

Methodologies of History: Environmental History

History 301
Fall 2008
T, Th 2 – 3:15pm

LA5- 148

Professor Sedrez
Office: FO2-101
Office Hours: T 12-1:30, W 9:30-11:30 (by
appointment only), Th 10:11:30 5-6
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Course Description

This is a required course for all history majors in the first semester of upper-division work. This course will introduce the history major to the study and practice of history. The assignments in this course will develop your skills as a historian: how to ask interpretive and methodological questions, how to research primary and secondary sources; how to use and evaluate evidence; how to footnote and use bibliographies; how to present findings and argue persuasively; how to write a historical study; and so forth. More often than not, this course will take the form of a workshop and will have a very “hands-on” and interactive approach. The skills you learn and the experience you gain in this course will prepare you for upper-division courses in the history major. Furthermore, students will be introduced to the concept of portfolios and the process of compilation.

The History Department now requires majors to move through a series of courses that begins with History 301, is followed by 302, and culminates in a Senior Seminar (499) that matches one of the areas of concentration selected for the major. History 499 must be taken in the last semester of work, or after 18 units of upper-division work have been completed in the major. Those 18 units must include at least six units (two courses) in the concentration that is the focus of the 499. Students in 499 are required to assemble a portfolio that reflects their work in upper-division history courses. This portfolio is designed to enable students to show development in the major, and their mastery of key analytical, mechanical, and presentation skills. As a part of the process, history majors (or prospective majors) should save all work from upper-division history courses for potential inclusion in this portfolio. For portfolio guidelines, see www.csulb.edu/depts/history.

Assessment

All of your assignments and self-evaluation form and essay will constitute your portfolio for the course; therefore, all assignments must be completed to demonstrate mastery over the various skills, tools, and methods. (The 301 portfolio is separate from the portfolio submitted in the senior seminar.) Successful completion of your final research paper is only possible if you accomplish all other tasks. Therefore, in order for you to do well in the course, you must go through the step-by-step process outlined in this syllabus. Falling behind in work is **not** an option.

Student Learning Objectives

After successful completion of the course of study, the student will be able to demonstrate the following skills and knowledge:

- Express ideas clearly in writing
 - Assessment: In-class writing assignments, research paper, annotated bibliography. Topic proposal
- Interpret and apply data from original documents
 - Assessment: Class discussions, research paper
- Demonstrate comprehension of a broad body of historical knowledge.
 - Assessment: Research paper, class discussions, PowerPoint presentation
- Develop essay responses that include a clear, defensible thesis statement and supporting evidence.
 - Assessment: Research paper, thesis workshops

- Explain how an historical event connects to or causes a larger trend or theme
 - Assessment: Research paper, class discussions, PowerPoint presentation
- Evaluate secondary materials for argument
 - Assessment: Annotated bibliography, class discussions, research paper

Technology and Resources

Each student must acquire an e-mail account if he/she does not already have one. For those who do not, you may set up an account at North Campus/New Media Center. Information is available at www.csulb.edu/ACS. Each student must also acquire a PIN number to order materials through Interlibrary Loan Services. This may be done at any library terminal on campus by going through “View My Library Record.” Writing and skill development resources are available through Writer’s Resource Lab (LAB-212, 985-4329, www.csulb.edu~wrl) and LAC (Lib E-12, 985-5350, www.csulb.edu~csulblac).

Course Policies

Enrollment in this course implies acceptance of all rules, policies, and requirements stated below:

In this course, as in others, each student is in charge of and responsible for his/her education. I am here to help in any way that I can. You may not take this course, however, if you are not a history major. If you are changing your major, you will need to provide documentation of major change.

Withdrawal Policy: Withdrawals after the first four weeks of instruction are not permitted except in cases such as an accident or serious illness where the circumstances causing the withdrawal are clearly beyond the student’s control and the assignment of an Incomplete is not practical.

Make-up Policy: Students must contact the instructor if a conflict arises that will prevent her/him from attending class. Only students who have excused absences and approval from the instructor will be able to make up a missed exam or assignment.

Incomplete: Taking an incomplete is strongly discouraged and rarely granted. Only in cases of dire emergencies beyond the student’s control will an incomplete even be considered.

