

HIST 611

History: Research Practicum

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Course Description:

In order to earn a PhD in history, a student is required to complete a dissertation which usually takes the form of a book-length piece of original scholarship. This is largely because the most important scholarly output for historians (at least in terms of tenure and promotion) is the scholarly monograph. And yet, article length works are hugely important as well. Both in their own right and as steps towards the completion of that eventual manuscript. Therefore, the goal of this course is to produce a piece of original, archivally based, historical writing that would be fit for submitting to a scholarly journal (and fit to present at an academic conference). The purpose of this class is to introduce first-year graduate students to the practice of writing history, and to get them to begin writing.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course students will be able to:

- Develop an original research question to serve as the basis of a scholarly article.
- Identify archival collections with materials appropriate for their own research.
- Interrogate archives to understand how those collections have come to be where they are and why they are described and arranged the way they are.
- Critique their own writing and the writing of their peers in a constructive manner.
- Explain how a shorter piece (such as an article) fits within their larger research agenda.

Required Texts:

You do not need to purchase any books for this class. All assigned readings will be available either as pdfs/links on Brightspace, or are available as ebooks through the Purdue Library website. To find the readings go to the “Content” tab on the Brightspace page for the class. You will find that I have mostly assigned articles (and you are free to bring your copy of these on a laptop/tablet if you don’t want to print them out).

There are four books that we will be reading, and while you are welcome to purchase a copy of them if you like, you are also permitted to use digital versions of these.

The four books are:

- Francis X. Blouin Jr. and William G. Rosenberg. *Processing the Past: Contesting Authority in History and the Archives*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
- Umberto Eco. *How to Write a Thesis*. (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2015). Note: this book is something of a classic and there are many other/older editions kicking around. If you find a cheap copy of an old edition, feel free to get/use it.

- Arlette Farge. *The Allure of the Archives*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).
- Thomas Mullaney and Christopher Rea. *Where Research Begins: Choosing a Research Project that Matters to You*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2022).

Course Assignments:

Final Paper: 30%

The focus of this class is on the production of a scholarly, archivally based, historical article of between 7,000 and 9,000 words. As such that article is the primary assignment, though there will be several related assignments along the way (largely to make sure that you are on track). The final paper is due by May 6.

Final Presentation: 10%

On our last day of class, April 29, we will have an in-class “conference panel” modeled after the types of panels one finds at academic conferences. At this panel (to which other members of the department will be invited), students will need to give the 15-minute conference talk version of their paper, and be ready to participate in a question and answer style discussion.

Final Paper Proposal: 5%

At least 24-hours prior to meeting with me during week four, students are expected to send a proposal for their paper. This should consist of: an at least 250-word abstract, a thesis statement, a series of questions the student is hoping to answer, an (at least partial) bibliography, and the name of at least one archival collection the student is planning on using.

Final Paper (partial) Draft: 15%

Before heading off for spring break (March 13), students must submit a draft of what they have written so far of their final paper. This draft should be at least 3,500 words in length, and should include an outline/roadmap of how the entire piece will come together. We will be conducting an in-class peer writing workshop on March 11, and all students will be expected to have distributed a draft to their peers ahead of time for use in that session.

Class Participation: 40%

Though the goal of this class is to produce a written work, we will be doing a considerable amount of discussing along the way. Students are expected to come to each class prepared to discuss the assigned readings for the day, and prepared to talk about the status of their research paper. For most class days, the assigned readings will be divided up, with different students being responsible for introducing the various articles and leading the discussions pertaining to those articles. Beyond that, on many days (as is noted in the schedule) students will be expected to come prepared to present briefly (and fairly informally) about particular topics.

Grading Scale:

A+ 100-98	B+ 89-88	C+ 79-78	D+ 69-68	F 59-0
A 97-93	B 87-83	C 77-73	D 67-63	
A- 92-90	B- 82-80	C- 72-70	D- 62-60	

Course Policies:

Freedom of Expression Policy: In this class, students are encouraged to exercise their right to free inquiry and expression. You are welcome to express any view on the subject matter introduced by the instructor or other class members within the structure of the course. While you are responsible for learning the content of this course, you remain free to take a reasoned exception to the views presented and to reserve judgment about matters of conscience, controversy, or opinion. When you encounter ideas that you find offensive, immoral, or unwise, you are encouraged to engage them with reasons, evidence, and arguments. Your course grade will be based on your academic performance, not on the opinions you express. Our commitment to freedom of expression means that no relevant ideas or positions are out of bounds, but disruptive or disorderly behavior, threats, or harassment are strictly prohibited and will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students.

