



Course Syllabus: Methods and Historiography
College of Humanity and Social Sciences
HIST 6103 Section 180
Fall Semester 2024

Contact Information

Instructor: Brandon Blakeslee

Office: OD 217

Office hours: Mon/Wed: 12:30pm-2:00pm; Tue: 1:00pm-3:00pm

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Course Description

Methods and Historiography is a two-part class. The methods part of the class introduces graduate students to traditional historical research methodology such as document evaluation, information management, content analysis, interpretation, and writing skills. The historiography part of the class introduces graduate students to the study of the history of historical research and interpretation from the Greeks to the present with emphasis on American historians. The class is required for all graduate students.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

- Sarah Maza, *Thinking About History*, (University of Chicago; 2017)
- Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, (Cornell University Press; 2009)
- EJ Hobsbawm, *Nations & Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, (Cambridge University Press, 2012)
- Anne Lamott, *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*, (Doubleday Books, 1995)
- Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, (Open Road Integrated Media; 2015) link to the [ebook](#)
- Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Regions, 1650-1815*, (Cambridge University Press, 2011) link to the [ebook](#)
- Ian Tyrrell, *Transnational Nation: United States History in Global Perspective Since 1789*, (Palgrave Macmillan; 2015)
- Selected Readings on D2L

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook](#)

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work, not the individual to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

[Office of Student Conduct](#)

Moffett Library

Moffett Library provides resources and services to support student's studies and assignments, including books, peer-reviewed journals, databases, and multimedia materials accessible both on campus and remotely. The library offers media equipment checkout, reservable study rooms, and research assistance from librarians to help students effectively find, evaluate, and use information. Get started on this [Moffett Library webpage](#) to explore these resources and learn how to best utilize the library.

Grading

Grading – Your grade will be out of 1000 possible points spread out over four categories of assignments: Reading Responses (250 points), Research Project (500 points), Professional Development (100 points), and Participation (150 points)

Table 1: Points allocated to each assignment

Assignments	Points
Reading Responses	250
Grant Proposal	50
Research Prospectus	200
Book Review	50
Historiographic Paper	200
Curriculum vitae	50
Cover Letter	50
Participation	150
Total Points	1000

Table 2: Total points for final grade.

Grade	Points
A	900
B	800 to 899
C	700 to 799
D	600 to 699
F	Less than 600

Reading Responses and Participation

Your reading responses and participation are tied together and represent 30% of your total grade.

- Reading Response (25 points each, 250 total): Due at the beginning of class, this is a two page paper where you identify the central argument the author is making, the sources the author uses, how it fits with the other books we have been reading, and other interesting information that stood out to you. The response is a way to organize your thoughts to discuss the book in class.
- Participation: Assessed at the end of the semester and worth 150 points of your grade. This is where I grade your participation in our book discussion and other class material. If you turn in all your assignments but do not participate in class, that will harm your grade.

Professional Development

A Master's degree is a step in the direction of becoming a professional historian and professional historians need a Curriculum Vitae (an academic resume) and a cover letter. You will write samples of both things and we will workshop them in class. Each assignment is worth 5% of your grade (50 points)

Research Project

Your research project is designed to help you in your Master's program by creating a Research Proposal and Historiographic Essay (each worth 20% of your grade or 200 points). Your Grant Proposal and Book Review (each 50 points) are designed to help you write portions of the the next paper.

- Grant Proposal (50 points)
- Research Prospectus (200 points):
 - Presentation (100 points)
 - Paper (100 points)
- Book Review (50 points)
- Historiographic Essay
 - Rough Draft Historiographic Essay (50 points)
 - Presentation (50 points)
 - Final Draft Historiographic Essay (100 points)

Extra Credit

There may be opportunities for extra credit over the semester but I do not offer individual extra credit.

Late Work

While I am generally happy to give extensions for late work, you should let me know you need an extension as soon as you can.

Important Dates

Last day for term schedule changes: August 29 (Thursday) Check the date on the [Academic Calendar](#).

Deadline to file for graduation: September 23 (Monday). Check the date on the [Academic Calendar](#).

Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:" November 25 (Monday) Check the date on the [Academic Calendar](#).

Refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#)

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all meetings of the classes in which they are enrolled. That being said, I understand that things happen and you may not be able to attend class and so I do not take attendance. However, you are still responsible for information that was discussed in class and I recommend you get notes from your fellow classmates (lecture slides will not be posted online).

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees, and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. However, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans, and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exist in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring

accommodations should make an application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibit the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state, and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License-to-carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by the MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [MSUReady – Active Shooter](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled “*Run. Hide. Fight.*” which may be electronically accessed via the University police department’s webpage: [“Run. Hide. Fight.”](#)

Grade Appeal Process

Update as needed. Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#)

***Notice:** Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

Course Schedule:

All assignments due on Tuesday is expected to be done at the start of class. All assignments due on Friday are expected to be in at midnight.

Week or Module	Readings/ Important Dates	Due Date
Week 1 8/26 to 8/30	Selected Readings in D2L	History of History 8/30
Week 2 9/2 to 9/6	<i>Thinking About History</i> (Intro-Chapter 3)	N/A
Week 3 9/9 to 9/13	<i>Thinking About History</i> (Chapter 4 – Conclusion)	N/A
Week 4 9/16 to 9/20	<i>Bird by Bird</i>	Curriculum Vitae 9/17
Week 5 9/23 to 9/27	<i>Nations and Nationalism</i> (Gellner)	Grant Proposal 9/27
Week 6 9/30 to 10/4	<i>Nations and Nationalism</i> (Hobsbawm)	N/A
Week 7 10/7 to 10/11	Prospectus Presentations	Prospectus Presentation 10/8
Week 8 10/14 to 10/18	"Vast Early America" link in D2L	Cover Letter 10/15
Week 9 10/21 to 10/25	<i>The Frontier in American History</i> link in D2L	N/A
Week 10 10/28 to 11/1	<i>The Middle Ground</i> link in D2L	N/A
Week 11 11/4 to 11/8	<i>Transnational Nation</i>	N/A
Week 12 11/11 to 11/15	Book Review presentation	Book review 11/12
Week 13 11/18 to 11/22	Historiographic Workshop (optional)	Historiographic Essay 11/22
Week 14 11/25 to 11/29	Thanksgiving Break!	N/A
Week 15 12/2 to 12/6	Historiographic Presentations	Historiographic Presentation 12/3 Final Draft 12/6