

# HIST 395 — The Crooked Paths of Research

Spring 2026 • Junior Research Seminar

---

## Course Overview

This junior-level seminar introduces history majors to **historical research and writing**. Rather than focusing on the “story” told in each reading, we will analyze:

- How texts are researched
- How authors construct narratives
- How assumptions and methodological choices shape history
- How archival access, evidence limitations, and narrative techniques affect interpretation

The course takes an **interdisciplinary approach**, examining historical methodology through:

- History (Europe and Latin America)
- Literature
- Art history

Examples include:

- Searching for a missing girl in Holocaust-era Paris
- Competing arguments about Shakespeare’s authorship
- Criminal records and folklore in gaucho rebellions in Argentina

A major purpose of this seminar is to **strengthen reading and writing skills** through weekly essay questions and a final research paper.

---

## Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will:

1. Understand the complexity and challenges of historical research.

2. Recognize multiple forms of historical reflection.
3. Demonstrate critical thinking about how historical knowledge is produced.
4. Identify research limitations and interpretive strategies.
5. Strengthen reading comprehension and academic writing skills.

To achieve these goals, we will use lectures, discussions, weekly essays, and a final paper.

---

## Required Book

- **Carlo Ginzburg**, *The Cheese and the Worms*

## Suggested Book

- **David Hockney**, *Secret Knowledge*
- 

## Class Schedule

**Weekly Essay Questions (WEQs)** are assigned throughout the semester.

### Week 1

#### **Introduction**

Readings: On Learning, Bias, and Understanding

WEQ assigned

### Week 2

#### **Modiano, *Dora Bruder***

WEQ

### Week 3

Ginzburg, "Proofs and Possibilities"

Grafton, "The Footnote"

WEQ

## **Week 4**

Shapiro, *Contested Will*  
WEQ

## **Week 5**

Shapiro, *Contested Will* (continued)  
WEQ

## **Week 6**

Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms*  
WEQ

## **Week 7**

De la Fuente, *Children of Facundo*  
WEQ

## **Week 8**

Yeazell, *Picture Titles*  
WEQ

## **Week 9**

Yeazell, *Picture Titles* (continued)  
WEQ

**March 16–21: Spring Break**

## **Week 11**

Preliminary report:

- Topic
- Bibliography
- Sources

## Week 12

Fuller, *Who is Ozymandias?*  
WEQ

## Week 13

Hockney, *Secret Knowledge*  
WEQ

## Week 14

Writing Week

## Week 15

Writing Week

## Week 16

Final paper due

---

## Grading

Assessment	Percentage
Weekly Essay Questions	85%
Final Paper	10%
Attendance	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

---

## Attendance Policy

Attendance is **mandatory**.

- You may have **3 absences** (excused or unexcused) with no penalty.
- **4th absence:** -1% from final grade
- **5th & 6th absences:** -2% each
- **7th absence: Automatic failure** of the course

**Late arrival:**

The attendance sheet is available for **3 minutes** after class begins. After that, you will be marked absent.

---

## Grade Scale

Percentage	Grade
90–100	A
80–89	B
70–79	C
60–69	D
0–59	F

---

## Freedom of Expression

Students are encouraged to engage in open inquiry and expression on all course topics.

You are free to:

- Take reasoned exception to material
- Express disagreement
- Ask challenging questions

**Classroom expectations:**

- Discussions must be respectful and constructive
- Disruption, harassment, or threats are not allowed
- Conduct violations will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students

See Purdue's **Commitment to Freedom of Expression** and **Bill of Student Rights** via Brightspace.

---

# Conduct and Academic Ethics

Students must follow Purdue's code of academic integrity.

- Plagiarism or cheating results in **at least a zero** on the assignment
- May result in **failure of the course**
- All incidents are referred to the **Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (OSRR)**
- University-level penalties may include suspension or removal

Report concerns to:

**integrity@purdue.edu | 765-494-8778**

---

## Emergency or Unexpected Conflicts

If a major campus emergency occurs, the syllabus (deadlines, requirements, grading) may change. Updates will be posted on Brightspace.

For emergencies such as bereavement, quarantine, or situations beyond your control, contact:

**Office of the Dean of Students**

Phone: 765-494-1747

---

## Diversity and Inclusion

Purdue welcomes individuals of all:

- Ages
- Religions
- Genders and sexual orientations
- Races and nationalities
- Languages
- Military experiences
- Disabilities
- Political views
- Socioeconomic backgrounds

Respect for all participants is required.  
Harassment or discrimination will result in disciplinary action.

---

## **Mental Health and Student Support**

If you experience stress, anxiety, or difficulty balancing responsibilities, Purdue provides support:

### **WellTrack (self-help tools)**

Available anytime.

### **Dean of Students Office**

765-494-1747 (M–F, 8 AM–5 PM)

### **Purdue Wellness Coaching (free)**

Book via BoilerConnect  
Email: [evans240@purdue.edu](mailto:evans240@purdue.edu)

### **Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)**

765-494-6995 (24/7, including holidays)  
Walk-in services available at PUSH (2nd floor)

---

## **Accessibility Accommodations**

If you have special needs or health conditions affecting your performance, please speak with the instructor privately to arrange accommodations.