See the University's "Commitment to Freedom of Expression" and "Bill of Student Rights" in the University Policies and Statements module on Brightspace.

Nondiscrimination Statement: Purdue University has a clear nondiscrimination policy, which reads "Purdue University is committed to maintaining a community which recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among its members; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. The University believes that intellectual and cultural diversity among its many members strengthens the institution, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of ideas, and enriches campus life. Purdue University views, evaluates, and treats all persons in any University related activity or circumstance in which they may be involved, solely as individuals on the basis of their own personal abilities, qualifications, and other relevant characteristics.

Purdue University prohibits discrimination against any member of the University community on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, genetic information, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, or status as a veteran. The University will conduct its programs, services and activities consistent with applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and orders and in conformance with the procedures and limitations as set forth in Purdue's Equal Opportunity and Equal Access policy which provides specific contractual rights and remedies. Any question of interpretation regarding this Nondiscrimination Policy Statement shall be referred to the Vice President for Ethics and Compliance for final determination."

Electronic Devices in Class: Ideally, students should come to class with physical copies of the assigned readings, prepared to participate in the class, and take notes by hand. However, I recognize that many students prefer to take notes on a computer, and that some will have digital versions of class texts. You are adults, and I hope that you can be trusted to use electronic devices in class responsibly. Students using digital devices for non-class related activities will be marked as absent for the day. A laptop for note-taking is one thing, but phones, headphones, and other gadgets should be put away at the start of class. And please note, when a student is distracted by their electronic device it really is quite obvious! I know you're thinking it isn't obvious when *you* do it, but (really) it is. I reserve the right to revise this policy if students fail to use their devices responsibly.

Communication: Throughout this course we will be in contact using your Purdue email address and Brightspace. I expect you to check both regularly, as these are the ways that I will be contacting you, and the whole class. I encourage you to get in touch with me regarding any questions and concerns you might have. The best way to contact me is by email zloeb@purdue.edu. I will try to always respond promptly, but please bear in mind that I (like you) am a human being trying to do many things, so do not panic if I do not reply to your email within five minutes of you sending it. I will try to respond to all emails within 24 hours, though students should not expect to hear from me on Saturdays.

Attendance: You are expected to attend all classes. A sign-in sheet will be available each day in the classroom. This class meets once a week, so being present really does matter. If you need to miss class for any reason, please let me know as soon as possible. While I recognize that students may need to miss a class due to illness (or other reasons that are in accordance with Purdue policies), unexcused absences will have an impact on a student's grades, and too many unexcused absences will be the grounds for failure.

According to Purdue's policies, excused absences include those for documented illness, grieving, military service, jury duty, religious observance, caring for dependent children, and official university activities. Students who need to miss class for these reasons will not be penalized. While some situations and crises (you woke up feeling sick/a family emergency) are hard to predict, wherever possible please let the instructor know in advance if you will need to miss class for an excused reason.

Office Hours: My regular office hours are ????? in Beering 6116. These are "open" office hours, so feel free to just drop by. During weeks 4 and 14 (when one on one meetings will be held), I will circulate a sign in sheet (though these meetings will ideally take place during our normal class times, not my open office hours). I also recognize that these days/times may not work for everyone, and I am willing to set up other times to meet in my office or over Zoom in order to accommodate your needs.

Classroom Expectations: To get the most out of this course you need to do the reading, come prepared to discuss the reading, and come prepared to actively listen to me and your peers. Beyond this, you are expected to be making steady progress on your research paper—as we will be regularly devoting time to talking about how the paper/research is coming along. This is not a lecture, and everyone's experience will be enriched if you come prepared to wrestle with the questions that are raised. Being prepared will not only improve your experience, it will improve the experience of your classmates. Class participation involves not only contributing to the discussion but actively listening while others (including me) are speaking. It is inevitable that you will disagree with some of your fellow classmates, but I expect that all class discussions will be kept thoughtful and respectful. Disagreements are okay, insults are not. Lastly, I am here to help (really), please feel free to reach out to me with your concerns—if you fear that you are falling behind or that you are not understanding something please let me know!