Expectations and Rules of Conduct:

- Students are expected to participate in a non-intimidating classroom environment that contributes to open discussion. They are expected to think objectively and historically and to listen attentively and respectfully to others’ remarks.
- Students are expected and required to be present at every class session and to be prepared for class. Unexcused absences will be penalized.
- Students may not read, listen to radios/CDs, talk, or take part in any activity that distracts from the class.
- All cellular phones, pagers, and alarms must be turned off during class.
- Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses that will not be tolerated. They are violations of university regulations. Such actions will be subject to disciplinary action. (See Schedule of Classes for details). While all written work must be exclusively your work, you may study and prepare for discussions together.

Required Readings: Bring to every class meeting as required by assignments.

- Syllabus
- Jules R. Benjamin, *A Student’s Guide to History*
- Vincent Ruggiero, *Beyond Feelings: A Guide to Critical Thinking*
- Department of History Manual of Style
- Articles available on BeachBoard and through E-Reserves (on the library website)

Goals: Divided into four progressive units with some overlap.

- I. Introduction:
 1. Students will demonstrate familiarity with major “schools” of current historical practice.
 2. Students will demonstrate ability to distinguish between various genres of secondary historical literature, including textbooks, monographs, and periodicals, using the resources of the University library.
 3. Students will be able to distinguish between a primary and secondary source.
- II. Mechanical Skills
 4. Students will be able to demonstrate an organized system of note taking and the mechanics of research.
 5. Students will be able to demonstrate appropriate footnoting and bibliographical entry.
 6. Students will be able to locate and retrieve appropriate sources (both primary and secondary) relative to a historical topic.
 7. Students will master computer skills appropriate to the discipline.
- III. Analytical Skills
 8. Students will demonstrate the ability to formulate focused historical questions.
 9. Students will demonstrate the ability to detect bias and point of view in primary and secondary sources.
 10. Students will demonstrate the ability to interpret and evaluate certain kinds of evidence: material, media, oral, quantitative and statistical, textual, and visual.
 11. Students will be able to make inferences, form generalizations, and draw conclusions based upon examined evidence.
- IV. Presentation
 12. Students will demonstrate the ability to create, organize, and support a thesis in written and oral presentations.

Requirements

I. Attendance and Participation: Prompt and regular attendance is mandatory. A great deal of our work, including exercises, discussions, and so forth is done in class. Students **must** notify me if they are to be absent. We will then work out a way to make up for absence from class. In addition, students must be ready, willing, and able to participate in class discussions on all reading assignments and issues pertinent to the week’s topic. This means bringing appropriate material, texts, and assignments. Keeping current with reading is crucial. Students must have read and thought about the week’s material before coming to class. This includes raising issues and posing and answering questions. Knowledge and understanding of readings will enable us to have productive class sessions. Attendance without participation will be insufficient and will be reflected in students’ grades (15% of grade).

II. Writing Assignments: All work must be typed, double-spaced, with one-inch margins and 12-point font, and must be turned in at the beginning of class the day that it is due. Students will be required to rewrite assignments that (1) are lacking in proper analysis, (2) are replete with grammatical errors, or (3) do not meet basic requirements.

1. Essays: Students must write a short essay each week. When readings are assigned, students must provide a brief summary (1 page) of the major points of the weekly reading. When no reading is assigned,

the essays must include a statement (1 page) explaining the process students went through to meet the goal(s) of the week. Students must provide evidence to show that they have achieved the set goal. Students will provide their own evidence or indicators. A rationale statement explaining why the goal is important, what was the process of achieving that goal must precede each indicator, and how the indicator provided relates to or meets the goal (basically the reasons for including the material). This will allow students to demonstrate a clear understanding of a particular goal and the goal's significance to the student of history. Some weeks, we will work on goals together in class. When we do this, students may use the material discussed in class to demonstrate the above (25% of grade).

2. *Research Paper*: 10-12 pages. This is the culmination of the course on the topic of your choice. Since students may not have extensive practice in writing, guidance from me and the breakdown in stages of the research and writing process will help. Students may also seek help from the Learning Skills Center or the Writer's Resource Lab. The research paper should reflect what students have learned and questions that still remain. The paper will not and cannot possibly be a comprehensive analysis or a completely finished product but an exercise on how to write a research paper, how to raise and answer historical questions in an organized, analytical, and well-supported manner (25% of grade).

