THE SENIOR SEMINAR
HIS 470-001
TR 12:30-1:45

Instructor: Dr. Randi Cox
Office: Liberal Arts, room 356
Hours: MW 11:00-12:00, 3:00-3:50, TR 2:30-3:20, and by appointment
Phone: 468-2428 (Email or text message is better than my office phone.)
Email: rcox@sfasu.edu or via the D2L email system.
Text: Sign up for JackText via Banner to receive and reply to text messages from me.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
History 470 is the Senior Seminar capstone course for advanced history majors. Per the official course
description, it is “designed to refine the research and writing skills of undergraduate history majors, giving
them the opportunity to complete a research project based on the use of primary documents.” This section
will focus on designing and implementing research projects that respond to contemporary concerns. In
particular we will ask: How should historians respond to Charlottesville?

COURSE TEXTS
- Kate Turabian, et al., A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, 8th ed.
- Jim Cullen, Essaying the Past: How to Read, Write, and Think about History, 3rd ed.
- Additional required materials will be posted on D2L.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT TO LEARN AND DO IN THIS CLASS (STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES)
As the capstone course of the History major, HIS 470 allows students the opportunity to bring together all
the skills they have developed in their previous courses. Your final project in this course—as your final project
in the major—should demonstrate that you have mastered all of the program’s goals. In this course you will:

• Review the core skills that scholars use to support historical reasoning. You will hone your ability to make
  connections between sources, assess change over time, compare multiple perspectives, identify causes
  and turning points, construct sound arguments, etc.
• Analyze selected secondary sources as case studies in order to evaluate research methods and
  theoretical models that you can use in your own research project.
• Analyze selected primary sources as case studies, recognizing both their value and limitations in
  reconstructing and interpreting the past.
• Formulate a research question on a topic relevant to a contemporary issue, locate and evaluate
  appropriate primary and secondary sources, apply appropriate methods and theoretical frameworks,
  and construct an effective historical narrative analyzing your findings.

These skills are closely related to the History Department’s Program Learning Outcomes. With a BA in
History, you should be able to:

1. Interpret the past in context.
2. Understand the complex nature of the historical record.
3. Engage in historical inquiry, research and analysis.
4. Craft a historical narrative and argument.
5. Practice historical thinking as central to engaged citizenship.
**Assignments, Grades, and Due Dates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Journal:</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Scheduled research progress reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework:</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Reading quizzes, library exercises, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Historiography paper:</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Thursday, October 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary source findings:</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Thursday, November 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation:</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>December 4 or 6 (May be combined with public event.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Executive Summary:</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Friday, December 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Draft:</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Wed, December 13 (Workshop on Tuesday, December 12)</td>
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**Research Journal and Homework:** This course is a seminar, and as such meetings will consist almost exclusively of discussion of the assigned readings and writing workshops that will build toward the final research paper. You must come to class having completed the readings and prepared to talk about them. The homework assignments early in the semester will help you prepare for these conversations by asking you to reflect on the readings before class. Journal entries will help you stay on track with your research project by asking you to reflect on your progress and offer feedback to your classmates. Similarly, the homework and in-class exercises offer opportunities to learn about sources and practice skills that you will use for the final project. All of these will be graded as Satisfactory, Unsatisfactory, or Not Attempted.

**Historiography paper:** This is a five-page essay that focuses on your secondary sources. Your goal is to demonstrate that you understand how other scholars have approached your topic and where you will fit into their conversation. This paper will serve as the rough draft for the historiography section of the final paper.

**Primary source findings:** This is the rough draft of the body of your paper. It should be substantial, although by definition it is not expected to be perfect. At this point you should have a clearly defined thesis and a narrative supported by evidence from primary documents. Analysis of evidence should be placed in the context of secondary source research. The rough draft should be at least eight pages and include footnotes, although their formatting may be incomplete. There will be a 30% late penalty for this assignment. You will present your draft to the class and comment on drafts by two of your classmates.

**Presentation and Executive Summary:** You will prepare a brief (2-3 page) Executive Summary of your key findings suitable for a press release. This summary should include historical background and your recommendations for current policies and/or actions. You will support this summary with a 5-minute PowerPoint presentation during the first week of December. These presentations will be open to the SFA university community.

**Final paper:** You will write a 12-15 page article summarizing your findings. You must demonstrate an understanding of the relevant historiography (secondary sources), but the most important part of the paper will be your explanation and analysis of your primary source work. We will meet as a class for a final workshop on Tuesday, December 12 during our scheduled final exam time at 10:30. You may turn in your paper at that time or by 5:00 on Wednesday, December 13.
INTERNAL COURSE POLICIES

Consultations: I take my responsibilities as an instructor seriously. You are warmly invited to come to my office hours to discuss readings, lectures or anything else that you have concerns or questions about. You may also make an appointment, if my hours are not convenient. If you are having problems in the class, the worst possible thing you can do is wait until the end of the semester to say something. Let me know right away, so that I can help you.

