



HIST 492.01E Senior Research Seminar

COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2024

SS#141, CRN: 80497

Last Updated August 2024

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Derrick McKisick, Ph.D.

Office Location: SS #119

Office Hours: Tuesday 9:00 -11:00 am / 4:00 – 5:00 pm / Thursday 9:00 – 11:00 am

Office Phone: 903.886.5222

Office Fax: 903.468.3230

University Email Address: derrick.mckisick@tamuc.edu

Preferred Form of Communication: **email**

Communication Response Time: 24-hours (excluding weekends)

COURSE INFORMATION

Required Materials

Scott Reynolds Nelson, *Steel Drivin' Man: John Henry, The Untold Story of an American Legend*, Oxford 2006, ISBN 978-0-19-534119-5

Jeremy D. Popkin, *From Herodotus to H-Net: The Story of Historiography*, Oxford, 2020, ISBN 978-80190077617.

Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, 10th ed., Bedford/St. Martins, 2021, ISBN 978-1319244415.

Course Description

This course provides senior history majors with an opportunity to conduct original historical research. Students will demonstrate the skills necessary for properly conducting historical research through classroom discussion and activities, out-of-classroom assignments and independent research work. Students will: engage in a discussion of the discipline of history; explain how historiography and sources can be used to frame historical arguments; recognize the contested nature of historical evidence and the value of scholarly debate; and demonstrate information retrieval skills required for historical research. The guided preparation of an approved scholarly research paper is designed to produce work that can be presented at a history conference or submitted for publication.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students will locate and analyze appropriate primary and secondary resources to answer a historical research question.
2. Students will produce a research project that employs writing conventions appropriate for historical scholarship including proper citation and grammar.
3. Students will identify and analyze secondary sources in a way that demonstrates their understanding of diverse historians' perspectives on and analysis of a historical topic.
4. Students will construct and support an argument using primary and secondary sources.
5. Students will produce a research project that demonstrates an understanding of historical reasoning including change over time, historical causation, and historical significance.

COURSE OVERVIEW

Instructional Methods

Course meetings consist of interactive lectures, discussions, and workshops. These course meetings will not be recorded. Remote attendance will not be offered. Additional course materials will be available asynchronously through D2L under the *content* tab. The course schedule is organized by day, with assignments, quizzes, and exams being due during class time on the day in the schedule unless otherwise indicated. Quizzes will be administered during class time.

This course is designed as a research seminar. As such, the focus will be on developing the skills, professional practices, and habits of mind of a professional historian rather than on a particular field of historical scholarship. In this course each student will be conducting their own research project on a topic of their choice from the last two centuries (1800-2000 CE) based on sources found within the library's digital archival sources available through the Adam Matthews collections (<https://www-am-explorer-com.proxy.tamuc.edu/>). Students will be locating and working with primary and secondary sources related to their chosen research question. Much of the work is cumulative in nature. Therefore proactive engagement from the beginning of the semester is essential to student success. Students who are consistently engaged and who adapt to instructor and peer feedback will find the most success in the course. Most class meetings will involve workshoping student research, analysis, and writing that is in-process. Students are expected to refine their research, writing, and analysis skills outside of class meetings.

In the event of a campus closure, we will follow the instructions given by the university administration. If the university permits, cancelled class meetings may move to Zoom (facilitated through D2L) at the standard class time. In the event of a cancelled class meeting for which an alternate Zoom meeting is not possible, the instructor may create a discussion post based on the day's topic to serve as an alternate assignment.

Clear and consistent communication is essential to this course. I strive to be flexible and understanding in meeting student needs. Please contact me with any questions or concerns. I am available to meet with students to discuss class content, expectations, and other relevant topics through virtual (zoom) or in-person office hours (times listed above).

