

Research Methods

HIST 6103 • Fall 2021

PROFESSOR: Dr. Mary Draper
E-MAIL: mary.draper@msutexas.edu
OFFICE: O'Donohoe 233
OFFICE HOURS: MWF – 9am to 10am
MW – 3pm to 4pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will introduce students to historical research and help them develop the practical and professional skills to succeed as a historian. We have two goals over the course of the semester: honing research skills and professionalization.

First, you will write all of the components of a research project except the final paper, including a book review, a historiographical essay (i.e. literature review), and a research prospectus. If you are completing the thesis track, these assignments should be related to your larger project. In most cases these papers will comprise the introduction of your thesis. At the end of the semester, each student will formally defend their prospectus.

Second, being a historian is as much about researching and writing as it is about understanding what historians do to support that research. This course will also introduce you to practical and professional skills such as writing grant proposals, conference proposals, cover letters, statements of purpose, and curriculum vitae.

By the end of the semester, students will better understand how historians write, think, edit, and discuss.

OBJECTIVES:

By thoughtfully engaging with course materials and completing assignments, you will be able to:

- Identify and explain the key features of academic writing genres, including research prospectuses, grant proposals, cover letters, and curriculum vitae
- Build a portfolio that showcases your research and professional materials
- Develop and articulate an original research project on a topic of your choice
- Constructively criticize your writing and the writing of your peers

READINGS:

Over the course of the semester, you will read six books as well as several articles and chapters (PDFs available on D2L). The books are as follows:

- Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Beacon Press, 1995)
- Sarah Maza, *Thinking about History* (UChicago Press, 2017)

- W. Caleb McDaniel, *Sweet Taste of Liberty: A True Story of Slavery and Restitution in America* (Oxford, 2019)
- Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Inventing the Flat Earth: Columbus and Modern Historians* (Praeger, 1991)
- Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of Nation* (Hawaii, 1994)
- Bathsheba Demuth, *Floating Coast: An Environmental History of the Bering Strait* (Norton, 2019)
- Monica Muñoz Martinez, *The Injustice Never Leaves You: Anti-Mexican Violence in Texas* (Harvard, 2018)

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING:

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

Class Participation and Readings (25%):

Attendance and Participation:	15%
Weekly Responses (2 pgs):	20%

Research Project (65%):

Grant Proposal (2-3 pgs):	5%
Research Prospectus (10-12 pgs):	20%
Book Review (2-3 pgs):	5%
Historiographical Paper (15-20 pgs):	25%

Professionalization (10%):

Curriculum Vitae/Resume	5%
Statement of Purpose/Cover Letter	5%

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

Class Participation and Readings:

- **Attendance and Participation (15%):** To succeed in this class, you need to prepare for and participate in class discussions and workshops. Come ready to talk about the readings, having thought about the author's methodologies and approaches. If you have perfect attendance but never speak, your discussion grade cannot be higher than a C. Likewise, if you do not attend class, your discussion grade will suffer. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of class. You will be given one unexcused absence. Your grade will drop one letter grade with subsequent absences.
- **Weekly Responses (2-3 pages) (20%):** On some weeks, you will come to class with a 2 to 3-page double-spaced response to the readings. These responses can take several forms. You can analyze the readings based on your own research interests. You can reflect on how an author's methodology might assist you with your own project. You can

critique, compare, and contrast the week's readings. These are meant to assist you in developing your own approach to research. They must be well organized and thoughtfully argued. The due dates of these papers are marked on your schedule.

