HIS 470: Senior Seminar  
FALL 2019

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Course Description
As a capstone course this course is designed for undergraduate history majors to demonstrate and refine their  
research and writing skills. Students will have the opportunity to formulate a topic, research primary and secondary source materials and build a historical narrative.

For this course specifically, we are going to use the past to understand the present. Our approach to the course will therefore come from specific questions that we have concerning the present, and it will be our task as historians to explore what events in the past played a role in constructing this present.

Explanation for Credit Hours Awarded
HIS 470 (Senior Seminar) is the capstone course required for all undergraduate history majors. It is designed to refine research and writing skills, giving students the opportunity to put the knowledge and skills they developed in HIS 210 (Craft of History) into practice by completing a research project, or projects, based upon the use of primary and secondary sources. The course meets for 150 minutes each week for 15 weeks, and time is also scheduled for a 2-hour final examination. In addition to performing their out-of-class research, students typically have reading assignments from books and articles on historiographical theory and practice and complete out-of-class writing assignments that engage with those readings. They typically give in-class presentations on the progress of their research projects as well. Course instructors are required to hold regular scheduled office hours to make themselves available to consult with students as needed. Combined, doing the required reading, completing the out-of-class writing exercises, preparing for the in-class presentations, and consulting with course instructors averages two hours of work outside the classroom for every hour spent in the classroom.

Assignments and Grades
The assignment breakdown for this semester is as follows:

Final Project (50%)
- First Draft of Paper - THIS IS NOT A ROUGH DRAFT! You will submit a complete first draft of your paper that will be reviewed by a peer and the professor. Half of the grade will come from the quality of your draft, and the other half will come from the quality of editing completed on your classmate’s draft (5%). Due:
  Friday, November 8
- Research Paper - The main focus of this seminar will be the creation of a primary source research project. You will complete a written paper (4000-5000 words) that will incorporate a wide range of historical skills (20%). Due: Friday, November 22
- Podcast - You will also turn your written paper into a 15-20 minute podcast (25%). Due: Tuesday, December 10
Papers [25%]

- **Podcast Review** - You will write a short (350 word) analysis of the podcasts *Revisionist History* (*In a Metal Mood, Season 4, Episode 8, August 8, 2019*) and *NPR Throughline* (*Episode 22. Scorched Earth, August 7*) for the first week of class. This review will serve as the discussion for the second period of class. In this assignment, you should analyze the arguments, sources, narrative, and medium (5%). **Due: Aug 28 (Wednesday) / Aug 29 (Thursday)**

- **Secondary Literature Review** - You will write a 1000-1250 word review of THE book and two academic journal articles on your topic. The paper should identify the arguments, sources, and how your project fits within their studies. The goal of this assignment is to provide you the secondary literature required to support your research project (10%). **Due: Friday, October 11**

- **Comparative Source Analysis** - You will write a 1000-1250 word analysis of the primary sources for your project. The paper should analyze the arguments, sources, and how the coverage differs from the present to the past. The goal of this assignment is to reflect on the historical changes within your topic from the time of its occurrence to the present (10%). **Due: Friday, October 25**

Participation [15%]

- **Meetings** - You will have three planned meetings with Drs. Chakravartty and Hampton. One of these will occur early in this semester to help identify possible research avenues. The second meeting will be to help select your project. The final meeting will be focused on helping you turn your paper into a podcast. It is your responsibility to plan accordingly for these meetings and be prepared regarding your work. You will be submitting a brief email “abstract” of the meeting as a follow up (5%).

- **Weekly Topic Reflections** - You will be submitting four weekly reflections to start the semester to help you locate your research project. Two will be brief responses essay (500 words). The other two will be 90-second podcasts. In each reflection, you must locate three written news stories (6 total) on the two different possible topic. Explain the argument of each source, analyze the evidence, and compare the different coverage. You must thoughtfully and critically engage with the other reflections in your group each week. The written responses will be graded on grammar, syntax, spelling, and footnotes (minimum of 6 footnotes per paper). The podcast reviews will be graded on content, logic, and listenability (10%).

- **In-class Collaborative Work Time** - You are expected to attend class during these periods to help you with your project. This time is meant to help you discuss successes and struggles you are having on your project with the professors and classmates.

Presentation [10%]

- **In-class Presentation** - You will prepare a PowerPoint presentation (6-8 minutes) of your topic and scope of your podcast near the end of the semester. Your presentation will include outline your project, thesis statement, sources, and bibliography. There will be a question and answer time after each presentation (10%).

Major Due Dates

- Meetings: Week 2, Week 5, Week 15
- Papers: 8/28-8/29, 10/11, 10/25
- Presentations: 11/4-11/14
- Final Projects: 11/8, 11/22, 12/10
Course Responsibilities
You are responsible for all registration deadlines. All of the assignments are required. To pass this class you must complete and turn in all of the assignments, and receive a passing grade on both the final paper and podcast. Also, course schedules occasionally change and all major changes will be announced on BrightSpace. Other than opportunities we provide for the entire class, no extra credit assignments will be offered during the course of the semester; after the semester is over, or on an individual basis. All work must be submitted by the due date. Late work will incur a ten-point penalty for each day past the due date.

Program Learning Outcomes:
The SFA History Department has identified the following Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) for all SFA students earning a B.A. degree in History:

1. The student will evaluate the role of the historian in society.
2. The student will assess the significance of historical events/phenomena and analyze their historical contexts.
3. The student will locate, identify, and critically analyze primary and secondary sources appropriate for historical research.
4. The student will interpret evidence found within primary sources and place those sources within their appropriate historical context.
5. The student will effectively communicate historical arguments in support of a central thesis, including the proper citation of sources using the most recent edition of the Chicago Manual of Style.

This course will incorporate to varying degrees each of these PLOs.

Student Learning Outcomes:
The more specific Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for this particular course are listed below:

1. In this senior-level capstone class, students will incorporate all of the skills learned in earlier history classes to create a primary-source-defined project that connects to the breadth of historical inquiry.
2. Students will complete writing projects of various lengths that relate to the analysis of historical context, the analysis of multiple perspectives, and the evaluation of change over time.
3. Students will write essays that compare and contrast as well as synthesize other historical works.
4. Students will build a podcast that offers an interpretive thesis. This assignment will measure proficiencies in the following areas: thesis definition, structure and organization, interpretation of evidence, clarity and general organizational skills, and citation and documentation.

Academic Integrity (A-9.1)
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. Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp.

**Students with Disabilities**
To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must 
contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 
(TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the 
accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your 
accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

**Withheld Grades (Semester Grades Policy, A-54)**
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.
Historical sense and poetic sense should not, in the end, be contradictory, for if poetry is the little myth we make, history is the big myth we live, and in our living, constantly remake.

Robert Penn Warren