Coursework: You should think of this course like joining a health club. As your personal trainer, it is my responsibility to show you how to do everything that is required of you. I give you my word that I will stick to the syllabus, so far as policies go. I will do my best to keep to the schedule and promise to notify you of any changes. On the other hand, it is your responsibility to exercise and eat right—that is, to come to class, keep up with the reading, and prepare for assignments. The grade you earn is determined by the quality of your effort, not necessarily by the amount of time you spend.

Technology: While I understand that students sometimes need access to phones for family emergencies, it is easy to become distracted by technology. Please be careful with your phones, so that you and those around you can focus on what we are doing. As long as your use of technology remains professional, I have no problem with it.

Attendance: Although attendance is not formally required in this class, poor attendance will make it difficult to perform well. There will be no make-ups on in-class assignments, and all of the assignments will build on skills developed in the classroom. Students who fail to complete the course will receive a grade of QF, which may limit future eligibility for financial aid. In addition, you cannot pass the course unless you submit all of the major assignments. even if your overall average is above 60%.

Professionalism: Students are expected to be on time and to behave in a professional manner. Disruptive or distracting behavior will not be tolerated. Students reading non-course material or disrupting the class in any way will be asked to leave the room. The penalty for cheating and plagiarism will range from failure of the assignment to failure of the course and referral to your dean, depending of the severity of the incident. We will practice avoiding accidental plagiarism in class, and I will help you learn to write about sources in your own words. I understand that it is difficult to do sometimes. Be aware that I am very patient with students learning a new skill, but I have no tolerance for deliberate plagiarism.

OFFICIAL UNIVERSITY POLICIES

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY (ADAPTED FROM SFA POLICY 4.1)

Abiding by university policy on academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Definition of Academic Dishonesty
Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one’s own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one’s paper without giving the author due credit.

Penalties for Academic Dishonesty in this class
I make every effort to distinguish between intentional cheating and unintentional errors made
by students as they learn how to cite their work. Minor errors that are clearly the result of a misunderstanding of the rules will result in a small penalty ranging from a point deduction to resubmission of the work. I am more interested in helping you understand professional standards than punishing you. However, deliberate plagiarism is a violation of our community trust and insults the hard work of other students. Therefore, significant plagiarism will result in a zero for the assignment or failure of the entire course. I will also report plagiarists to the dean. Students who have demonstrated a record of deliberate academic dishonesty in multiple classes have been expelled from the university.

You may read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/student_academic_dishonesty.pdf.

**Withheld Grades (SFA Policy 5.5)**

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

**Disability Statement (SFA Policy 6.1)**

I am committed to creating a course that is inclusive in its design. If you encounter barriers, please let me know immediately so that we can determine if there is a design adjustment that can be made or if an accommodation might be needed to overcome the limitations of the design. Together we’ll develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. I am always happy to consider creative solutions as long as they do not compromise the intent of the assessment or learning activity. You are also welcome to contact the Office of Disability Services to begin this conversation or to establish accommodations for this or other courses. I welcome feedback that will assist me in improving the usability and experience for all students. If you need official accommodations, you have a right to have these met. The Office of Disability Services works with students to identify accommodations that remove barriers to learning. The ODS is located in the Human Services Building, Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD). For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic-accomodation-for-students-with-disabilities.pdf
HISTORY

Essential Concepts

Students of history should understand...

History: History is an interpretative account of the past supported by evidence that survives. History is not simply an account of "what happened"; the past cannot be known except through a disciplined process of problem solving.

The Past: The object of historical study is the past. Recognizing the "pastness of the past" directs historians to understand people of the past by contextualizing their actions: what they were trying to accomplish, the nature of their beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge, the culturally and historically situated assumptions that guided thought and action.

Historical Evidence: Historians use primary and secondary sources to make sense of the past. History students should know that primary and secondary sources come in diverse forms, represent diverse perspectives, and have distinct strengths and limitations as evidence about the past.

Complex Causality: Historians are intensely interested in the how and why of historical events. Historical accounts are multiple and layered, avoiding monicausal explanations and reductionist thinking.

Significance: Significance is the indefinite standard by which historians determine what questions are worth asking; what parts of the past are worth teaching, learning, and remembering; and which pieces of the extant past properly belong in a meaningful, coherent account.

Essential Competencies

Students of history should be able to...

Evaluate Historical Accounts: Recognize historical explanations in their most common forms: narrative, exposition, causal model, and analogy; identify an author's interpretation and critically scrutinize the evidence and analysis used to support it; and critically evaluate, compare, and synthesize historical accounts.

Interpret Primary Sources: Distinguish primary from secondary sources; assess the credibility of sources and make judgments about their usefulness and limitations as evidence about the past; consider how the historical context in which information was originally created, accessed, and distributed affects its message; and address questions of genre, content, audience, perspective, and purpose to generate subtexts that illuminate the intentions of the author.

Apply chronological reasoning: Take account of the role of time, sequencing, and periodization in historical narratives. Contextualize: Place an event, actor, or primary source within the context of its time in order to interpret its meaning and significance.

Construct a historical argument using primary sources: Construct acceptable historical accounts that interpret the past using primary sources as evidence for knowledge claims in ways that demonstrate understanding of historical concepts, especially the nature of historical evidence, interpretation, and perspective.