History 3300: The Craft of History

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Or by appointment

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Texts: Gaddis, *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past*
Salevouris and Furay, *The Methods and Skills of History: A Practical Guide*
Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*

Course Description: What does it mean to “do history?” What is the role of a historian in modern society? How does one “think and write historically?” HIS 3300 is designed as an introduction to the historical profession as well as to begin to train history students how to read, write, and think historically. The course will utilize text and selected readings, discussion, and written assignments to introduce the student to the appropriate material and information.

Course Requirements/Goal: All students are required to complete all readings and assignments of the course. The textbook readings are designed to serve as a foundation as well as additional source material to the course lectures and discussions, and thus are essential for understanding the fundamental elements of the class. I will assume that every student has completed his/her textbook readings and that they will be responsible for the material.

HIS 3300 is also a required course for History majors and thus should be approached with all seriousness. Much of the information and skills you will learn in this course will become vital for successful completion of 3000 and 4000 level courses at the university.

Historians write. That is the essence of the profession. HIS 3300 will begin to train and inform you about the research and writing process. We will explore the manner of researching and how you move from research to, what the great philosopher Jimmy Buffett once sung, “how to get it on paper.” I will not require you to write a lengthy research paper, but the primary goal of the class will be to give you a basis for how to start that journey. We will discuss techniques and strategies on how to navigate the process, and then complete small exercises that will reinforce what we have examined in class.

Historians also read. There is no need to labor over the written word if no one will read your prose. HIS 3300 includes a substantial reading component in assigned texts, the goal of which is to prepare you for class discussion. The most glaring deficiency I see among current college students is their almost maniacal aversion to reading. If you are going to study history, you must learn to get over such an affliction. If you don’t enjoy reading then perhaps history is not the field for you.

Finally, as you will see later in the syllabus, attendance/participation will be the primary determinant of your grade. In fact, fully 50% of your grade will be just showing up for class. I
take such an approach because most of what we will do in this course will be discussion-based, and for that to occur you need to be here in the classroom. For example, we will begin the course with a reading of John Lewis Gaddis’ *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past*. Gaddis, who is a native Texan, a graduate of UT, and is now a distinguished professor at Yale University, is one of the most revered practitioners of the historical profession. Within the pages of his brief book (@ 150 pages of text) he examines and explains how historians should think and write about the past and how to do so in a clear, concise manner. We will spend the first few days of class time discussing Gaddis’ work and if you are not in class you will miss such a vital lesson. We will also do a number of in-class exercises that will require your attendance as it will not be something you can make-up. As you will also so, missing 1-2 classes will not be a draconian penalty, but every absence over 2 will be one that will drastically affect your grade. The point is, as Woody Allen once said, “half of life is just showing up.” Half of this class will be just showing up, paying attention, and participating. And you just might learn something.

**Grading:** There are no formal “exams” in this course; the determination of the student’s grade will come from their participation/attendance and assignments. **Please read and understand how your grade will be determined.** Keep up with your assignments and your grades as doing so will allow you to determine your progress in the course. It is not complicated and I guarantee you that if I can figure it out with my math-challenged capabilities you can as well. If students make the effort to know how they are performing, there will be no “surprises” at the end of a course.

Concerning grades, please take note of the following statement: **While grading over curriculum elements such as writing assignments may superficially seem arbitrary, they are anything but.** I grade according to a rubric designed explicitly for that assignment. Thus, instructors do not “assign” grades, but students “earn” grades in their courses. Toward the end of every semester I hear lamentations and wailing from students who “need” a higher grade than they have earned for various reasons. Take this advice: if you “need” a certain grade in the course for whatever reason, begin to earn that grade from day one. Do whatever work is necessary to earn that grade. Two or three weeks before the semester ends is NOT the time to begin worrying about your course performance. Also, other than opportunities that I give the entire class (such as attending a lecture or other special program) I do not offer “extra credit” so do not ask. I strongly believe that you should take responsibility for your actions. A college course is a semester long affair, not something that you “coast” through for ten weeks and then attempt a “monster” comeback at the end; it is not a sporting event and you are not Tom Brady, so do not try to complete that “Hail Mary” pass at the end of the semester.

Attendance is **required** in this course and is, as mentioned earlier, the most significant part of your course grade. After the first week of class I will take attendance every day. **Tardiness has become a problem in recent semesters, and in this course it will be handled thusly:** If you are more than five minutes late to class, **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO ENTER THE CLASSROOM;** it is disruptive and rude and I will not allow you to enter. Also, except for a truly emergency situation, students should not leave the classroom once class begins. We are only here for 50 minutes—you can wait until after we finish to do whatever it is you need to do. If you think you will need to use a restroom, do it **BEFORE** class. Students are
counted “present” when they are in class at the required time; if they are not, they are absent—for whatever reason. That means that there are no “excused” absences in this class other than for official, university sponsored or sanctioned events. Illness, personal reasons, jail time, or anything else you can think of does not exempt you from being counted absent. If you are not here, you are absent. Please make sure you understand this and the attendance grading policy below.