Research Project

- **Grant Proposal (2-3 pages) (5%):** You will identify one archive and draft a grant proposal to access that archive. (Note: The archive does not need to have a fellowship and/or grants program). That proposal should outline what sources you plan to consult and how they will fit into your research project. If written correctly, parts of this proposal can be used for your Research Prospectus. This is due Sept. 8.
- **Research Prospectus (10-12 pages) (20%):** This paper will outline your research topic, identify the historical question you want to answer, and explain why you want to answer it and how you will go about doing so. Your proposal should also include an overview of the primary and secondary sources related to your research. You will circulate two drafts of this prospectus—on Sept. 20 and Nov. 22—before your final draft is due on Dec. 9.
- **Book Review (2-3 pages) (5%):** You will write a review of a book related to your research project. This review should critically engage the author's argument and methodology. It is due on Oct. 6.
- **Historiographical Paper (15-20 pages) (25%):** This paper will situate your research within the existing literature. Think of it as a narrative annotated bibliography that surveys debates within the field, critiques omissions, and shows why your own research project is necessary for a better understanding of that historical subject. A 7-10 page excerpt of this paper is due Nov. 1. The final draft is due on Dec. 9.

Professionalization (10%):

- **Curriculum Vitae/Resume (5%):** You will draft either a c.v. or resume. We will workshop these in class on September 29. Your updated one is due on Oct. 13.
- **Statement of Purpose/Cover Letter (1-2 pages) (5%):** You will draft either a cover letter for a history-related job or a statement of purpose for graduate school admissions. We will workshop these in class on October 27. Your updated one is due on Nov. 10.

CLASS FORMAT: This class consists of workshops and discussions. You will be writing something nearly every week, from book responses to research prospectuses. Moreover, you will be re-writing a lot of your assignments. For example, you will turn in three drafts of your Prospectus. You will also be giving and receiving feedback on your writing throughout the semester. This is because writing and editing are thoughtful, time-consuming processes. Rarely is a paper finished with a first draft. Lastly, you will be reading seven books and several chapters over the course the semester. You will be expected to engage the author's argument and

methodology during our discussions of these readings. Being a historian entails thinking, writing, and discussing.

ATTENDANCE AND CLASS MEETINGS IN THE AGE OF COVID: You are expected to regularly attend class. Your success depends upon your engagement with the course materials and class discussions. But, please do not come to class if you are feeling under the weather or have been exposed to COVID. No exceptions. Instead, please contact me. We'll work together to make a plan that fits your needs.

ACCOMMODATIONS: Students should visit the [DSS webpage for current students](#). If you have never applied for accommodations before you may qualify for them under the vulnerable population designation. The application may be [downloaded](#) or [completed online](#). Once an accommodations letter is provided students will discuss their specific accommodation needs with their professor(s).

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY: *“As an MSU Student, I pledge not to lie, cheat, steal, or help anyone else do so.”* Academic misconduct—cheating, collusion, plagiarism, etc.—will not be tolerated and will receive an F. For example, “cutting and pasting” from any internet source or poorly paraphrasing (i.e. changing a few words with the synonym function) without citing that source is plagiarism. It is unacceptable.

DROP DATE: Last Day to drop with a grade of “W” is October 25, 2021. It is the student’s responsibility to visit with their academic advisor prior to withdrawing from a class.

COMPUTER REQUIREMENTS: This class uses D2L. You will find readings and submit papers through D2L. It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer in this class. Computers are available on campus in various areas of the buildings.

NOTICE: Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor. Look on D2L for any relevant announcements.

OTHER RESOURCES: While not required reading, the following are helpful resources for historical writing and research.

- Kate L. Turabian, *Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertation* (any edition)
- Wayne C. Booth, *The Craft of Research* (any edition)
- Wendy Laura Belcher, *Writing Your Journal Article in Twelve Weeks* (any edition)
- Helen Sword, *The Writer’s Diet: A Guide to Fit Prose* (UChicago, 2007)

E-mail me (mary.draper@msutexas.edu) or visit me during office hours if you have any questions.