Re-grading Policy: There is a mandatory 24-hour "sit with it" policy for all posted grades. If, after 24 hours, you are still curious why you received the grade you received you may contact me for an explanation. If you find that the grades you are receiving on assignments are not what you desire, I encourage you to come to my office hours so we can discuss strategies for how you can improve your work.

Maintaining Classroom Integrity: In order for all students to feel comfortable participating in this class it is essential that the integrity of the classroom be protected. Taking pictures, videos, or making recordings—without prior consent of the instructor and every student in our class—is not permitted. Any student who is found to have made or distributed images, videos, or recordings from our class without permission will receive an automatic F for the course and the Dean of Student’s Office will be informed.

Academic Misconduct: Stephen Akers, Executive Associate Dean of Students, writes “Purdue University values intellectual integrity and the highest standards of academic conduct. To be prepared to meet societal needs as leaders and role models, students must be educated in an ethical learning environment that promotes a high standard of honor in scholastic work. Academic dishonesty undermines institutional integrity and threatens the academic fabric of Purdue University. Dishonesty is not an acceptable avenue to success. It diminishes the quality of a Purdue education, which is valued because of Purdue's high academic standards.” Plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated, and will be dealt with in accordance with Purdue’s policies. If you are not sure what “academic misconduct” consists of, please familiarize yourself with the relevant policies here: <https://www.purdue.edu/odos/osrr/academic-integrity/index.html>

AI/Chatbot Policy: Submitting work that was generated by AI and claiming it as your own is a form of academic misconduct (as noted above), and carries the same consequences. If a chatbot generated any portion of your assignment you are in violation of the academic integrity expectations of this course and the University. Your case will be reported to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities for further review of your status at this University. If you are stressed about a particular reading or assignment and are tempted to turn to AI, please come to office hours and speak to me. I’m happy to help you improve your reading/writing strategies.

Accommodations for Disabilities: Purdue University as an institution, and I as an instructor, are committed to ensuring that the classroom is accessible and that students needs are met. If you experience or anticipate experiencing physical or academic barriers related to disability, I encourage you to let me know as soon as possible so we can discuss appropriate options. I also highly encourage you to directly contact the Disability Resource Center at: drc@purdue.edu or call them at 765-494-1247. There is a formal process for requesting accommodations, and if you believe you qualify for accommodations, I encourage you to begin the process at once. For more information, please visit: <https://www.purdue.edu/drc/>

Mental Health Statement: Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at Purdue “has a strong commitment to meeting the needs of diverse people. CAPS is committed to helping students benefit from their college experience. CAPS is committed to helping students achieve personal and academic success. Although CAPS works with students in crisis, our primary goal is to assist students with their concerns before they develop into more serious problems. One way that students can do this is to talk to a therapist or psychologist in a supportive atmosphere to aid self-understanding and the resolution of personal issues.” If you are struggling and in need of mental health support, regardless of the source of your struggles, I encourage you to make use of Purdue’s CAPS services. You can contact CAPS by calling 765-494-6995, or by going to the CAPS office on the second floor of the Purdue University Student Health Service. For more information, please visit: <https://www.purdue.edu/caps/about/mission.html>

COVID-19 Policies: This is an in-person class, in which you will be in close proximity to other students, if you have any of the symptoms of COVID-19 (or have recently come into close contact with someone infected) I encourage you to get tested immediately. Purdue no longer has a mask mandate, but I support any students who chooses to wear a mask in class. Remember: we keep each other safe.

Basic Needs Security: If you are experiencing challenges securing housing or food and believe that this may affect your course performance, please know that there are resources available to help you at Purdue. Should you find yourself in need of assistance I urge you to contact the Dean of Students for support. No appointment is needed and Student Support Services is ready to assist students 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Major Campus Emergency: While we are all certainly hoping for a smooth semester, as the experience of the pandemic has taught us all, that is not always possible. Should a major campus emergency occur, deadlines, grading, and course requirements are subject to revision. But let's all hope that isn't necessary.

