

HISTORY 652/CRN 42189
RESEARCH SEMINAR IN AMERICAN HISTORY:
19th-20th Century United States
FALL 2010
Monday 3:30-5:30 pm/UNIV 319

Professor Nancy Gabin
 University Hall 121
 Office hours:

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 Tuesdays 12:00-1:00 & by appointment

This course enables graduate students to research any topic in 19th and 20th century United States history. This course is not limited to graduate students in history; graduate students in related fields are quite welcome. The course is a research seminar. Students will engage in original research in primary sources and produce a major paper (a journal article or thesis chapter) by the end of the semester. In the first weeks of the semester, we will explore the sources available for research in the history of the United States and consider the process of scholarly research and writing. After they have defined a topic, students will devote the middle part of the semester to intensive research. In the last weeks of the semester, student papers will be presented and evaluated in class.

I have asked Follett's and University Bookstore to order the following paperback book.

- Wayne C. Booth, *et al.*, *The Craft of Research*. 3/e. University of Chicago Press, 2008

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1—August 23, 2010

- Introductions
- Goals and purposes
- Finding a topic
- Finding sources

Week 2—August 30, 2010

Read through Booth, *et al.*, *The Craft of Research* (especially Chapters 1-6) and look at the tables of contents of and/or browse recent issues of journals such as *Journal of American History*, *American Historical Review*, *Journal of Social History*, *Labor*, *Journal of Women's History*, and *American Quarterly* for inspiration in framing your own seminar project and for an overview of current scholarship in U. S. history.

- Defining historical scholarship and making an argument
- Doing research
- Writing the paper

Week 3—September 6, 2010 Labor Day class does not meet

Week 4—September 13, 2010

Presentation of student topics:

- Students will discuss briefly their research questions, the relevant secondary literature, and pertinent primary sources and respond to questions and suggestions. Each presentation and response to questions will take about 15 minutes (8 students @ 15 mins/ea = 2 hours).
- Students also will submit electronically to Professor Gabin a paper prospectus—a written statement of their topic, including research questions, a review of relevant secondary literature, a research agenda, and a bibliography of secondary and primary sources.

Please address the following questions in preparing your paper prospectus:

1. What research problem or question do you intend to address in your paper?
2. Why is this an interesting question? Why is it problematic? Why is it significant?

3. How far along are you in your thinking and research? What do you expect to discover? Are you ready yet to formulate a thesis statement? If so, what is it?
4. Attach or include a working bibliography of the sources you have used so far and intend to consult. Separate them into two categories (secondary sources and primary sources) and use the Chicago Manual of Style to format the entries. Write short annotations (a few sentences will suffice) for material you have already read.

Weeks 5-13—September 20-November 15, 2010

Research—no class meetings but two written assignments are due during these nine weeks.

- **Exploratory Essay:** As a progress report, you will write one exploratory essay in which you (again) propose your research problem and write a narrative of your thought process in trying to think through the problem. It should be a first-person, chronologically organized account of your thinking process as you explore possible answers to your research question. Begin by describing what the question is and how and why you became interested in it. Then, narrate the evolving process of your thinking. The exploratory essay should include both external details (what you read, how you found it, who you talked to) and internal mental details (what you were thinking about, how your ideas were or are evolving). For this essay, it does not matter whether you reach a final position or answer your research question. I am interested in your process, not your final product. Show me, for example, your frustration when a promising source turned out to be useless. Show me how new ideas continually led you to reformulate your question through expansion, narrowing, shifting of focus, or whatever. Make your exploratory essay an interesting intellectual detective story. You will be able to convert the exploratory essay into an outline and first draft. Trust me.
The exploratory essay is due by 11 p.m. on Monday October 18. Electronic submission preferred.
- **Outline:** As you approach writing the first draft, you should prepare an outline or a plan of your paper and submit it to me (electronic submission is okay). The outline or plan may be as detailed or as schematic as you see fit, but it ought to reflect your completion (or near completion) of the research and your readiness to draw some conclusions about it. (See Booth, *The Craft of Research*, especially Chapter 12.) You may submit the outline/plan electronically whenever you are ready but no later than 11 p.m. on Monday November 8.

Week 15—November 29, 2010

First draft and Peer evaluations:

I will sort you into three groups of two-to-three scholars who will evaluate one another's drafts. No later than 5 p.m. on Tuesday November 23, the members of each peer evaluation group will provide electronically all the members of their group and Professor Gabin with a written draft of their papers. This first draft of the paper need not be complete in all details. The introduction and/or the conclusion may still be rough and unpolished. Some sections may appear as detailed outlines rather than paragraphs of prose. Notes may lack some details or appear in less-than-perfect format. But it ought to contain enough of the major substance of the paper to enable colleagues and me to read and evaluate it according to the criteria on the peer evaluation sheet (forthcoming). Each member of the group will evaluate their group members' paper separately and in writing (I will distribute an evaluation sheet that you will use in preparing your evaluations). On Monday November 29 we all will meet in UNIV 319 at 3:30 p.m. You'll break into your groups and together discuss your evaluations of the papers. A copy of the written evaluations should be given to each paper writer and Professor Gabin. Please note that these written evaluations or reader's reports are brief and informal. They are somewhat easier to write than a formal four-to-five-page comment for a conference-style presentation and discussion. But you should take seriously the task of writing the evaluations; they are meant to help not just the members of your group but also you in writing your own paper. And I will take the quality of the reader's reports that you prepare into account in determining course grades.

Weeks 16-17—December 6 and December 13, 2010

Time for revisions—no class meetings. Final, revised versions of papers—in hard or electronic copy—are due no later than Thursday December 16 at 10 p.m.

SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND WORK TO BE DONE

1. **Prospectus/Topic statement:** Oral presentation in class on September 13. Written statement (electronic version) to Professor Gabin on **September 13**.
2. **Exploratory essay/Progress report:** Written statement (email is okay) to Professor Gabin on **October 18**.
3. **Outline:** Written outline or plan (email is okay) to Professor Gabin by **November 8**.
4. **Draft of paper:** Written draft of paper (electronic version) to peer group members and Professor Gabin on **November 23**.
5. **Peer evaluations/Reader's reports:** Written evaluations of peer group members' papers (hard copy or electronic version) to authors and Professor Gabin on **November 29**.
6. **Revised version of paper:** Paper (electronic version is okay) to Professor Gabin on **December 16**.

A NOTE ON PLAGIARISM:

Plagiarism or any form of academic dishonesty may result in an F for the course, and the relevant materials turned over to the Dean of Students Office. Plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else's language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging the source. This definition applies to texts published in print or on-line, to manuscripts, and to the work of other student writers. Plagiarism means reproducing or paraphrasing the words or ideas of someone else without proper attribution, and passing this work off as one's own. For more discussion of academic dishonesty, please see "Academic Integrity: A Guide for Students," at <http://www.purdue.edu/odos/aboutodos/academicintegrity.php> and the Online Writing Lab's material at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/1/>. See, too, Chapter 13 in Booth, *Craft of Research*, and the American Historical Association's Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct at <http://www.historians.org/pubs/free/professionalstandards.cfm>.