



Martha Ryan Cipher Book (Coll. #1940)

## Introductory Research Seminar

HIS 709.01

Fall 2007

Dr. L. Tolbert

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\*Please note: the quickest way to communicate with me is through **email** rather than through my office phone.

Office: HHRA 2109

Hours: by appointment

### Course Objectives

*If we knew what we were doing, it wouldn't be called Research.*

—A . Einstein

This course is designed as an advanced introduction to professional research practice. You will develop your own research project based on your individual interests. But this course will not operate as if you were pursuing a set of unrelated independent studies. Though your topics will differ widely, you will all be facing similar research and writing problems: finding primary sources, understanding what your evidence means, presenting your findings in an interesting and compelling interpretation. Thus the subject of this course is not based on any particular historical period or topic, rather it is the historical method—the process of historical investigation, and particularly the role of writing in the research process. We will follow the approach of Booth, Colomb, and Williams, who explained in *The Craft of Research* that “writing is not just the last stage of a research project but from its beginning a guide to critical thinking.”

Your primary goal in this course is to write a compelling proposal for an original research project. You will develop the proposal in stages and, as in any professional grant competition, peer review will be an important part of the research process in the course.

By the end of the semester you should be able to:

- Recognize and understand the AHA standards of professional conduct and research practice.
- Identify and employ best practices in grant proposal writing in the humanities.
- Construct a meaningful original research problem.
- Explain the significance and contribution of your research to the appropriate historical field(s) of scholarship.
- Understand the relationship between historians and archivists and use archival finding aids to identify appropriate primary sources for your project.
- Develop a meaningful research bibliography.
- Identify and apply the best research methodologies for successfully completing your project.

## Course Readings

### Required Style Manual( at UNCG bookstore):

Kate Turabian. A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996.

### Journal Articles (Journal Finder and Reserves):

Bender, Thomas."Venturesome and Cautious": American History in the 1990s." *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 81, No. 3, *The Practice of American History: A Special Issue*. (Dec., 1994), pp. 992-1003.

Grigg, Susan, "Archival Practice and the Foundations of Historical Method," *Journal of American History* 78 (June 1991): 228-239.

Hall, Jacquelyn Dowd. "You Must Remember This": Autobiography as Social Critique," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 85, No. 2. (Sep., 1998), pp. 439-465.

Halpern, Rick. "Oral History and Labor History: A Historiographic Assessment after Twenty-Five Years," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 85, No. 2. (Sep., 1998), pp. 596-610.

Kammen, Michael G. "An Americanist's Reprise: The Pervasive Role of Histoire Probleme in Historical Scholarship Concerning the United States Since the 1960s," *Reviews in American History*, Vol. 26, No. 1, Special Issue: The Challenge of American History. (Mar., 1998), pp. 1-25.

Levine, Lawrence W. "The Unpredictable Past: Reflections on Recent American Historiography," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 94, No. 3. (Jun., 1989), pp. 671-679.

Noggle, Burl. "The Twenties: An New Historiographical Frontier," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 53, No. 2. (Sep., 1966), pp. 299-314.

Paris, Jan and Roslyn Holdzkom. *The Invisible Process: Ingenuity and Cooperation in Finding Women's Lives*. Chapel Hill: Academic Affairs Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1997. [on reserve in Jackson Library]

Steckel, Richard H. "The Quality of Census Data for Historical Inquiry: A Research Agenda," *Social Science History*, Vol. 15, No. 4. (Winter, 1991), pp. 579-599.

Tchen, John Kuo Wei. "Back to the Basics: Who Is Researching and Interpreting for Whom?" *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 81, No. 3, *The Practice of American History: A Special Issue*. (Dec., 1994), pp. 1004-1010.

Thelen, David. "The Practice of American History," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 81, No. 3, *The Practice of American History: A Special Issue*. (Dec., 1994), pp. 933-960.

## Evaluation

Class Participation	10%
Long Research Proposal	60%
Short Research Proposal	30%

There will be a series of required, research and writing exercises designed to help you develop your proposal in stages. The work you produce will be an important focus of class discussion throughout the semester. It is therefore essential that you complete this work on time. Your class participation grade will be based in part on the quality of your work on these assignments. See the following due dates:

30 August	Preliminary Topic Description (use form posted on Blackboard)
13 September	Using SHC Finding Aids: <a href="http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv.html">http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv.html</a> Use the online finding aids to locate at least one folder or box you would request with research potential for your project. Write a description of your search process and rationale for your selections based on how your choice fits your overall research goal.
2 October	Statement of research problem due
11 October	Historiography section due
25 October	Methodology section and revised bibliography due.
8 November	Short Proposal due (3 single-spaced pages)
6 December	Final Long Proposal due (about 20 pages)

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## Course Schedule

23 August	Getting started: course goals and how we'll achieve them
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## What is a Research Proposal?

