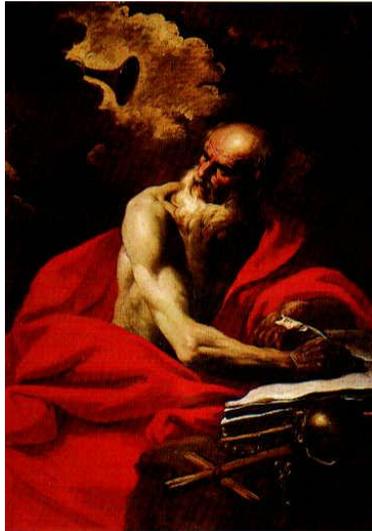




**EAST TEXAS A&M**  
UNIVERSITY

**HISTORY 492.01E: SENIOR RESEARCH SEMINAR  
COURSE SYLLABUS: FALL 2025**



Pier Francesco Mola (1612-1666), *Saint Jerome* (c. 1660)  
Vatican Museum, Rome

**Instructor:** Professor John Howard Smith

**Course Location/Time:** Ferguson Social Sciences 141 / Tues. & Thurs., 11:00 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

**Office Location:** Ferguson Social Sciences 117

**Office Hours:** Monday-Friday, 8:00—9:00 a.m., or by appointment

**University Email Address:** [john.smith@etamu.edu](mailto:john.smith@etamu.edu)

<b>COURSE INFORMATION</b>
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**Course Prerequisites/Co-requisites: None**

**Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings:**

*Textbooks Required:*

- William Kelleher Storey, *Writing History: A Guide for Students*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020. ISBN13 978-0-19-007841-6
- Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, *They Say/I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: W. W. Norton, 2024. ISBN13 978-1-324-07003-0
- John Howard Smith, *A Dream of the Judgment Day: American Millennialism and Apocalypticism, 1620-1890* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021)—Free download on D2L

**Course Description:**

The purpose of this course is to provide 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.

<b>COURSE REQUIREMENTS</b>
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**Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments**

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 Waters Library's digital archival and secondary source [databases](#). 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

workshopping student research, analysis, and writing that is in-process. Students are expected to refine their research, writing, and analysis skills outside of class meetings.

Graded assessment of student performance will be measured according to the following criteria:

Attendance & Participation: (100 pts., 30% of course grade)

Attendance to class meetings and participations in discussions of the content are intended to allow students to discuss issues pertaining to the topics at hand concerning various aspects of reading, researching, and writing history, and will serve to inform the Instructor about how well students are absorbing course content.

Readings Quizzes: (100 pts., 30% of course grade)

The readings quizzes are designed to test students' comprehension of the readings for each particular day a quiz is administered, testing the depth of their knowledge of the topic(s) at hand and their analytical skills. Administration will be random, and each quiz will take up no more than 10 minutes of class time at the beginning of each class period. Grading will be on a 0-10 point scale for each quiz, with a running average maintained through the semester that will be adjusted to a score from 0-100 at the end of the semester.

Research Paper: (40% of course grade)

The research paper will be a project undertaken on a topic of the student's choosing, with the consultation of the Instructor, that presents an interpretative argument within the context of the topic's historiography. It is intended to demonstrate the degree to which the student has absorbed and comprehended the fundamentals of historical research and writing. **See below for further details.**

### Grading

Grading will be calculated using a standard 10-point scale, with course elements weighted accordingly:

90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
0-59	F

Attendance & Participation (100 pts.)	30%
Readings Quizzes (10 pts. each)	30%
Research Project (100 pts.)	40%

## TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

As this course is web-enhanced through D2L/Brightspace, students are asked to follow these links for information about course enhancements:

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

[https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser\\_support.htm](https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm)

## ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

This course will be facilitated using D2L/Brightspace, the Learning Management System used by East Texas A&M University. To get started with the course, go to: <https://leo.etamu.edu/login.aspx>.

You will need your CWID and password to log in to the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact Technology Services at 903.468.6000 or [helpdesk@etamu.edu](mailto:helpdesk@etamu.edu).

Consistent and reliable access to the Internet is a fundamental requirement for this course.

## COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

### Interaction with Instructor Statement:

Office hours are given at the top of this syllabus, and are posted outside of my door. Arrangements can be made to confer via Zoom if a student cannot meet with me during regular office hours for consultations. Email is the most reliable method of reaching me outside of my office. Expect a reply within 24 to 36 hours, and replies will only be sent to students' LeoMail accounts. **Do not email me from your personal email account.**

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of D2L/Brightspace, please contact D2L/Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

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

## COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

### Academic Honesty

It is the policy of the University, the History Department, and the instructor that no form of plagiarism or cheating will be tolerated. Plagiarism is defined as the deliberate use of another's work and claiming it as one's own. This means ideas as well as text, whether paraphrased or presented verbatim (word-for-word). You are neither required nor expected to come up with original ideas about, or new interpretations of, the American Revolution. **Anyone caught cheating or plagiarizing will automatically fail the assignment in question, may summarily fail the course, and could be subject to disciplinary action by the University.** There is an easy way to avoid such a dire fate: take pride in your work, and please take full advantage of the instructor's abundant willingness to help you at every opportunity.

