

California State University, Fresno  
Department of History

HIST 100W: Historical Research & Writing Skills

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Office hours: T/Th 1:30 – 3:00 p.m.  
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Catalog Description: Prerequisites: HIST 4, ENGL 5B and 10, upper-division standing. Individual guidance and criticism in research, writing, argumentation, and documentation. While engaging in historical research and writing, students gain a deeper appreciation of the discipline's theoretical and methodological concerns.

Description: This course is an introduction to the theory and practice of historical inquiry and writing. We will discuss – and utilize – the different approaches, methods, and tools which historians commonly use in their crafting of history. The ultimate end of the course is the production of a 15-20 page research paper on any aspect of early modern European history, demonstrating mastery of key research and analytical techniques related to the historical field.

Learning Outcomes: At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to

- ∞ identify and discuss historical arguments, theses, and approaches;
- ∞ identify primary and secondary sources, as well as analyze them in context;
- ∞ define a research question and create a research plan;
- ∞ locate relevant historical materials in the library and online, and determine the sources' usefulness to the particular question at hand;
- ∞ review relevant secondary sources and develop a correctly formatted annotated bibliography of relevant primary and secondary sources;
- ∞ analyze the state of research on their particular research area and generate a historiographical summary;
- ∞ analyze primary sources related to their research question and generate their own thesis statements;
- ∞ develop a 20-25 page research paper and write an abstract of their research findings.

Requirements: Students will be required to

- ∞ complete a **Diagnostics Test** to gage their level of expertise and comfort with the basic steps of historical research and writing;
- ∞ create a critical **list of three potential research topics**;
- ∞ write a 1-2 page **précis** of one of their research sources (50 points);
- ∞ craft a **Thesis Page**, introducing their topic of choice, listing primary sources upon which research is to be based, and introducing the proposed main argument of their final paper (100 points);
- ∞ craft an **Annotated Bibliography** of secondary sources relevant to their research (100 points);
- ∞ write a **Book Review** analyzing critically one of their research sources (100 points);

- ∞ write a 5-6 page **Historiographical Review**, summarizing current scholarship on the chosen topic and stressing possible venues for further research (150 points);
- ∞ craft a **15-20 page essay** based on the research done (300 points)
- ∞ and participate fully in class discussions (200 points).

Please note: A grade of "C" or better is required to earn W course credit.

Required books: All required books are available at the Kennel Bookstore.

Brown, Callum. *Postmodernism for Historians*. New York: Longman, 2005.  
ISBN #0582506042

Tosh, John. *Historians on History*. New York: Longman, 2000.  
ISBN #0582357950

Turabian, Kate. *Student's Guide for Writing College Papers*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1977.  
ISBN #0226816230

Required on-line readings:

There are several readings which you have to access through the course's BlackBoard site. To make downloading more efficient, some of the articles have been divided into two files, and you must download each part separately.

Course Policies:

I realize that most of you are taking several classes and are probably working as well. However, enrolling in this course means that you and I have a contractual obligation to one another: I am obligated to teach to the best of my ability, to be available during office hours, and to answer your questions whenever possible; you are obligated to attend class, to complete the readings and writing assignments in a timely manner, and to participate actively in the process of learning. The course policies were designed with this in mind, and include:

Attendance:

Attendance in this course is **mandatory**, especially because class will actually meet only 20 times. Since you are required to implement into your final paper all material discussed, missing class will surely lead to a failing grade in the course. You are allowed only one (1) absence without penalty. After that, your final grade will decrease by 50 points with every absence. For example, if you miss two classes during the semester and your cumulative grade was an 840, you will receive a C (790) for your final grade.

Participation:

This course is based mostly on group discussions. This is for both our benefits, as class will be more interesting than if I simply lectured the whole time! However, this means that your participation is necessary to the success of this course. Therefore, you are expected to 'chip in' as much as possible. **You must have read and critically thought about ALL the assigned material, and must complete all assignments on time. Also, you must be willing to participate in class discussion. Shyness is not an excuse;** learning to share

your ideas is part of the exercise! Note: if you are not prepared for class (i.e. if you have not done the readings or completed your project assignments), you will be asked to leave the room, and will still be held responsible for any material you might have missed.

Your active participation in the learning process is of such importance that Participation counts for 200 points. For specifics, see the Participation Rubric (handed out separately).

#### Essays and Assignments:

For this course, you must complete eight critical assignments, including a diagnostic exam, a précis one of your research sources, a book review of that same source, and a final research project (which has several independent parts). Full descriptions and detailed instructions for each assignment will be handed out in class and made available through the course's BlackBoard site.

Diagnostic Exam – This assignment measures your base knowledge of research methods and format, as well as of historiography. The diagnostic exam is not graded, and therefore has not been assigned a point value. However, failure to complete this assignment by the due date will result in a 100 point deduction of your final grade.

