporting Technology	Excellent use of slides, posters or other supporting materials. Slides clearly illustrate and support the presentation using little or no text.	Good use of slides or other supporting materials. Most slides support and explain the presentation but some use text to make points.	Fair use of slides or other supporting materials. Many slides are text-only and repeat the oral presentation instead of supporting it.	Unclear use of slides or other supporting material. Slides may be confusing, heavily text-oriented, and repeat verbatim the presentation.
Quality of Evidence and Information	Claims and ideas are supported by a variety of relevant facts, examples and details. The presenter consistently integrates sources to support, extend and inform their audience.	Claims are supported by facts, examples, and details. The presenter generally uses relevant sources of support, to extend or inform, but does not always integrate these to inform their audience.	Some claims and ideas are supported by facts, examples, and details. The evidence/information are uneven and may be inaccurate. The sources are not well integrated and presented to their audience..	Claims and ideas are supported by few facts, examples, and details. Evidence/information is vague, missing or inaccurate. The presenter drifts off-topic and neglects important sources and confuses their audience.
Synthesis of Arguments	Alternative perspectives and conflicting arguments are well-presented and assessed. Judgments are reached concerning the relative accuracy of arguments.	Alternative perspectives and conflicting arguments are presented and assessed. Presenters judgements about these perspectives are not always clear.	Some alternative perspectives and conflicting arguments are presented, but presenter offers no judgements to their audience.	Alternative perspectives or conflicting arguments are not presented.