Stages for writing the research paper:

Topic Proposal: Students will spend the first few weeks of the semester thinking about a possible paper topic. Think about what interests you, what region, what period, etc. The only requirement is that it be a topic that discusses some aspect of Environmental History. Then go to the library to see what sources are available. Students must write an essay (1-2 pages), stating the topic they have chosen, the reasons for choosing said topic, the questions the topic raises for them, and why they think it is a significant subject. Include possible primary and secondary sources. Due week 5 (5% of grade).

Revised Proposal with Annotated Bibliography: The revised proposal must contain a working thesis statement, the historical questions the student is trying to investigate, the sources he/she will be using, the kinds of evidence that are available. An annotated bibliography is a full citation of your sources followed by notes for each entry in order to explain the contents, relevance, and value of specific bodies of material. Due week 8 (10% of grade).

Oral Presentation of above on the same day: (5% of grade).

Comments on Drafts: Students will turn in drafts of the research paper and receive feedback from each other and me. Groups of 3-4 students will read other students' papers and write comments in the margins, on the back of the last page, and on the form given out to in class. Some of the things to look at are: thesis, questions raised, argument(s), supporting evidence, organization, structure, writing, etc. Don't be shy about providing constructive criticism and giving suggestions for improvement. First draft due week 10; second draft due week 12 (5% of grade).

Oral Presentation of Research Paper: The oral presentation will be in class and of work in progress. Oral presentations will be given using PowerPoint and guidelines will be provided in advance. Students will bring a current version of the paper to class as well as copies of an outline of the presentation for everyone, explain to the class what the topic is, the questions they are trying to answer, the conclusions they are drawing, their approach, difficulties they had or are having, and questions that still remain unresolved. Students will give feedback. Due weeks 13-14. (10% of grade).

Final Research Paper: It must be typed, double-spaced, with one-inch margins and 12-point font. It must be a grammatically correct, well-researched, well-thought out, well-organized, and well-written

paper that is well supported by primary and secondary evidence and includes appropriate footnotes and bibliography. Notes used to write the paper must also accompany paper. Due week 15.

Note: All of the above will be included in a portfolio that will be submitted during week 15.

SCHEDULE

Week One (September 2 – September 4): Introduction

Tuesday

Topics: Introduction to the course, What is history, What is a historian

Exercise:

- 1) Brainstorming in class with a newspaper article regarding possible historical questions.
- 2) Write in-class: what is history, historian, why we study history, what is a historical question?

Thursday

Readings:

- 1) Jules Benjamin, *A Student's Guide to History*, 1-17
- 2) (Beachboard under Course Documents) Simon Romero, "A Barren Port Waits Eagerly For Its People," in *New York Times*, October 6, 2005 (Beachboard under Course Documents); Ari Kelman, "In the Shadow of a Disaster," in *The Nation*, December 14, 2005

Exercise:

- 1) Discuss readings and in-class essays.

Assessment:

Essay #1 (no more than one page to be completed in class) on your first experience with history or your memory of what first interested you in history.

[Meets goal I, 1]

Week Two (September 9 – September 11): History and An Overview of Sources (Primary and Secondary)

Tuesday

Readings:

- 1) Benjamin, *A Student's Guide to History*, 77-97; Ruggiero, chap. 5.

Exercise:

- 1) Class visit to the library for workshop.

[Meets goals I, 1 and II, 7]

Thursday

Readings: Benjamin, *A Student's Guide to History*, 19-25;

Assessment/Exercise:

- 1) In-class exercise assessing ability to make distinction between primary and secondary sources.
- 2) Examine an example of each genre of secondary historical literature: textbook, monograph, periodical..

[Meets goals II, 2-3]

Week Three (September 16-18): Fields and Disciplines, Locating Sources

Tuesday

Readings:

- 1) (E-Reserves through CSULB Library Website) Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacob, *Telling the Truth about History*, Introduction, Chapters 1 (“The Heroic Model of Science”), Ruggiero, chap. 6.

Assessment/Exercise:

- 1) Essay #2 (no more than one page) on readings, pinpointing main arguments, and discussion of main themes.
- 2) Take notes on readings and give a full bibliographical citation as demonstrated in guide book. Bring notes to class to help in discussion and save them for the portfolio.

[Meets goals I, 1 and II, 4]

Thursday

Readings:

- 1) (E-Reserves through CSULB Library Website; and Beachboard) Hughes, “Defining Environmental History”

Assessment/Exercise:

- 1) Take notes on readings. Bring notes to class to help in discussion and save them for the portfolio.