Grading: What follows is the rubric I will use to determine your grade. Please make sure that you understand what it contains as there will be no variation from the elements within this syllabus:

Attendance/Participation (50 points): Every student will begin the semester with fifty (50) attendance points. If you attend every class session as scheduled then you will end the semester with those fifty points. You will lose points for every class you miss, on a sliding scale, according to the following schedule:

1-2 absences: 2.5 points for each absence
3-5 absences: 5 points for each absence
Over 5 absences: 10 points for each absence.

Example: Student A missed one class because he overslept. He attended all other sessions. Thus, for attendance he will receive 47.5 points. Student B missed four days of class. She decided to not come back from home one Monday, went to play golf on one beautiful Wednesday, was ill on another Monday, and had to attend a funeral on one Friday. Four absences at five points each means she lost twenty points and thus received 30 attendance points, which is a 60% grade for that element. If she had only missed two classes (ill and attending a funeral) she would have received 45 points, which is 90%. Student C blew off one entire week to follow Bad Bunny on his current American tour, stayed home to binge-watch “Stranger Things” for two days, and then woke up one morning and his car wouldn’t start so he went back to bed. He missed six days, which meant that he lost 60 points. His attendance grade went to zero. What that also means is the best he can do in the course, even if he received a perfect score on every assignment—which would be doubtful—would be 50%, which is failing. As you can see, coming to class is the most important element of the course.

Response Writing Exercises (20 points): During the semester (consult the schedule portion of the syllabus for due dates) you will be asked to complete 10 exercises contained in your The Methods and Skills of History text. While I will give you feedback on your work, the grade you will receive for each one will depend on you completing the assignment. It is very simple: if you make the effort and fully complete the assignment you will receive 2 points for each one you finish; if you do not, or only make a minimal effort (which is at my discretion) then you will receive no points. Again, the most significant element of this is effort.

In-class Turabian text citation exercise (15 points): For this assignment, during class you will be given some bibliographic examples of books, articles, primary documents, and other research elements and you will be required to place each in their proper Chicago Manual of Style form. This will be a fully graded exercise.
Final “Exam” Response Paper (15 points): You will be asked to write a minimum 750-word paper that will be due on the day our Final Exam is scheduled. It will be a thought paper detailing, generally, “what you have learned this semester.” You will receive more instruction on this as it draws nearer. This will also be a general pass/fail assignment.

The grade breakdown is as follows:
Attendance—50 points
Response Papers—20 points
Citation exercise—15 points
Final exercise—15 points
Total points: 100

Your final grade will be a percentage of the total points.

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. Interpret the past in context.
2. Understand the complexity of the historical record.
3. Engage in historical inquiry, research, and analysis.
4. Craft historical narrative and argument.

This section of this course will focus on PLOs [Identify those that are directly taught in this course.]

Student Learning Outcomes:
List all student learning outcomes (SLOs) for this course including the course specific student learning outcomes that support the PLOs above. In general, SLOs in a course that support the PLOs are specific and include the exact knowledge, skill or behavior taught in the course that supports the more global PLOs. For additional information on meaningful and measurable learning outcomes see the assessment resource page http://www.sfasu.edu/assessment/index.asp

Explanation of credit hours awarded for course:
This is an upper-level history course. Upper-level lecture courses in history meet for 2,250 minutes (37.5 hours), including examination times, during the course of a semester. Students typically have weekly reading assignments from a combination of textbooks, monographs, scholarly articles, primary document collections, and supplemental materials (biographies, historical novels, memoirs, etc). The level of reading is more advanced than that required in lower-level surveys, and the number of pages students are required to read is generally higher. Typical upper-level courses require students to take 2-3 essay exams per semester, in addition to the final exam, which is also generally a written exam. In addition, out-of-class writing assignments (book reviews, biographical sketches, research papers, etc) are typically required in upper-level courses. Course instructors are required to hold regular scheduled office hours to make themselves available to consult with students as needed. Combined, studying for exams, doing the required reading, completing writing assignments, and consulting with course
instructors average two hours of work outside the classroom for every hour spent in the classroom. Online sections of upper-level courses contain extensive written content within modules, and instructors hold "electronic office hours" to consult with students as needed, generally responding to student inquiries within twenty-four hours. Online course content includes the same information students in a face-to-face lecture course receive, requiring students to engage the online modules for at least 2,250 minutes per term. Besides engaging the material in the modules, online students have outside reading assignments similar to those mentioned above for face-to-face students. Thus, for every hour an online student spends engaging the content in the modules, he/she spends at least two hours completing associated activities and assessments.