Departmental Orientation and Guides

The history department has uploaded orientation materials to the department's history major D2L shell (HIST 500). These materials are available to assist you in learning the basic skills, professional norms, and departmental expectations for history majors. Please consult them as needed throughout the semester. All materials submitted for the course should follow the History Department style guide and the information presented in the department's orientation available through the D2L majors page. Failure to comply with these expectations in an assignment may negatively impact your grade.

Classroom Participation

Students are expected to contribute to classroom discussions. Thoughtful participation is not necessarily the same as talking frequently. It means demonstrating a knowledge of the material, a willingness to think critically, and, most importantly, a willingness to learn from others. Humility and a willingness to listen are essential virtues in the classroom. Students are encouraged to engage not only with the professor and the material, but also with each other where appropriate.

Grading	Assessments	
Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:	Analysis Posts (10x20)	200
A = 895-1000 Points	Tests/Smart Goals (3)	75
B = 795-894 Points	Research Proposal	50
C = 695-794 Points	Book Review	40
D = 595-694 Points	Historiography Report	40
F = 000-594 Points	Project Paper Draft	100
	Project Paper Final	250
	Presentation	30
	Peer Review	40
	Portfolio Draft	25
	Portfolio Final	50
	<u>Participation</u>	<u>100</u>
	Total	1000

Assignments

Analysis Posts

In order to keep students on-track with our course readings and to ensure students come to class prepared to engage in course discussions, Analysis Posts will be due most weeks through the D2L discussion tab. Student posts should be 1-2 paragraphs (roughly 200 words) and should fully answer the question using course materials. All sources should be cited using Turabian footnotes. While these assignments will be completed within the D2L “discussion” forums, you are not responsible for submitting responses to other student’s submissions. Posts are due by class time on the date indicated in the course schedule. There are 11 posts. The lowest post grade will be dropped.

Tests

There will be three tests over the course of the semester to evaluate student understanding of key historical skills and concepts. These will cover proper citation, schools of historiography, and the historian’s craft. These will be taken in class.

Book Review

Each student is responsible for writing one 600-word book review on a historical monograph that they identify as a key secondary source for their project. Each review should summarize the book’s argument and critically engage with its content. See the book review guide posted under guides on the D2L site and the department orientation D2L page for more information. Submit your review through the D2L assignments dropbox and submit a paper version in-class for written feedback.

Research Proposal

The research proposal represents the foundation of your history research project. It should be no more than 500 words of text along with a working bibliography (in proper Turabian format) of primary and secondary sources. Your proposal should follow the structure and guidelines provided in the guide on D2L. This research proposal will guide the rest of your research and writing for the project and will be the product of multiple days of workshopping.

Historiography Report

As part of each student’s research project, you will read widely in the secondary sources surrounding your proposed topic and question. The historiography report is a 500-700 word working explanation of the central questions and interpretations in the historiography of your topic. Your submission should include a working bibliography of secondary sources you are examining for your project. Material from this submission may be used directly in the project paper.

Project Paper

The project paper represents the culmination of your history research project from the course and a capstone for the history major. It should clearly pose a historical question, present and interpret historical sources, and provide an answer to the question posed. It should be 3000-4000 words (including notes) It should include a title page and

bibliography and should follow the extensive guidelines provided in class and through D2L. We will conduct peer review of a draft of this paper in class. You will submit a final, revised draft during finals week.

Presentations

Each student will be responsible for presenting their research project to 3-4 fellow students. This presentation should explain the research question, outline the historiography, discuss the research, and provide clear historical analysis. Each student will also answer questions from the audience. These presentations will be recorded and submitted to D2L along with copies of any visuals used during the presentation.

Peer Review

After the submission of the paper rough draft, each student will engage in group peer review with a small group of other students. This peer review should be honest and constructive and will be submitted in written form. Upon receiving this feedback (anonymously), each student will compose a short (1 page) response to concerns raised, explaining which comments they will incorporate into their revisions and which they will not (with clear explanations for each).