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WEEK 1 Aug. 23 Aug. 25	<p>Monday: Introduction to Class <i>In class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Review syllabus & course expectations- How to read for this class?<ul style="list-style-type: none">o W. Caleb McDaniel, “How to Read for History,” August 1, 2008: http://wcaleb.org/blog/how-to-read- How to write and cite a paper?<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Kate L. Turabian, <i>Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertation</i> (any edition)o See also https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html <p>Wednesday: How should we approach the archive? <i>Reading due:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Marisa J. Fuentes, “Power and Historical Figuring: Rachael Pringle Polgreen’s Troubled Archive,” <i>Gender & History</i> Vol. 22, No. 3 (November 2010), 564-584.- Chapter 11, “Passing,” from Catherine Kerrison’s <i>Jefferson’s Daughters: Three Sisters, White and Black, in a Young America</i> (New York: Random House, 2019), 275-308. <p><i>Assignments due:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Response Paper #1 <p><i>In class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Discussion of Fuentes and Kerrison- Brainstorm Research Project topics <p>For next week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Finish reading Michel-Rolph Trouillot, <i>Silencing the Past</i> (due Wednesday)- Identify one physical (not digital) archive related to your research. Spend some time researching its website and identifying potential sources. Be on the lookout for finding aids and other resources that will assist your research. Come to class on Monday prepared to discuss the archive you have identified.
WEEK 2	<p>Monday: What is an archive? How do scholars research in them? <i>Reading due:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Introduction and “The History of Whom?” in Sarah Maza’s <i>Thinking about History</i>, pp. 1-44

<p>Aug. 30 Sep. 1</p>	<p><i>In class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion of Maza chapter - Introduction to Archives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o How to locate them, What to do with them, How to Apply for Research Grants <p>Wednesday: Whose history do we write?</p> <p><i>Reading due:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Michel-Rolph Trouillot, <i>Silencing the Past</i> (all) <p><i>Assignments due:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Response Paper #2 <p><i>In class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion of Trouillot, <i>Silencing the Past</i> <p>For next week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Begin reading W. Caleb McDaniel, <i>Sweet Taste of Liberty</i>
<p>WEEK 3</p> <p>Sep. 6 Sep. 8</p>	<p>No Class on Monday</p> <p>Wednesday: How do you write a Prospectus?</p> <p><i>Reading due:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hunt, Lynn. "How Writing Leads to Thinking." <i>Perspectives on History</i>, February 1, 2010: https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/february-2010/how-writing-leads-to-thinking - Continue reading W. Caleb McDaniel, <i>Sweet Taste of Liberty</i> <p><i>Assignments due:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grant Proposal (2-3 page double spaced) <p><i>In class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workshop Grant Proposals - How to write a Prospectus & Strategies for Writing <p>For next week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue reading W. Caleb McDaniel, <i>Sweet Taste of Liberty</i>
<p>WEEK 4</p> <p>Sep. 13 Sep. 15</p>	<p>Monday: How do you organize research?</p> <p><i>Reading due:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ch. 8, "Passages," in Elizabeth Fenn, <i>Pox Americana: The Great Smallpox Epidemic of 1775-82</i> (Hill & Wang, 2001), pp. 224-258. - "Appendix: An Essay on Sources" in McDaniel's <i>Sweet Taste of Liberty</i>, 245-257 - McDaniel maintained an open-source wiki that organized his research. Spend some time consulting it here: http://wiki.wcaleb.rice.edu/ <p><i>In class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion of Fenn & McDaniel - How to organize research (from Zotero to wikis)