Book précis – You will write a 1-2 page summary of one of the sources for your research project. The précis will count for 50 points of your final grade. Instructions will be handed out separately in class.

Book Review – You will also craft a 2-3 page book review in which you critically assess the source for which you wrote your précis. The book review will count for 100 points of your final grade. Instructions will also be handed out separately.

Research Project – Your final research project counts for 650 points. However, it is divided into five individual assignments, each explained fully in the Research Project Guidelines I handed out separately. Do note: you must submit BOTH a rough draft and a final draft of your Historiographical Essay and final Research Essay.

**Please note: PLAGIARISM IN ANY OF THE ABOVE ASSIGNMENTS WILL RESULT IN A GRADE OF ZERO FOR THE ASSIGNMENT, AND SUCH INSTANCES WILL BE REPORTED TO THE UNIVERSITY.**

Plagiarism detection: The campus subscribes to the Turnitin.com plagiarism prevention service, and you will need to submit written assignments to Turnitin.com. Your work will be used by Turnitin.com for plagiarism detection and for no other purpose. The student may indicate in writing to the instructor that he/she refuses to participate in the Turnitin.com process, in which case the instructor can use other electronic means to verify the originality of the student's work. Turnitin.com Originality Reports **WILL be available for your viewing.**

#### Late papers and missed exams:

All assignments must be submitted on time. **I will NOT accept late assignments, and you will earn a zero on any missed assignments.**

Only a serious and unavoidable cause, such as a documented medical condition or family emergency, will be accepted as an excuse for failing to turn in an assignment or take an exam on time. In these cases, a new due-date will be assigned.

HIST 100: Historical Research and Writing Skills  
 Essay Grading Rubric

Grade Range	Structure	Style	Argument	Sources
A (100-90) Outstanding work	Clear focus on the question; clear indication of definitions and the direction of the argument; coherence within and between sections; clear conclusion arising from preceding material.	Well written; good vocabulary; attention to spelling, punctuation, grammar; well presented.	Clear analysis of key issues; fully developed and complex argument that shows synthesis and analysis of material; all statements supported by evidence.	Assimilation of class work; reading beyond class discussion; good use of collateral material; all sources properly referenced.
B (89-80) Good to very good work, in the upper range containing elements of excellent work	Focus on the question; some indication of progress of argument; attention to definitions; generally clear and coherent; adequate conclusion.	Well presented; attention to spelling, grammar punctuation; reasonable vocabulary.	Good level of analysis; indicates some complexity, though not always fully developed; sound rather than excellent.	Assimilation of class work; some reading beyond class discussion; collateral material not always fully integrated; adequate referencing.
C (79-70) Reasonable to good work	Needs greater focus on the question; needs clearer direction to the reader; better organization would give more coherence; introduction and conclusion could be more developed; lacks clear definitions.	Adequate presentation; spelling, grammar and punctuation could be improved; vocabulary could be wider.	Needs better balance of analysis and description; point of argument needs to be clearer; relies too heavily on unsupported assertions and generalizations.	Rather limited range of material; needs better use of collateral material; incomplete referencing.
D (69-60) Poor or barely acceptable work	Very limited reference to question; difficult to follow; very loose definitions; poorly organized; inadequate conclusion.	Spelling, grammar, and punctuation need much more attention; vocabulary not appropriate; poor presentation.	Very simplistic or badly constructed argument; tending to the descriptive; unsupported assertions; point of argument not at all clear; little use of theoretical perspectives.	Very limited range of material; too much irrelevant material; very little evidence of critical thought outside class discussion; incomplete or incorrect referencing.
F (59-0) Unacceptable Work	Ignores question; no sense of construction; no indication to reader of line of argument; no introduction or conclusion.	Careless spelling, grammar, punctuation; poor presentation; inappropriate use of vocabulary.	No sense of argument; no analysis; over-descriptive; unsubstantiated assertions; generalizations; lack of theoretical perspective.	Over-reliance on unanalyzed course material; little or no referencing to collateral reading; no indication of assimilation of discussion.

Grading Scale:

Assignment	Possible Points
Diagnostic Test	N/A
Topic Selection	N/A
Précis	50
Book Review	100
Annotated Bibliography	100
Thesis Page	100
Historiography	150
Final Essay	300
Participation	200
Total	1000

Letter Grade Equivalency
A = 1000 - 900 points
B = 899 - 800
C = 799 - 700
D = 699 - 600
F = 599 - 0

Office hours:

I will be available for consultation during regular office hours, as listed above. Take advantage of this opportunity to ask questions, ask for clarifications, or just to chat: using office hours will allow you to get a better feel for the class and will give you the opportunity to make sure what I expect from you and what you understand I expect from you are the same thing! Note, however, that I do not repeat lectures or give out notes, nor do I duplicate handouts you have lost. For duplicates, you should refer to the course website (listed above).