Portfolio

Over the course of the semester students will compile a printed, bound portfolio that will be submitted to the department as a summative artifact representing their learning over the course of the program. Detailed instructions will be provided in class and through D2L for this portfolio. Students will submit a draft and a final portfolio during the final exam period.

Participation

One of the goals in this course is to foster an academic community where we each learn from each other and where we practice civic and academic virtue. This means showing up to class on time, preparing to engage the subject at hand, and being willing to both speak and listen to your professor and colleagues. Your participation grade will be assessed based on my perception of your willingness to model this type of academic engagement.

COURSE CALENDAR

Week 1

- August 27 What is history? What is historiography?
Read: Rampolla Part 1; Popkin, Chapter 1
- August 29 History as Detective Work – Assessing Sources
Read: Nelson, Chapters 1-3
Post: Defining History
Post: Student Introductions

Week 2

- September 3 History in Particular; History in General
Read: Nelson, Chapters 4-6
Post: History in General and Particular
Post: Three research topic ideas (2-3 sentences each)
- September 5 History and Memory
Read: Nelson, Chapters 7-8
Post: History and Memory

Week 3

- September 10 Research Proposal Components
Watch: Locating and Evaluating Sources – Adam Matthews
Read: Sample Proposal (D2L)
Read: Rampolla Part 5
Bring to class 3-4 potential sources from <https://www-am-explorer-com.proxy.tamuc.edu/>
- September 12 Sutter Article Analysis: Argument and Historiography
Read: Paul Sutter, “What Gullies Mean”
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/25700141>
Post: Sutter’s Argument and Historiography

Week 4

- September 17 AI and the History Profession
Project Topic Workshop
Bring revised topic ideas to class to circulate
Read: Rampolla, Part 2
Post: AI and the History Profession
- September 19 Sutter Article Analysis: Primary Sources and Research Process
Post: Sutter’s Primary Sources

Week 5

- September 24 Sutter Article Analysis: Writing Structure and Narrative
Post: Sutter’s Writing
Read: Rampolla, Part 4
- September 26 From Reading History to Doing History
Test: What does it mean to do history?

Research Proposal Workshop
 Bring a Draft Research Proposal to class
 Must have completed Research Proposal Consultation by this point

Week 6

October 1 The History of History – Guest Lecture
 Read: Popkin, Chapters 2-5
 Read: Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Chapter 15 ([online](#))
 Due: Research Proposal

October 3 The History of History – Guest Lecture
 Read: Popkin, Chapters 6-7

Week 7

October 8 Guest Lecture – Teaching as a Profession
 Test: Historiography

October 10 Project Book and Historiography Discussion
 Read: Project Book
 Cotton Conference, Saturday, October 14, Audie Murphy Museum

Week 8

October 15 Book Reviews
 Read: Rumpolla, Part 3
 Due: Project Book Review

October 17 Book Reception Discussion
 Read: Four book reviews of the Project Book
 Post: Reception Report

Week 9

October 22 Historiography Workshop
 Due: Historiography Report

October 24 Primary Source Workshop
 Working with Sources (citations and quotations)
 Read: Rumpolla, parts 6-7
 Bring 2-3 primary sources to discuss

Week 10

October 29 Article #2 discussion
 Read: Article #2
 Post: Article #2

October 31 How to Organize your Writing: Outlines and Notecards
 Read: Rampolla, Part 4e-4g
 Quiz: Citations and Formatting (November 6)

Week 11

November 5 How to Write: Tone and Perspective
 Writing Workshop

November 7 Bring 200 words of interpretive writing with footnotes (2 copies) to workshop
Peer Review Discussion
Writing Workshop
Bring 200 words of interpretive writing with footnotes (2 copies) to workshop
Due: Paper Draft Submission (November 13)

Week 12

November 12 Peer Review Launch
Discussion: Critique, Peer Review, and Historical Publishing
November 14 The Politics of History
Read: Matthew Karp, "History as End," *Harpers*, July 2021 ([online](#))