	<p>Wednesday: How do you follow archival traces?</p> <p><i>Reading due:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - W. Caleb McDaniel, <i>Sweet Taste of Liberty</i> (all) <p><i>Assignments due:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Response Paper #3 <p><i>In class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion of reading W. Caleb McDaniel, <i>Sweet Taste of Liberty</i> <p>For next week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Begin reading Russell, <i>Inventing the Flat Earth</i> - First Draft of Prospectus due
<p>WEEK 5</p> <p>Sep. 20</p> <p>Sep. 22</p>	<p>Monday: Workshopping Prospectuses</p> <p><i>Reading due:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Popova, Maria. “John Updike’s 6 Rules for Constructive Criticism.” <i>The Atlantic</i>, May 2, 2012: http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2012/05/john-updikes-6-rules-for-constructive-criticism/256643/ - Popova, Maria. “Elmore Leonard’s 10 Rules of Writing.” <i>Brain Pickings</i> (blog), August 21, 2013: https://www.brainpickings.org/2013/08/21/elmore-leonard-10-rules-of-writing/ - Temple, Emily. “‘Write a Sentence as Clean as a Bone’ And Other Advice from James Baldwin.” <i>Literary Hub</i>, August 2, 2018: https://lithub.com/write-a-sentence-as-clean-as-a-bone-and-other-advice-from-james-baldwin/ <p><i>Assignments due:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First draft of Prospectus (~10 pages double-spaced) <p><i>In class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workshop first draft of Prospectus <p>Wednesday: What is Historiography and Why does it Matter?</p> <p><i>Reading due:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “How is History Produced?” and “Causes or Meanings?” in Sarah Maza’s <i>Thinking About History</i>, 118-198 - Burt, Stephen. “All Possible Humanities Dissertations Considered as Single Tweets.” <i>The New Yorker</i>, June 10, 2015: https://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/all-possible-humanities-dissertations-considered-as-single-tweets - Michael Hattem, The Historiography of the American Revolution: A Timeline <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Spend some time exploring Hattem’s timeline. He charts how interpretations of the American Revolution have changed over time. <p><i>In class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion of Maza - What is Historiography, and why does it matter? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Why Annotated Bibliographies are your friends... - What makes a good book review?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Karin Wulf, “The Art and Craft of Review,” <i>The Scholarly Kitchen: What’s Hot and Cooking in Scholarly Publishing</i>, Jan. 9, 2017: https://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2017/01/09/the-art-and-craft-of-review/ - Introduction to WorldCat, GoogleBooks, and ILL <p>For next week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue reading Russell, <i>Inventing the Flat Earth</i> (due Monday) - Begin writing a book review relating to your own research project. Keep in mind that you will be writing a historiographical paper this semester as well.
<p>WEEK 6</p> <p>Sep. 27 Sep. 29</p>	<p>Monday: How does historical misinformation circulate?</p> <p><i>Reading due:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Russell, <i>Inventing the Flat Earth</i> - “The History of What?” in Maza, <i>Thinking About History</i>, 83-117 - “Facts or Fictions?” in Maza, <i>Thinking About History</i>, pp. 199-234 <p><i>Assignments due:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Response Paper #4 <p><i>In class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion of Maza - Guest discussion with Dr. Ziegler <p>Wednesday: How do you write a C.V. or resume?</p> <p><i>Assignments due:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Come to class with a copy of your c.v. or resume to annotate/edit. <p><i>In class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resume & C.V. Workshop - https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/job_search_writing/resumes_and_vitas/writing_the_cv.html - https://theprofessorisin.com/2016/08/19/dr-karens-rules-of-the-academic-cv/ <p>For next week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Begin reading Thongchai Winichakul, <i>Siam Mapped</i>
<p>WEEK 7</p> <p>Oct. 4 Oct. 6</p>	<p>Monday: How do you edit your own papers?</p> <p><i>Assignments due:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Before class, use this tool to analyze some of your writing: Sword, Helen. “The Writer’s Diet”: http://www.writersdiet.com/test.php <p>Wednesday: How do you spatialize history?</p> <p><i>Reading due:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “The History of Where?” in Sarah Maza’s <i>Thinking About History</i>, 45-82 <p><i>Assignments due:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Book Review due (2-3 pgs) <p><i>In class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Geospatial Tools for History