Course Schedule

(please note: this is subject to change)

Week 1: January 14

Course introduction and overview

Week 2: January 21

What are you asking? Why are you asking it? And who will care what the answer is?

Read:

- Umberto Eco. *How to Write a Thesis*. (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2015). Read chapters 1 and 5.
- Thomas Mullaney and Christopher Rea. *Where Research Begins: Choosing a Research Project that Matters to You*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2022). Reach chapter 1, 2 and 3.

Be ready: to give brief presentations (ten minutes total) on two academic journals to which you would consider sending your article. For the sake of this, please try to pick journals in your subfield.

Week 3: January 28

From abstraction to an abstract

Read:

- Umberto Eco. *How to Write a Thesis*. (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2015). Read chapter 2.
- Thomas Mullaney and Christopher Rea. *Where Research Begins: Choosing a Research Project that Matters to You*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2022). Read chapters 4, 5 and 6.

Be ready: to give brief presentations (ten minutes total) on two (relatively recent) academic articles that were published in the academic journals you presented on in the previous week. Your goal here should not be to summarize the content of the articles, but to specifically talk about what primary sources they use (and how they use them).

Week 4: February 4

No class, one on one meetings with Professor Loeb.

Week 5: February 11

Where will you go to look for answers? And what might you find there? Introduction to archival basics

Read:

- Kathryn A. Scanlan. "ARMA v. SAA: The History and Heart of Professional Friction." *The American Archivist*. Vol. 74 (Fall/Winter 2011): 428-450.
- Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook "Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory." *Archival Science*. Vol. 2 (2002): 1-19.
- Society of American Archivists. "Dictionary of Archives Terminology." Please read the entries/definitions for: archive, archivist, finding aid, folder, fonds, historical value, impartiality, papers, and value.
 - <https://dictionary.archivists.org/category/basic-archival-science.html>

Be ready: prior to coming to class today, please email Professor Loeb a link to the finding aid for at least one archival collection you are thinking of using for your final paper. You will need to be ready to comment on this finding aid to the class.

Week 6: February 18

Why is that stuff in these places?

Read:

- Ernst Posner. "Some aspects of archival development since the French Revolution." *The American Archivist*. Vol. 3, No. 3 (July 1940): 159-172.
- Michel Duchein. "The History of European Archives and the Development of the Archival Profession in Europe." *The American Archivist*. Vol. 55, No. 1 (Winter 1992): 14-25.
- Terry Cook. "What is Past is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift." *Archivaria*. (Spring 1997): 17-63.
- Elizabeth Yale. "The History of Archives: The State of the Discipline." *Book History*. Vol. 18 (2015): 332-359.

Be ready: to comment, at least briefly, on the history of the archive you are using material from.

Week 7: February 25

Appraisal and acquisition and arrangement and description

Read:

- Terry Eastwood. "Reflections on the Goal of Archival Appraisal in Democratic Societies." *Archivaria*. Vol. 54 (Fall 2002): 59-71.
- Sara S. Hudson. "In Secret Kept, In Silence Sealed: Privacy in the Papers of Authors and Celebrities." *The American Archivist*. Vol. 67 (Fall/Winter 2004): 194-211.
- Terry Cook. "'We Are What We Keep; We Keep What We Are': Archival Appraisal Past, Present and Future." *Journal of the Society of Archivists*. Vol. 32, No. 2 (October 2011): 173-189.
- Kimberly Christen. "Tribal Archives, Traditional Knowledge, and Local Contexts: Why the 's' Matters." *Journal of Western Archives*. Vol. 6, No. 1 (2015): 1-18.
- Michelle Caswell, Marika Cifor, and Mario H. Ramirez. "To Suddenly Discover Yourself Existing: Uncovering the Impact of Community Archives." *The American Archivist*. Vol. 79, No. 1 (Spring/Summer 2016): 56-81.