Week 13

November 19 Thinking in projects and career trajectory
Read Faculty CVs
(<https://inside.tamuc.edu/academics/cvsyllabi/cv/default.aspx>)
Portfolio Discussion (CV's and Cover letters)
Due: Peer Review

Week 14

November 26 Due: Portfolio (PDF) November 26 – No Class
Thanksgiving Break – University Closed 11/27- 12/2

Week 15

December 3 **November 27-December 3**
Presentations, Conferences, and Public Speaking
Watch Guide to Public Speaking: [TED](#)
Guide to History Conferences: [online](#)
Workshop presentations
Due: Peer Review Response
December 5 Meet in Presentation Groups
Project Presentation Discussion (and makeups)
Careers in History outside the Classroom / History Graduate School
Read: Popkin, Chapter 8
Examine: AHA [Chart of Careers](#)
Examine: [AHA Site](#)

December 7 Paper Final Draft Workshop
Due: Paper Final Draft (December 7, 11:59 PM)

Final Exam

Tuesday, December 12, 1:15 PM
Final Portfolio Due Wednesday, December 13, 11:59 PM

Statement on AI (ChatGPT)

At A&M University-Commerce we recognize that there are potentially legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that can generate text or suggest replacements for text. AI is a powerful tool for consolidating information. As a tool it requires that both students and faculty think through how to use it wisely and responsibly to accomplish our goals. AI is also a powerful tool for gathering the work of others and combining it, without citation, into a product for distribution and misattribution. In this it is, at best, morally dubious.

For this course our goals are to practice historical thinking, to engage in historical scholarship, to interpret historical scholarship, and to grow in our understanding of the past and of the ways humans have sought to understand it. As a tool, AI does little to help us in these tasks. To the contrary, using AI for course assignments would undermine your learning in these areas—the learning you are paying for. It would outsource the valuable human endeavor that is historical scholarship to an algorithm that can only parrot back predigested scraps of the work humans have done before. For this reason, students and faculty are not authorized to use any AI software in this course. Any use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism) as well as a betrayal of the norms and values of graduate-level historical scholarship. As a student you are to be fully responsible for the content of any assignment you submit.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

Email Communication

All course communications will come through your university email account. Be sure to check it regularly. You should contact me through my TAMU-C email address (Andrew.Baker@tamuc.edu). I check my email regularly between 8 am and 5 pm Monday – Friday. I do not check my campus email on Sunday. A failure of planning on your part does not constitute a crisis on my part.

Counseling Center

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel

Statement on Student Grievances

Students who have questions or concerns about the Instructor's course policies or the conduct either of the Instructor or a classmate should first consult with the Instructor. In the event of a lack of resolution or satisfaction on the matter, the student may bring their concerns to the head of the History Department, Sharon Kowalsky (Sharon.Kowalsky@tamuc.edu). If this does not result in a satisfactory conclusion to the matter, students may bring the issue to the attention of the Associate Dean of Students per procedures outlined on pp. 15-19 of the Student Guide Book.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Drop/Withdrawal

If you decide that you need to drop or withdrawal from this course, it is your responsibility to complete the necessary paperwork. I will not drop you from the course if you stop attending.

Attendance

Regular attendance is vital to success in the course. Unexcused absences will impact your participation grade for the semester. Only medical and family emergencies and university approved absences will be excused. If you anticipate any difficulties attending course sessions, please be proactive in contacting the professor.

Late Work

Make-up tests will only be offered in the case of an excused absence as described above. Students who anticipate university-approved absences must make arrangements to complete the work at an alternate time. Unexcused late work will be penalized a letter grade per day late (excluding weekends) to a maximum penalty of half credit.

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx).
<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum:
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

Health and Safety

Students should not attend class when ill or after exposure to anyone with a communicable illness. Communicate such instances directly with your instructor. Faculty will work to support the student getting access to missed content or completing missed assignments.

TAMUC Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10GraduateStudentAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library- Room 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.