University Policies:

This class will follow University guidelines as described in the University Catalog.

Honor Code:

“Members of the CSU Fresno academic community adhere to principles of academic integrity and mutual respect while engaged in university work and related activities.” You should:

- understand or seek clarification about expectations for academic integrity in this course (including no cheating, plagiarism and inappropriate collaboration)
- neither give nor receive unauthorized aid on examinations or other course work that is used by the instructor as the basis of grading.
- take responsibility to monitor academic dishonesty in any form and to report it to the instructor or other appropriate official for action.

Cheating and Plagiarism:

Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses that could have extremely serious consequences such as probation, suspension, or expulsion from the University. At the very least, **cheating in this class will result in an immediate F for the assignment, and such cases will be reported to**

the appropriate authorities.

As defined in University's Policies webpage (<http://www-catalog.admin.csufresno.edu/current/policies.html>), "cheating is the actual or attempted practice of fraudulent or deceptive acts for the purpose of improving a grade or obtaining course credit. Typically, such acts occur in relation to examinations. It is the intent of this definition that the term cheating not be limited to examinations situations only, but that it include any and all actions by a student that are intended to gain an unearned academic advantage by fraudulent or deceptive means." Cheating includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism. This is "a specific form of cheating that consists of the misuse of the published and/or unpublished works of others by misrepresenting the material so used as one's own work." For more information on the University's policy regarding cheating and plagiarism, refer to the Class Schedule (Legal Notices on Cheating and Plagiarism) or the University Catalog (Policies and Regulations).

Remember: Using someone else's work without giving them credit (that is, annotating) is plagiarism. **This includes downloading information from the Internet and presenting it as your own, as well as getting someone else to write a paper or assignment for you.**

Students with Disabilities:

Upon identifying themselves to me and to the university, students with disabilities will receive reasonable accommodation for learning and evaluation. For more information, contact Services to Students with Disabilities in University Center Room 5 (278-2811).

Disruptive Behavior:

You are expected to be respectful of the professor and your classmates. Pagers, cellular phones, and personal stereo systems must be turned off and put away prior to the beginning of class. Talking to your classmates while I am trying to lecture is unacceptable. Reading the newspaper or any material not related to class is also unacceptable. The use of any tobacco products is prohibited by law, and smoking or chewing tobacco are not allowed in the classroom. If you do not comply with the regulations above, you will be asked to leave the room and will be held responsible for any material you might have missed. For further information on what is considered disruptive behavior in the classroom, see the University Policy on Disruptive Classroom Behavior (APM 419).

Computers:

"At California State University, Fresno, computers and communications links to remote resources are recognized as being integral to the education and research experience. Every student is required to have his/her own computer or have other personal access to a workstation (including a modem and a printer) with all the recommended software. The minimum and recommended standards for the workstations and software, which may vary by academic major, are updated periodically and are available from Information Technology Services (<http://www.csufresno.edu/ITS/>) or the University Bookstore. In the curriculum and class assignments, students are presumed to have 24-hour access to a computer workstation and the necessary communication links to the University's information resources."

Copyright policy:

Copyright laws and fair use policies protect the rights of those who have produced the material. The copy in this course has been provided for private study, scholarship, or research. Other uses may require permission from the copyright holder. The user of this work is responsible for

adhering to copyright law of the U.S. (Title 17, U.S. Code). To help you familiarize yourself with copyright and fair use policies, the University encourages you to visit its copyright webpage:  
<http://www.csufresno.edu/library/libraryinformation/campus/copyright/copyrtpolicyfull.pdf>  
For copyright Questions & Answers:  
<http://www.csufresno.edu/library/libraryinformation/campus/copyright/faqcopyright.pdf>

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**\* I reserve the right to modify this syllabus. You will be notified of all changes, and will be given notice with enough time to complete your assignments as required. If you are absent from class, it is your responsibility to check on announcements made while you were absent.**