Core Curriculum Objective Table

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<tr>
<th>Core Objective</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>How the Core Objective Will be Addressed</th>
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<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking Skills</td>
<td>To include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication Skills</td>
<td>To include effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empirical and Quantitative Skills</td>
<td>To include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions.</td>
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<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>To include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal.</td>
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<td>Personal Responsibility</td>
<td>To include the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Responsibility</td>
<td>To include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.</td>
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**Academic Integrity (Student Academic Dishonesty, Policy 4.1)**

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/student-academic-dishonesty-4.1.pdf

In addition, you may include your own guidelines for academic integrity as appropriate.

**Withheld Grades (Course Grades, 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.

**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/.

**Mental Health Statement**
SFASU values students’ mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. SFA provides a variety of resources to support students’ mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

On-campus Resources:
SFASU Counseling Services
www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices
3rd Floor Rusk Building
936-468-2401

SFASU Human Services Counseling Clinic
www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp
Lecture, Reading, and Assignment Schedule: Most of the lecture topics will be more discussion than pure lecture over reading and other elements of the class. When reading assignments appear on a date you should read those pages before you attend class so that you will be prepared to discuss. For example, for Aug. 26 you see page numbers for the Gaddis book; you should read those pages before class. For the assignments, except for ones we complete in class, they are due on the next class day after they are assigned. For example, the assignment listed for Sept. 5 will be due on Sept. 7.

Week One:
Jan. 19: Introduction to the Course

Week Two:
Jan. 22: What makes one a Historian?
Jan. 24: Historians and time, space, and scale (Discussion over Gaddis book) Landscape of History, ix-52
Jan. 26: The Historians Craft: Why it is a Humanity and not a Social Science (Discussion over Gaddis book): Landscape of History, 53-10

Week Three:
Jan 29: Thinking Like a Historian, (Discussion, Gaddis book), Landscape of History, 111-151
Jan. 31: Class discussion over What it means to “do” history
Feb. 2: Sept. 5: Why in the World Do We Study History, The Methods and Skills of History, xi-26; Complete Set B, exercise 2 (p. 11) and Set B, Exercise 1 (p.24)

Week Four:
Feb. 5: Becoming Historically Conscious, The Methods and Skills of History, 27-63
Feb. 7: Writing History The Methods and Skills of History, 65-100; (We’ll do Set A, exercise 1 in class so bring your text).
Feb. 9: Sources: What Are They and How Do We Use Them? The Methods and Skills of History, 103-129

Week Five:
Feb. 12: Class will meet in the Ralph Steen Library
Feb. 14: Reading History: The Methods and Skills of History, 131-166 Complete Source Exercise (Handout in Class)

Week Six:
Feb. 21: Interpreting Sources: *The Methods and Skills of History*, 217-239. **We will do Set A, Exercise 2 in class so bring your text; Complete Set B, Exercise 4, p. 238**
Feb. 23: Putting it All Together: Getting Your Evidence on Paper *The Methods and Skills of History*, 239-248

**Week Seven:**
Feb. 26: **We will work through Set A, exercise 1, 2, and Set B, 1 2 in class. You will need to complete Set A, Exercise 3 to be turned in on Oct. 5. You will have two library days to help you have time to complete your assignment**

**Week Eight:**
Mar. 4: Why Historians Cite Sources
Mar. 6: **In Class Citation Exercise: Bring your Kate Turabian Text to Class**
Mar. 8: Subfields of History in the Academy

**March 11-17: Spring Break**

**Week Nine:**
Mar. 18: Public History
Mar. 20: The Cardinal Sin: Avoiding Plagiarism
Mar. 22: Why a History Degree is the Best Undergraduate Degree

**Week Ten:**
Mar. 25: Historians and the Public
Mar. 27: **No Class, Library Day**
Mar. 29: **No Class, Easter Break**

**Week Eleven:**
April 1: Historians and the “Cultural War”
Apr. 3: Why is History Necessary in a Democratic Society
April 5: **No Class, Library Day**

**Week Twelve:**
April 8: How to Read a History Assignment and Take notes in class
April 10: Specialty Writing: The Book Review
April 12: **No Class, Library Day**

**Week Thirteen:**
April 15: Teaching History in k-12
April 17: To Be or Not to Be: Do you want to be a professor?
April 19: Tips for an essay exam

Week Thirteen:
April 22: Careers with a History degree
Apr. 24: Class Discussion: Do You Want to be a Historian?
April 26: Class Wrap-Up—What have we learned?

Week Fourteen:
April 29: No Class; Prepare Final Assignment
May 1: No Class: Prepare Final Assignment
May 3: No Class: Prepare Final Assignment

Final Response Paper Due: Monday May 6