

Syllabus
History 703: Graduate Research Seminar in U.S. History
Fall Semester 2007

Instructor Information:

Dr. Justin Nystrom

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Office Hours: T/R 10:30-11:30 and by appointment

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Course Objectives:

Your central objective in this course is the completion of a quality primary source research paper. Ideally, you will end the semester with something that you may convert into a conference paper or journal article. While we will spend some time early in the semester analyzing successful examples of essay-length research, the majority of your time in this class will be spent on your own research projects. Students should also expect to take an active role in class discussion and keen interest in the peer review process. While this class will not meet every week, I cannot overemphasize the importance of structure and time management to the successful completion of your work.

Required Texts:

There are not any books assigned for this course. We will, however, be reading journal articles that you may download either from the library's journal databases (JSTOR, ProQuest, etc.) or from Blackboard. I expect that you will retain a printed copy of the journal articles for use in class discussion.

Grading:

Participation and Peer Review, 20%. For the first three weeks of class, we will look at a variety of successful articles in American history, examining them for methodology, argument, and significance to historiography. This should help you not only conceptualize your own work, but prepare you for engaging in a qualitative peer review of your classmates' work.

Proposal, 15%. You will write a proposal outlining the questions driving your research, your expected findings, and their significance. The proposal will include a review of both the primary and secondary sources used in your work. Proposals will receive peer review. Note: A significant amount of your research should be complete by the time you write your proposal.

Preliminary Draft and Final Paper, 65%. Your paper's grade hinges upon its timely execution, intellectual content, and material execution, as well as your incorporation of the critical review process. We will engage in peer review of our draft papers.

Note:

While I will not issue letter grades for preliminary aspects of this course (discussion contributions, proposal, drafts, I will make clear where I feel that you should concentrate more effort. If at any point you are concerned about your performance in this class, please make a point of seeing me.)

Attendance Policy:

You should not miss class in graduate school.

Basic Schedule:

(Regular class meetings scheduled for Monday evening.)

As you can see, we do not meet every week. You will, however, need to plan in time to meet both with me and your thesis advisor/departmental mentor on an individual basis over the course of the semester. While our regular meetings are few, you will need to be very careful about performing regular work on your project!

Week 1 – 4: (Aug. 20, 27, (Week 3 – Labor Day) Sep. 10) Reading and review of successful journal articles.

Week 9 – Oct. 15 (Fall Break) – Class will not meet, but first round of proposals to instructor and peer critics.

Week 10 – Oct. 22 – Class meets to discuss first round of proposals/peer review. Second round of proposals to instructor and peer critics.

Week 11 – Oct. 29 – Class meets to discuss second round of proposals/peer review.

Week 14 – Nov. 14 – Draft Due to instructor/peer reviewer – Class does not meet

Week 15 – Nov. 26 – Class meets to discuss peer review of drafts (long session.)

Papers are Due the last day of class, Dec. 10.