Sample Class Schedule

<p>Tuesday, August 26</p>	<p>Part I: Introduction: Bureaucratic Matters          Part II: Discussion: History and the Historical Method, I          (What is history to you? How is history “done”?)</p> <p>Assignments for 8/28:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⌘ Read <i>Historians on History</i>, 1-14</li> <li>⌘ Read online materials</li> </ul>
<p>Thursday, August 28</p>	<p>Discussion: History and the Historical Method, II          (What do historians say history is?)</p> <p>Assignments for 9/2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⌘ Complete Diagnostic Test</li> <li>⌘ Read <i>A Manual for Writers</i>, 5-35</li> </ul>
<p>Tuesday, September 2</p>	<p><b>Diagnostic Test Due</b>          Lecture &amp; Discussion: Tools of the Trade: Topics &amp; Sources</p>
<p>Thursday, September 4</p>	<p><b>Individual Meetings: Topic Selection</b>          (Meetings to be held in SS #120)</p>
<p>Tuesday, September 9</p>	<p>Lecture &amp; Discussion: Sources: What? Where? How?</p> <p>Assignment for 9/11:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⌘ Read <i>A Manual for Writers</i>, 36-47</li> </ul>
<p>Thursday, September 11</p>	<p><b>Topic Selection Due</b>          Lecture &amp; Discussion: Engaging the Sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⌘ A Key Lesson: How to Read: Content vs. Argument</li> </ul> <p>Assignments for 9/16:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⌘ Read <i>Postmodernism for Historians</i>, 12-32</li> <li>⌘ Read <i>Historians on History</i>, 19-45</li> </ul>
<p>Tuesday, September 16</p>	<p>Part I: Discussion: Historiography: Empiricism          Part II: The précis: what and how</p> <p>Assignments for 9/18-23:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⌘ Start bibliographical research</li> <li>⌘ Select and read a core source for your research</li> <li>⌘ Create a précis of your selected source</li> </ul>



Thursday, September 18	<b>No Class Meeting: Research Day</b>
Tuesday, September 23	<b>Précis Due</b> Lecture & Discussion: Book Reviews: What? Where? How?
Thursday, September 25	<b>Individual Meetings: Finalizing Your Topic &amp; Bibliography</b> Assignment for 9/30: ∞ Read <i>Historians on History</i> , 47-82
Tuesday, September 30	<b>Book Review Due</b> Discussion: Historiography: Political Histories Assignments for 10/2: ∞ Read online materials ∞ Read <i>Historians on History</i> , 83-106
Thursday, October 2	Part I: Discussion: Historiography: Disciplinary Crosspollination Part II: Discussion: Marxism Assignment for 10/7: ∞ Read <i>A Manual for Writers</i> , 48-61 ∞ Peruse <i>A Manual for Writers</i> , chapter 17
Tuesday, October 7	Part I: Lecture & Discussion: Crafting an Argument Part II: Annotating Assignments for 10/9-14: ∞ Continue Research ∞ Write a preliminary thesis page and bring it to your individual meeting on the 14 <sup>th</sup> .
Thursday, October 9	<b>No Class Meeting: Research Day</b>
Tuesday, October 14	<b>Individual Meetings: Your Thesis &amp; Annotated Bibliography</b> Assignments for 10/16: ∞ Read online materials ∞ Read <i>Historians on History</i> , 213-230
Thursday, October 16	Discussion: Social History Assignments for 10/21: ∞ Read <i>Historians on History</i> , 231-270 ∞ Read online materials

<b>Thesis Page &amp; Annotated Bibliography Due</b> Continuation: Social History	
Tuesday, October 21	Assignments for 10/23: ∞ Read <i>Historians on History</i> , 127-150 ∞ Read online materials
Thursday, October 23	Discussion: Gender & Race
Tuesday, October 28	Part I: Lecture & Discussion: Annotating, cont. Part II: Lecture & Discussion: Crafting a Historiographical Essay  Bring with you your source notes and Turabian book.
Thursday, October 30	<b>Individual Meetings: Your Historiographical Essay</b>  Assignments for 10/28: ∞ Read <i>Historians on History</i> , ∞ Read online materials
Tuesday, November 4	<b>First Draft of Historiographical Essay Due</b> Discussion: Cultural History  Assignments for 11/6: ∞ Read <i>Historians on History</i> , ∞ Read online materials
Thursday, November 6	Discussion: Micro History  Assignments for 11/13: ∞ Read <i>Postmodernism for Historians</i> , 33-92
Tuesday, November 11	Veterans' Day: No Class Meeting
Thursday, November 13	<b>Final Draft of Historiographical Essay Due</b> Discussion: Postmodernism  Assignments for 11/13: ∞ Read <i>Postmodernism for Historians</i> , 92-116; 158-181
Tuesday, November 18	Continuation: Postmodernism
Thursday, November 20	<b>No Class Meeting: Research Day</b>

Tuesday, November 25	<b>First Draft of Research Paper Due (online)</b> <b>No Class Meeting: Research Day</b>
Thursday, November 27	Thanksgiving: No Class Meeting
Tuesday, December 2	<b>No Class Meeting: Research Day</b>
Thursday, December 4	Class Presentations, Group I
Tuesday, December 9	Class Presentations, Group II
Finals Week	<b>Final Draft of Research Paper Due (in person)</b>