History 210-001: The Craft of History

Instructor: Bao Bui (builb@sfasu.edu)
Class place & time: Ferguson 475, TTh 9:30AM
Office: Liberal Arts Building 346
Office hours: Tue. 2-3:30PM, Wed. 4-5PM and by appointment

IMPORTANT: This syllabus is a written memorandum of understanding between you, the student, and me, your instructor. The syllabus outlines both my obligations as your instructor and your responsibilities as a student.

Course Description and Objectives:
This course will serve as an introduction to the historical profession. The course will help prepare students to read primary and secondary sources critically and to craft historical research papers. In addition, students will be introduced to major historiographical trends, research methods, and the practices of historical writing. Major career paths for historians will also be introduced, including teaching and public history.

Required textbook and readings:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Edition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Hurston, Zora Neale</td>
<td>Barracoon: The Story of the Last &quot;Black Cargo&quot;</td>
<td>Amistad</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Cabeza de Vaca, Alvar Nunez</td>
<td>Cabeza de Vaca's Adventures in the Unknown Interior of America</td>
<td>Available online</td>
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Additional readings will be assigned on a weekly basis.

Course Requirements:

1. Attendance and participation: Since this course is discussion-centered, it is critical that students come to class having read the materials and ready to contribute to the discussion.

2. Take-home essays: At mid-semester and in late April students will be assigned a take-home essay. Students will have 7-10 days in which to complete each essay and turn in a printed copy. Each essay will be 6-7 pages long and will require students to write an analysis that integrates both the readings with class discussion. Detailed instructions will appear on the essay prompt sheets.

3. Presentation: Students will be assigned to groups of 2 or 3. Each group will pick a historical subject, era, region, theme, or methodological approach, and the reading(s) for the class. The readings can be a book chapter, a short book, or a series of articles. A group may
also select professional aspects relating to careers in the historical profession. The group will present on their subject and readings during their assigned week. More details will be given after Week 4 of the semester.

**Grading:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance/participation</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group presentation</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essays (2)</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>1000 points</strong></td>
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A: 900-1000  
B: 800-899  
C: 700-799  
D: 600-699  
F: 599 or less

**Attendance Policy:**

Attendance is an integral part of the course and is mandatory. You must sign the attendance sheet to get credit. An attendance sheet will go around for each session.

An absence is defined as being absent for more than 10 minutes of one class meeting. For an absence to be “excused” you must have a note from the Emergency Dean, the Health Center, or your doctor. You must give me this note within one week of the absence. You may have three (3) unexcused absences without penalty. Each subsequent unexcused absence will lower the overall final score by 2%. After 7 unexcused absences the student will receive an F-grade for the class.

If you are part of a University sponsored activity that will cause you to be absent from class, please make sure that I have a letter from the coach/leader noting the specific dates you will be absent. Please keep a copy of all documents for your records.

Your attendance/participation grade (100 points) is determined by you coming to class and making active and positive contributions to our class meetings. NOTE: Attendance does not equal participation. The instructor reserves the right to adjust the student’s final grade in cases of extraordinary contributions to class discussions.

Your classmates will be comprised of individuals with a wide variety of experiences, beliefs, orientations, and identities leading inevitably to differences in perspective and viewpoint. All students - irrespective of race, gender and sexual identities, nationality, political persuasion or religious belief – have the right to politely express their own interpretation of historical events based upon the material at hand. Students are encouraged to challenge conflicting interpretations and opinions but they may not personally disrespect their peers.

The use of personal phone in class is unprofessional, constitutes a distraction to your colleagues and your instructors, and can result in a drop of an entire grade and/or dismissal at the instructor’s discretion. Talking in class or any other disruptive behavior will result in a
warning; subsequent offenses can result in the lowering of the final score (5% penalty) or immediate dismissal (“F” grade).

**E-mail policy**

I will reply to most email inquiries within 24 hours of receiving them; however, I am not obliged to respond to emails outside of 9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday.

I will communicate with you via email in a professional and courteous manner. You are expected to do the same. I will respond only to emails that 1) are sent from your university account and 2) have a proper salutation (“Hi/ Dear Prof./Dr. B”) and a closing salutation (Simply signing your full name will do) that also includes your class section and hour. If you do not get a response to your email inquiry, check your email to make sure it is up to professional standards.

**Academic Integrity**

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](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp)

**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.

**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/.

COURSE CALENDAR (in progress)

Week 1, Jan. 22 & 24. What is history?
- Selected readings from the New York Times and Slate.com
- Standage’s 6 Glasses, Chapters 1-3

Week 2, Jan. 29 & 31. A global history of common objects
- Standage’s 6 Glasses, Chapters 3-6

Week 3, Feb. 5 & 7. “The first historian”
- Selected readings from Herodotus (c.484 – c.425 BC)

Week 4, Feb. 12 & 14. Case study: The travelogue as history
- Cabeza de Vaca’s Adventures

Week 5, Feb. 19 & 21. Case study: Social history
- Isenberg’s White Trash, 1st half

Week 6, Feb. 26 & 28. Case study: The biography as history
- Isenberg’s White Trash, 2nd half
- Hurston’s Barracoon, 1st half

Week 7, Mar. 5 & 7. The historian in question
- Hurston’s Barracoon, 2nd half

Week 8, Mar. 12 & 14. Group 1
- Readings TBD by group members

Week 9, Mar. 26 & 28. Group 2
- Readings TBD by group members

Week 10, April 2 & 14. Group 3
- Readings TBD by group members

Week 11, April 9 & 11. Group 4
- Readings TBD by group members
Week 12, April 16. Public history: museums, & historic sites [Easter Break begins on April 18]
  • Readings TBD as needed

Week 13, April 23 & 25. Group 5
  • Readings TBD by group members

Week 14, April 30 & May 2. Group 6
  • Readings TBD by group members

Week 15, May 7 & 9. Teaching as a profession
  • Readings TBD as needed

Congratulations! You’ve done the smart move by looking at the very last item posted on the syllabus. Now email me a picture of an ice cream truck to show me that you did what you were supposed to do.