Be ready: to return to the finding aid for the collection(s) you are using. Be prepared to talk about how things are arranged and described in the finding aid. If possible (hopefully you've started your research by now), comment on any contrasts you are finding between what it says in the finding aid and what you're actually finding in the folders.

Week 8: March 4

Preservation and Digitization

Read:

- Terry Kuny. "A Digital Dark Ages? Challenges in the Preservation of Electronic Information." Paper presented at the 63rd IFLA Council and General Conference. August 27, 1997. <https://origin-archive.ifla.org/IV/ifla63/63kuny1.pdf>
- Paul Conway. "Preservation in the Age of Google: Digitization, Digital Preservation, and Dilemmas." *Library Quarterly*. Vol. 80, No. 1 (January 2010): 61-79.
- Lisa M. Given and Lianne McTavish. "What's old is new again: the reconvergence of libraries, archives, and museums in the digital age." Vol. 80, No. 1 (January 2010): 7-32.
- Laura Jackson and D. Claudia Thompson. "But You Promised: A Case Study of Deaccessioning at the American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming." *The American Archivist*. Vol. 73, No. 2 (Fall/Winter 2010): 669-685.
- Jane Henderson. "Beyond lifetimes: who do we exclude when we keep things for the future?" *Journal of the Institute of Conservation*. Vol. 43, No. 3 (2020): 195-212.

Be ready: to talk about any digital repositories of primary sources you are using. How is the material arranged and described there? How usable is it really? What, if any, problems have you encountered in trying to make use of these materials?

Week 9: March 11

In class writing workshop (of drafts).

Be ready: prior to this class (by March 6th), you should have circulated a draft of your paper to your classmates (so they could read it ahead of time). This draft should have been at least 3,500 words. The

goal for this writing workshop is for you all to be able to discuss each other's drafts...meaning you should have read them before today's class.

Week 10: SPRING BREAK

Week 11: March 25

Archival ethics

Read:

- Rodney Carter. "Of Things Said and Unsaid: Power, Archival Silences, and Power in Silence." *Archivaria*. Vol. 61 (Spring 2006): 215-233.
- Mark Greene. "A Critique of Social Justice as an Archival Imperative: What *Is* It We're Doing That's All That Important." *The American Archivist*. Vol. 76, No. 2 (Fall/Winter 2013): 302-334.
- Randall Jimerson. "Archivists and Social Responsibility: A Response to Mark Greene." *The American Archivist*. Vol. 76, No. 2 (Fall/Winter 2013): 335-345.
- Mario H. Ramirez. "Being Assumed Not to Be: A Critique of Whiteness as an Archival Imperative." *The American Archivist*. Vol. 78, No. 2 (Fall/Winter 2015): 339-356.
- Bergis Jules, Ed Summers, and Vernon Mitchell, Jr. "Documenting the Now White Paper." April 2018. <https://www.shiftcollective.us/library/p/2018-documenting-the-now-white-paper>

Be ready: to give a post-spring break status update on your research paper. Now that you've received comments on your draft, where are things standing? What's next?

Week 12: April 1

Of archivists and historians

Read:

- Francis X. Blouin Jr. and William G. Rosenberg. *Processing the Past: Contesting Authority in History and the Archives*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

Be ready: by this point you should have spent some real time working through your material. And thus we will devote some time today to really discussing how the process of archival work is actually going for you.

Week 13: April 8

Archival allure

Read:

- Arlette Farge. *The Allure of the Archives*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

Be ready: to share some of your most interesting primary source finds with the class. What did you find that made you recoil? What did you find that made you laugh? What was the document that you found that really reoriented your thinking.

Week 14: April 15

No class, one on one meetings with Professor Loeb.

Be ready: this is a fairly informal “final check in” meeting. You should come ready to discuss the status of your paper and how you are planning on turning it into a 15 minute presentation for the last day.

Week 15: April 22

In class, writing workshop.

Be ready: prior to this class (ideally by April 17) you should have sent your classmates a “as close to final draft as possible,” so that they can offer further comments on it in class today.

Week 16: April 29

In class “conference panel.”

Be ready: to participate in our in-class conference panel! You’ll need to give a 15-minute conference talk version of your paper, and answer audience questions after. Please note: other graduate students and professors from the department will be invited to attend.