30 August

Standards of Professional Conduct/What is original research?/Practical approaches for defining a workable research topic

Read:

NEH policy on research misconduct:

<http://www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/researchmisconduct.html>

AHA Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct

<http://www.historians.org/pubs/Free/ProfessionalStandards.cfm#SharedValues>

Grant competitions:

<http://www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/fellowships.html>

<http://www.acls.org/burkguide.htm>

<http://www.americanantiquarian.org/longterm.htm>

**Assignment:** Preliminary topic overview, 1-2 pages; email your topic description to the class list by . All students should read proposals and come to class prepared with questions and strategies for developing the focus of each topic idea.

6 September

Beyond Google: Search strategies and resources for constructing a meaningful research bibliography

Read:

Thelen, David. "The Practice of American History," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 81, No. 3, *The Practice of American History: A Special Issue*. (Dec., 1994), pp. 933-960.

Tchen, John Kuo Wei. "Back to the Basics: Who Is Researching and Interpreting for Whom?" *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 81, No. 3, *The Practice of American History: A Special Issue*. (Dec., 1994), pp. 1004-1010.

13 September

Finding Evidence: Working with archivists on the web and in the archive

Read:

Grigg, Susan, "Archival Practice and the Foundations of Historical Method," *Journal of American History* 78 (June 1991): 228-239.

Paris, Jan and Roslyn Holdzkom. *The Invisible Process: Ingenuity and Cooperation in Finding Women's Lives*. Chapel Hill: Academic Affairs Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1997.

**Assignment:** Using SHC Finding Aids: <http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv.html> Use the online finding aids to locate at least one folder or box you would request with research potential for your project. Write a description of your search process and rationale for your selections based on how your choice fits your overall research goal.

## What is the Role of Historiography in the Research Process?

20 September            What is historiography?

Read:

Noggle, Burl. "The Twenties: An New Historiographical Frontier," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 53, No. 2. (Sep., 1966), pp. 299-314.

Levine, Lawrence W. "The Unpredictable Past: Reflections on Recent American Historiography," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 94, No. 3. (Jun., 1989), pp. 671-679.

Bender, Thomas. "Venturesome and Cautious": American History in the 1990s." *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 81, No. 3, *The Practice of American History: A Special Issue*. (Dec., 1994), pp. 992-1003.

27 September            What is the difference between a research topic and a research problem?

Read:

Kammen, Michael G. "An Americanist's Reprise: The Pervasive Role of Histoire Probleme in Historical Scholarship Concerning the United States Since the 1960s," *Reviews in American History*, Vol. 26, No. 1, Special Issue: The Challenge of American History. (Mar., 1998), pp. 1-25.

4 October                What's your problem?

**Assignment:**

Distribute a statement of your research problem to the class list by the end of the work day on **Monday, 2 October**.

## What is Methodology?

11 October                It's about the nature of the evidence you are using

Read:

Steckel, Richard H. "The Quality of Census Data for Historical Inquiry: A Research Agenda," *Social Science History*, Vol. 15, No. 4. (Winter, 1991), pp. 579-599.

Halpern, Rick. "Oral History and Labor History: A Historiographic Assessment after Twenty-Five Years," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 85, No. 2. (Sep., 1998), pp. 596-610.

**Assignment:** Historiography section due

18 October                    It's about the strategies you employ for analyzing your evidence

Read:

Paris, Jan and Roslyn Holdzkom. *The Invisible Process: Ingenuity and Cooperation in Finding Women's Lives*. Chapel Hill: Academic Affairs Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1997.

Hall, Jacquelyn Dowd. "You Must Remember This": Autobiography as Social Critique," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 85, No. 2. (Sep., 1998), pp. 439-465.

**Assignment:** Bring to class photocopies of 1-2 pages of a secondary source from your research bibliography in which the scholar discusses a methodological issue that is important for your project or research goals.

25 October    No Class

**Assignment:** Methodology section and revised bibliography due

## Putting the Final Proposal Together

1 November                    the short version vs. the long version

8 November                    Methodology Workshop

**Assignment:** Short proposals due—distribute to class list

15 November                    Short Proposals/peer review

22 November                    Thanksgiving Holiday

29 November                    Short Proposals/peer review

6 December                    Final Long Proposals due