Assessment:

- 1) Essay #3 (no more than one page) – explaining the process of where you have begun looking for the information for your topic, how you have begun to retrieve it using the computer, and what are your results so far. Include a list of scholarly articles relevant to your topic and one website where you found a primary or secondary source. Identify the website by address (URL) and by brief description.
- 2) E-mail me the above essay as an attachment in Word by Sunday, September 21 and continue to communicate with me by e-mail at least once every two to three weeks to set up appointments to talk about your progress. You may also communicate with me through e-mail.

[Meets goal II, 6-7]

Week Four (September 23 – September 25): Working with Sources and Forming Historical Questions

Tuesday

Reading: Ruggiero, chaps. 1 to 3.

Exercise: Discussion of a primary source to tone critical thinking skills.

Assessment:

- 1) Visit library independently. Find a primary source on your chosen topic.
- 2) Essay #4 – describe and analyze document and state where you found it. Include a copy of the primary source – in part or in full (enough for others to recognize it as a primary source).

[Meets goals I, 2-3]

Thursday

Exercise:

- 1) In-class workshop – coming up with historical questions and focusing and narrowing questions based on a historical event or subject presented in class. Learning about two of the most significant questions for the historian: So what? Who cares?
- 2) Discussion of how to find author’s historical questions.

Assessment:

- 1) Essay #5 – explaining the process of sifting through broad general questions to more focused ones that are historically significant, by using your own topic. Due Thursday, October 2.

[Meets goal II, 8]

Week Five (September 30 – October 2): Interpreting and Evaluating Evidence: Material, Media, Oral, Quantitative and Statistical, Textual and Visual

Tuesday

Exercise: Library workshop (Individual topic focus) – Meeting Greg Armento

Assessment:

- 1) Essay on historical questions due.

Thursday

Reading: Benjamin, *A Student's Guide to History*, 25-36, Ruggiero, chp. 7; Hughes, "Thoughts on doing environmental history". (BB)

Exercise:

- 1) Bring in one non-print/non-textual source.

Assessment:

- 1) Presentation – What kinds of evidence are you using for your paper and why? How would you use others for your topic?

[Meets goal III, 10]

Week Six (October 7 – October 9): Deciding on a historical topic

Tuesday

Readings: Benjamin, *A Student's Guide to History*, 73-75, 107-115; Ruggiero, chap. 16 & 17.

Exercise:

- 1) Go over proposal guidelines.
- 2) Discussion of student paper topics

Assessment:

- 1) Write an essay of 1-2 pages, stating the topic you have chosen, the reasons for choosing said topic, the questions the topic raises for you, why you think it is a significant subject, and possible sources you will be choosing.
- 2) Bring in an example of a primary or secondary source you plan to use for the paper. It must be one you found on the Internet, using criteria from "Evaluating Internet Sources" handout and information gained from library workshop.

[Meets goal III, 6]

Thursday

Reading: Benjamin, *A Student's Guide to History*, 57-67; Ruggiero chap. 18, 19.

Exercise:

- 1) In-class discussion guidelines on how to assess, be critical yet constructive of each other's work, what makes a good history essay or research paper, some common grammatical problems and solutions, and the rubric.

[Meets goals III, 6 and 8]

Week Seven (October 14 – October 16): How to take notes and Detecting Bias

Tuesday

Readings: Benjamin, *A Student's Guide to History*, 120-125, review 110-115; Ruggiero, chap. 8, 9 &10.

Exercise/Assessment:

- 1) Bring in notes from week 2. Also, bring a few blank index cards.
- 2) In-class workshop using a few pages to help you develop a proper and consistent style that works best for you. We will discuss how to take notes, what to take notes of, keeping track of bibliography, and how to paraphrase correctly.
- 3) You will turn in all notes you took for the research paper in this course at the end of the semester along with your final paper.
- 4) Write a one-paragraph paraphrase (essay #6) on one paragraph from one of your secondary or primary sources. Also, include a copy of the original page used. Submit both on Thursday, October 16.

