

The Writing of History
HIST 3903
Spring 2020
T 3:30pm to 6:20pm – PY 202

Dr. Mary Draper
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Office: O'Donohue 233
Office Hours: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays: 9 - 10 am
 Tuesdays and Thursdays: 11 – 12 pm

Course Description:

What is history? And how does one write it? This course introduces students to the methods and skills historians use to write history. Throughout the semester, we will break down the steps of writing a research paper. We will discuss how to choose a paper topic, develop thesis statements, assess primary and secondary sources, outline papers, and write a polished paper. At the end of the semester, students will submit a 10-12 page paper (on a topic of their choice) based on original research.

Readings:

The following books are available for purchase at the bookstore or on Amazon.

Required:

- William Kelleher Storey, *Writing History* (Oxford, 2015)
- John H. Arnold, *History: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 200) (freely available online through Moffett)

Recommended:

- Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research, Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (Chicago)

Other readings including primary sources, chapters, and articles are posted on D2L.

Grading and Assignments:

Your grade for this course is based on the following percentages:

Participation:	10%
Proposal:	5%
Two Reviews (one book & one database):	20%
Annotated Bibliography:	10%
Primary Source Analysis	10%
Outline & 3-5 Page Excerpt:	10%
In-class presentation:	5%
First & Final Drafts:	30%

Grading Scale: A = 100-90; B = 89-80; C = 79-70; D = 69-60, F = 59 and below

A note on discussion grades and attendance:

This is a discussion-based class. To succeed in this class, you need to participate. Come prepared to talk about the readings, engage in class discussions, and participate in in-class activities. You will also be

asked to complete informal writing assignments. I will notify you in class of those assignments and when they are due.

Attendance is mandatory and will be taken at the beginning of class. If you miss two or more times, in addition to earning a zero for your discussion grade, your final grade will be penalized two percentage points for each additional class missed. If you must miss and know about the absence ahead of time, please inform me. If you will be absent, you must turn it in ahead of time.

Research Paper:

You will write a research paper on a topic of your choice. I am happy to help brainstorm topics with you, or you're welcome to discuss potential topics with other professors in the department.

To write this paper, you will turn in the following assignments:

Proposal: Two- or three-page proposal outlining your topic, the question you want to answer, and the primary and secondary sources you intend to use.

Book Review: Three- to four-page review of a book relating to your topic. This should assess the book's argument and evidence. The book should be published since 2010.

Annotated Bibliography: Locate 15 secondary sources (book or articles) and assess their value to your research project. Write 2-4 sentences about the work's argument, what sources they use, what it leaves out, and how it relates to your project.

Database and Digital History Project Review: One-page analysis of a primary source database or digital history project

Primary Source Analysis: Two-page analysis of a primary source relating to your research topic.

Outline & 4-6 Page Excerpt: A rough draft of four to six pages of your paper, which you will share with a peer reviewer (whom I will designate) who will compose a 300 to 500 word memo with comments/suggestions about the draft. The draft should also include an outline of what comes before/after the excerpt.

First Drafts: A rough draft, which you will share with a peer reviewer (whom I will designate) who will compose a 300 to 500 word memo with comments/suggestions about the draft. In particular, think about what needs to be added to or removed from the paper to make the argument stronger.

In-class presentation: A five-minute presentation on your project, followed by a question and answer session with your classmates

Final Drafts: A polished ten- to twelve-page paper based on original research. It should include footnotes as well as a bibliography.

A note on assignments:

Please bring a hard copy of your assignment to class on the day it is due. I will not accept e-mailed assignments. Moreover, be sure to complete every assignment. It will be impossible to earn an A in the class if you do not complete all of the assignments.

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Schedule:

- Jan. 21: **WEEK 1: What is History?**
Due: Start thinking about a paper topic
- Jan. 28: **WEEK 2: How does one write history?**
Read: Arnold, *History*, Ch. 1 on “Questions about murder and history”
Storey, *Writing History*, Ch. 1 on “Getting Started”
Storey, *Writing History*, Ch. 3 on “Writing History Faithfully”
Due: Bring to class a history book you’ve enjoyed from another class, or one that you’ve checked out from the library.
Continue thinking about paper topic
- Feb. 4 **WEEK 3: Library Resources**
Read: Storey, *Writing History*, Ch. 2 on “Interpreting Source Materials”
Storey, *Writing History*, Ch. 4 on “Using Sources to Make Inferences”
Due: Continue thinking about paper topic
- Feb. 11 **WEEK 4: Evaluating Sources**
Read: Arnold, *History*, Ch. 2 on “From the tails of dolphins to the tower of politics”
Storey, *Writing History*, Ch. 5 on “Get Writing!”
Due: **Proposal**
Schedule meeting with Dr. Draper to review proposal
- Feb. 18 **WEEK 5: Research and Archives**
Read: Arnold, *History*, Ch. 3 on “‘How it really was’: truth, archives, and the love of old things”
Storey, *Writing History*, Ch. 6 on “Build an Argument”
Storey, *Writing History*, Ch. 7 on “Narrative Techniques for Historians”
Due: **Database or Digital History Review**

- Feb. 25 **WEEK 6: Writing**
Read: Storey, *Writing History*, Ch. 8 on “Writing Sentences in History”
 Storey, *Writing History*, Ch. 9 on “Choose Precise Words”
Due: **Book Review**
- Mar. 3 **WEEK 7: Primary Sources**
Due: **Primary Source Analysis**
 Bring to class a primary source related to your project. It can be the one you analyze or it can be another one (perhaps one you’re unsure what to do with).
- Mar. 10 **WEEK 8: Historiography**
Read: Arnold, *History*, Ch. 4 on “Voices and silences”
Due: **Annotated Bibliography**
- Mar. 17 **NO CLASS**
- Mar. 24 **WEEK 10: Paleography and other Skills**
Read: Arnold, *History*, Ch. 5 on “Journeys of a thousand miles”
 Storey, *Writing History*, Ch. 10 on “Revising and Editing”
- Mar. 31 **WEEK 11: Organization and Topic Sentences**
Due: **Outline and Four- to Six-Page Excerpts**
- Apr. 7 **WEEK 12: Weird History (or, if the past seems weird, you don’t understand it)**
Read: Arnold, *History*, Ch. 6 on “The killing of cats; or is the past a foreign country?”
Due: **Peer Review of Excerpts**
- Apr. 14 **WEEK 13: Revising and Editing**
Due: **First Drafts**
 Schedule meeting with Dr. Draper to review draft before April 21
- Apr. 21 **WEEK 14: Footnotes**
Read: Arnold, *History*, Ch. 7 on “The telling of truth”
Due: **Peer Review of First Drafts**
- Apr. 28 **WEEK 15: Presenting research**
Due: **In-class Presentations**
- May. 5 **WEEK 16: You made it!**
Due: **Final Drafts (12-15 pages)**