	<p>For next week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue reading Thongchai Winichakul, <i>Siam Mapped</i> (due Monday)
<p>WEEK 8</p> <p>Oct. 11</p> <p>Oct. 13</p>	<p>Monday: How do you write a history of a place?</p> <p><i>Reading due:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thongchai Winichakul, <i>Siam Mapped</i> <p><i>Assignments due:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Response Paper #5 <p><i>In class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guest discussion with Dr. Rattansengchanh <p>Wednesday: How do you conference?</p> <p><i>Reading due:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Angelini, Alessandro. "Art of the Conference Paper," November 3, 2010: https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2010/11/03/art-conference-paper <p><i>Assignments due:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Updated c.v./resume due - Identify one conference in your field. These are often hosted by organizations such as the Society for Military History, the Southern Historical Association, etc. You can find CFP (Call for Papers) on https://networks.h-net.org/h-announce <p><i>In class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Applying to a Conference - Crafting a Conference Paper - What to expect <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Lindsay Chervinsky, "Conference: A How-To Guide for Academics," https://cloudup.com/c0zioenckBS <p>For next week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Begin reading Bathsheba Demuth's <i>Floating Coast</i>
<p>WEEK 9</p> <p>Oct. 18</p> <p>Oct. 20</p>	<p>No class this week</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Schedule individual meetings with Dr. Draper to discuss research projects and historiography - You will have a 7-10 page excerpt of your historiographical paper due in two weeks. <p>For next week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue reading Bathsheba Demuth's <i>Floating Coast</i>
<p>WEEK 10</p> <p>Oct. 25</p> <p>Oct. 27</p>	<p>Monday: How do you write about human <i>and</i> non-human actors?</p> <p><i>Reading due:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bathsheba Demuth's <i>Floating Coast</i> <p><i>Assignments due:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Response Paper #6

	<p><i>In class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion of Bathsheba Demuth's <i>Floating Coast</i> <p>Wednesday: How do you apply to graduate school or history-related jobs?</p> <p><i>Reading due:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AHA Career Diversity Five Skills: https://www.historians.org/jobs-and-professional-development/career-resources/five-skills <p><i>In class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - History Job Boards - What makes a good cover letter? - What makes a good statement of purpose? <p>For next week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Begin reading Monica Muñoz Martinez, <i>The Injustice Never Leaves You</i> - Excerpt of Historiographical Paper due
<p>WEEK 11</p> <p>Nov. 1 Nov. 3</p>	<p>Monday: Workshopping Historiographical Papers</p> <p><i>Assignments due:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 7-10 page excerpt of Historiographical Paper due <p><i>In class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workshop of Excerpts <p>Wednesday: NO CLASS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Schedule meeting with Dr. Draper to discuss excerpt <p>For next week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue reading Monica Muñoz Martinez, <i>The Injustice Never Leaves You</i>
<p>WEEK 12</p> <p>Nov. 8 Nov. 10</p>	<p>Monday: How do you write about Texas?</p> <p><i>Reading due:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monica Muñoz Martinez, <i>The Injustice Never Leaves You</i> <p><i>Assignments due:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Response Paper #7 <p><i>In class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion of Monica Muñoz Martinez, <i>The Injustice Never Leaves You</i> <p>Wednesday: What's the Digital Turn?</p> <p><i>Assignments due:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cover Letter or Statement of Purpose due - Identify a digital history project that seems interesting to you. Explore its website and come to class prepared to talk about its merits and limitations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Examples of digital projects include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Musical Passage: A Voyage to 1688 Jamaica: http://www.musicalpassage.org/

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mapping the Scottish Reformation: http://mappingthescottishreformation.org/ ▪ Slave Ship in 3D Video: https://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/ship <p><i>In class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workshop Cover Letters or Statements of Purpose - What is digital history and why might it be helpful? - Prospectus Defenses: What to Expect
WEEK 13 Nov. 15 Nov. 17	<p>No class this week</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue refining and editing your Prospectus. An updated draft is due November 22. - Continue researching and writing your Historiographical Paper. It is due during Finals Week.
WEEK 14 Nov. 22 Nov. 24	<p>Monday: NO CLASS</p> <p><i>Assignments due:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Second draft of Prospectus due (to be circulated with class). You will have one more opportunity to update your prospectus after this. The final draft will be due on Friday December 3. <p>For next week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue researching and writing your Historiographical Paper - Look for prospectuses to be circulated via e-mail. Please read these ahead of the defenses. Come to the defenses prepared to engage your classmates in a conversation about their projects and methodologies.
WEEK 15 Nov. 29 Dec. 1	<p>Monday & Wednesday: Prospectus Defenses</p> <p><i>Reading:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prospectuses <p><i>In class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Defenses of Prospectuses <p>Final version of Prospectus due December 3</p>
FINALS	<p><i>Final Historiographical Paper due Thursday December 9.</i></p>

*** Readings, assignments, and schedule subject to change ***