[Meets goal II, 4]

Thursday

Exercise/Assessment:

- 1) In-class exercise to assess whether students can evaluate sources for bias, fact, opinion, and reliability.
- 2) Write a personal essay (essay #7) of when you were ten, of last year, and of yesterday. Be prepared to discuss issues of bias, inclusion, and memory based on your readings and your own view. Due via email by Sunday, October 19.
- 3) Essay #8 – explain your process of detecting bias using in-class exercise and your own sources for the research history as well as your personal history. Due Tuesday, October 21.

[Meets goal III, 9]

Week Eight (October 21 – October 23): Footnoting and Annotated Bibliography

Tuesday

Readings: Benjamin, *A Student's Guide to History*, 130-158

Assessment:

- 1) Bring in a list of sources in proper bibliographic form and footnote form (2 primary sources and 3 secondary sources).
- 2) In-class exercises on footnote and bibliography style.
- 3) Activity on how to footnote.

[Meets goal II, 5]

Thursday

Written and Oral Presentation of Revised Proposal with Annotated Bibliography.

The revised proposal must contain a working thesis statement, the historical questions the student is trying to investigate, the sources he/she will be using, and the kinds of evidence that are available. An annotated bibliography is a full citation of your sources followed by notes for each entry in order to explain the contents, relevance, and value of specific bodies of material.

Exercise:

- 1) Oral presentation of revised proposal.
- 2) Groups will evaluate revised proposals based on guidelines passed out in class.
- 3) Sign up for outline meetings next week.

Week Nine (October 28 – October 30): Thesis and Outlines

Each student must make an appointment to see me at least once during this week. Together, we will develop a working outline (essay #10).

Tuesday

- 1) Thesis Workshop
- 2) Discuss thesis statements.

- Outline Meetings

[Meets goal III, 9]

Thursday

Reading: Benjamin, *A Student's Guide to History*, 113-115, 152-178

Exercise:

- 1) Discuss organizing research, writing, and revising in preparation of writing first draft.
- 2) Go over guidelines for drafts.
- 3) Bring in 25 completed note cards.

Assessment:

- 1) In addition to final research paper- Essay #9 discussing in-class exercise and the inferences, conclusions and so forth you have drawn from your own sources – due via e-mail by Friday, October 31.

- Outline Meetings

[Meets goals III, 10-11]

Week Ten (November 6):

First Draft Due. Students will turn in drafts of their research paper with footnotes and bibliography and receive feedback from each other. Meet in class to exchange draft papers with group members. Pairs of students will read each other's papers and write comments on the evaluation forms as well as margins. Some of the things to look at are thesis, questions raised, argument(s), supporting evidence, organization, structure, writing, etc. Evaluations are due to the group and me on Tuesday, November 11.

[Meets goal IV, 12]

Week Eleven (November 11 – November 13):

Tuesday

Readings: Benjamin, *A Student's Guide to History*, 43-45

Exercise:

- 1) Meet in class to receive evaluations and comments from group and me regarding the first draft.
- 2) Set up oral presentation schedule.
- 3) Discuss the requirements for oral presentations and provide suggestions and guidelines.
- 4) Individual appointments to discuss draft.

Thursday

- 1) Individual appointments to discuss draft.

Week Twelve (November 18, 20)

Tuesday

Studentes invited to attend lecture by Prof. Jorge Marcone at AS328, 3:45 pm

Thursday

Second Draft Due: Make sure you have made considerable improvement based on comments made by classmates and me. Consult rubric for further discussion.

Week Thirteen: THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY November 26 – November 28

Week Fourteen (December 2 – December 4):

Thursday and Thursday

Oral Presentations: The oral presentation will be in class. Be well prepared, tailoring your presentation according to guidelines. Email or drop off your PowerPoint presentation prior to class meeting. Students will bring a current version of the paper to class, explain what the topic is, the questions they are trying to answer, the conclusions they are drawing, their approach, and difficulties they are having.

[Meets goal IV, 12]

Week Fifteen: December 11

Final Research Paper: It must be typed, double-spaced, with one-inch margins and 12-point font. It must be a grammatically correct, well-researched, well-thought out, well-organized, and well-written paper that is well supported by primary and secondary evidence and includes appropriate footnotes and bibliography. Paper must also be accompanied by copies of notes used to write the paper, the rough drafts, essays, topic proposal, revised proposal, peer evaluations of others' work, and self-evaluation – in other words, all materials which make up the portfolio.

The final paper will be submitted through Turnitin.

[Meets goal IV, 12]