

History 395 (CRN 16381, 3 credits)
Research Seminar: Roots of the Climate Crisis
Tuesday-Thursday 3:00-4:15
Fall Semester 2019
Recitation 303

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Objectives: This junior-senior research seminar is intended to introduce students to the serious practice of writing history. Although we will explore a common theme for the sake of coherent conversations, each student will be pursuing her or his own original project springing from our initial discussions of the common theme. Students will find a topic, develop a research question, find and evaluate evidentiary sources, construct an argument, and finally draft a paper that resembles articles in historical journals (although somewhat shorter in length). My objective in this class is to help students discover whether they have the interest and aptitude to graduate from being consumers (readers) of history to being producers (writers) of history.

Course Theme: For our common theme I have selected “Roots of the Climate Crisis,” by which I mean the cumulative force of four hundred years of choices, developments, and cultural explanations that have brought the modern world to the brink of an extraordinary climate crisis in the 21st century. Viewed as current affairs, the climate crisis raises hundreds of thorny questions about which thousands of experts in many disciplines currently are arguing. Our focus, however, will be on deep background issues that lie beneath these contemporary arguments and often make it difficult to contemplate solutions because we think things cannot be otherwise than they are and have been in our lifetimes. Historical inquiry is uniquely appropriate for challenging these habits of mind and exposing choices, contingencies, paths not taken in the past that might illuminate alternatives in the present and future. We will start the semester discussing my new book, *Laid Waste!: The Culture of Exploitation in Early America*.”

Your Job: Each student will develop a research project out of some aspect of the arguments found in *Laid Waste!* (The book covers 350 years, so surely you will find something of interest.) By week four we will be working collectively and individually to develop your topics, questions, and research strategies. The balance of the semester is devoted as much to the craft of research as the subject of the climate crisis. The calendar of assignments below details when we will take up different issues and what to read as we go along.

Learning Outcomes: After taking this class you should be able to . . .

- find and articulate a question worthy of historical investigation.
- identify and evaluate evidence with which to construct your answer to that question.

- assemble your evidence into a logical and compelling argument
- offer an interpretation of past events and possible relevance to present understanding.
- write a readable prose essay demonstrating each of the above achievements.

Readings: **Larson, *Laid Waste! The Culture of Exploitation in Early America***
 (on Blackboard)
 Wayne Booth, et al., *The Craft of Research* 4th ed. (3rd will do)

Graded work: You will receive discussion points for class participation (ranging from 1 to 4 depending on your level of engagement). There are also graded assignments in the calendar.

Discussion points max: 68 points
 Problem Statement: 10 points
 Trial Introduction: 10 points
 Bookends: 10 points
 First rough draft: 20 points
 Presentation: 20 points
 Final paper: 50 points

Grades: Your final grade will be based on your percentage of earned points out of a total of 209 according to the following scale:

93-100% = A	73-76 = C
90-92 = A-	70-72 = C-
87-89 = B+	67-69 = D+
83-86 = B	63-66 = D
80-82 = B-	60-62 = D-
77-79 = C+	< 60% = F

Attendance and courtesy: You are expected to attend all class sessions, and you will find it difficult to do very well in this course if you do not. I expect you to be attentive in class and respect the rights of others to a constructive learning environment. Historical interpretation involves argument—and thus it requires a respectful environment for the exchange of ideas, *always*.

Emergency Announcement: *In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances. Here are ways to get information about changes in this course:*

email larsonjl@purdue.edu

office phone 494.4127

cell phone 765.412.9166.

Cheating / Plagiarism: Plagiarism refers to the reproduction of another's words or ideas without proper attribution. University Regulations contains further information on dishonesty. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are serious offenses and will be treated as such in this class. You are expected to produce your own work and to cite accurately all necessary materials. Cheating, plagiarism, and other dishonest practices will be punished as Purdue University policies allow. Any instances of academic dishonesty will likely result in a grade of F for the course and notification of the Dean of Students Office. See https://www.purdue.edu/odos/osrr/resources/documents/responding_to_academic_dishonesty.html Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (OSSR).

Emergency preparedness: In the event of a major campus emergency, the above requirements, deadlines and grading policies are subject to changes that may be required by a revised semester calendar. Once the course resumes any such changes will be posted on Blackboard or can be obtained by contacting the professor via email or phone.

For further information see https://www.purdue.edu/ehrs/emergency_preparedness/

Calendar of Assignments

Week 1	
Aug 20	Intro and orientation
Aug 22	Laid Waste, introduction
Week 2	
Aug 27	Laid Waste, chaps 1-3
Aug 29	Booth, Craft of Research, pp 1-26
Week 3	
Sep 03	Laid Waste, chaps 4-6
Sep 05	Booth, Craft of Research, pp 27-65
Week 4	
Sep 10	Laid Waste, chaps 7-9, Epilogue
Sep 12	Where to engage the problems?
Week 5	
Sep 17	Problem development workshop
Sep 19	Problem development workshop
Week 6	
Sep 24	Problem Statement due in class;
Sep 26	Building the bibliography, Booth, pp 65-104

Week 7	
Oct 01	A nest of references—secondary works
Oct 03	A clutch of eggs—primary sources
Week 8	
Oct 08	BREAK
Oct 10	Trial and error—early writing exercises; trial introduction due
Week 9	
Oct 15	Making arguments, Booth 105-172
Oct 17	Argument and audience, Booth 173-231
Week 10	
Oct 22	Language, structure, rhetorical strategies
Oct 24	Architecture of a paper, Booth 232-247 on intro and conclusions
Week 11	
Oct 29	“Bookends” due ; discuss presentation style
Oct 31	Workday
Week 12	
Nov 05	Workday
Nov 07	First rough draft due
Week 13	
Nov 12	Individual conferences
Nov 14	Individual conferences
Week 14	
Nov 19	Presentations—4 individuals
Nov 21	Presentations—5 individuals
Week 15	
Nov 26	Presentations—5 individuals
Nov 28	THANKSGIVING
Week 16	
Dec 03	Presentations—5 individuals
Dec 05	Wrap-up
Dec 09	Final papers due 5 pm