Likewise, no element of the course grade is negotiable or optional. *The instructor's evaluative judgment of tests and examinations is **final**, and will not be subject to revision except in cases of mathematical error.*

For more, see: [Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

### Class Decorum

All students must show respect toward the Instructor and the Instructor's syllabus, presentations, assignments, and point of view. Students should also respect each others' differences. If the Instructor determines that a student is not being respectful toward other students or the Instructor, or is otherwise behaving in an inappropriate manner, it is the Instructor's prerogative to remove the student from the class either temporarily or permanently, as the case requires.

***Please refrain from using cellphones during class. Food is not permitted in the classroom, though beverages are permitted. Noncompliance will result in deductions from the participation grade.***

***Note: Refusal to comply with any of the Instructor's policies will result in immediate deregistration from the course.***

### **Nondiscrimination Notice**

East Texas A&M University 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.

### **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.

### **"Campus Carry" Statement**

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in East Texas A&M University 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 46.035 and East Texas A&M University Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.** For a list of locations, please refer to (<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>) and/or consult your event organizer. **Pursuant to Penal Code 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all East Texas A&M campuses.** Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

### **Statement on the Uses of Artificial Intelligence**

East Texas A&M University acknowledges that there can be legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words. **However, use of such tools cannot take the place of original composition on academic writing assignments, and therefore is strongly discouraged by the Instructor in this course.** Any discovered and confirmed use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty, and will result in the same penalties that attend cases of plagiarism. Students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, including cases in which A.I. was used, and especially in cases where the A.I. software plagiarized another text and/or misattributed or otherwise misrepresented primary and/or secondary source materials. For further information please consult East Texas A&M policy 13.99.99.R0.10: Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty.

**University Specific Procedures:**

East Texas A&M 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.

**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**  
**East Texas A&M University**  
**Waters Library 132**  
**Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835**  
[StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu)  
[Student Disability Resources & Services](#)

*Student Conduct*

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See *Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook*).

*Mental Health Services*

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](http://www.tamuc.edu/counsel).

**DEPARTMENTAL ORIENTATION & 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.**

<b>COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR</b>
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**PART I: HISTORY & HISTORIOGRAPHY**

- Aug. 26: Introductions
- Aug. 28: What is History, and Why Do We *Do* It?
- Sept. 2: Ancient and Medieval Historiography
- Sept. 4: Modern Historiography
- Sept. 9: The Philosophy of History
- Sept. 11: History as a Science and a Profession

**PART II: BECOMING A HISTORIAN**

- Sept. 16: Asking Questions of the Past  
**Readings:** Storey, *Writing History*, chap. 1A–1C; Alfred Crosby, “Virgin Soil Epidemics as a Factor in the Aboriginal Depopulation in America,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ser., 33 (Apr. 1976), 289-299; David S. Jones, “Virgin Soils Revisited,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 60 (Oct. 2003), 703-742 (download from D2L)
- Sept. 18: What Historians Work With—Secondary Sources  
**Readings:** Storey, *Writing History*, chaps. 1D–1L, 1N, 2A and 2C  
**\*Research Question Due\***
- Sept. 23: What Historians Work With—Primary Sources  
**Readings:** Storey, *Writing History*, chap. 2A and 2C (again!), and 2D
- Sept. 25: Getting the Facts Straight  
**Readings:** Storey, *Writing History*, chap. 4A–4F
- Sept. 30: Scholarship as Conversation  
**Readings:** Graff and Birkenstein, “Introduction”; Storey, *Writing History*, chap. 3A  
**\*Research Paper Proposal Due\***
- Oct. 2: Summarizing Another Historian’s Argument  
**Readings:** Graff and Birkenstein, chaps. 1-2; Storey, *Writing History*, chap. 3B
- Oct. 7: The Art of Paraphrasing  
**Readings:** Graff and Birkenstein, chap. 3; Storey, *Writing History*, chap. 3C
- Oct. 9: Building an Argument  
**Readings:** Graff and Birkenstein, chaps.4-5; Storey, *Writing History*, chap. 5A–5D
- Oct. 14: Making Your Points  
**Readings:** Graff and Birkenstein, chaps. 6-8; Storey, *Writing History*, chap. 5H  
**\*Historiography Report Due\***
- Oct. 16: Answering the “So What?” Question  
**Readings:** Graff and Birkenstein, chap. 7

Oct. 21: Professional Ethics

**Readings:** Storey, *Writing History*, chap. 3G; The American Historical Association's "[Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct](#)," sections 1-4

**\*Formal Thesis Statement Due\***

Oct. 23: Handling Counterarguments

**Readings:** Graff and Birkenstein, chap. 6; Storey, *Writing History*, chap. 5M

### **PART III: BEING A HISTORIAN**

Oct. 28: Start Writing!

**Readings:** Graff and Birkenstein, chap. 8; Storey, *Writing History*, chap. 5E–5F

**\*Expanded Thesis Statement with Arguments/Counterarguments Due\***

Oct. 30: Nuts and Bolts

**Readings:** Storey, *Writing History*, chap. 7 (entire)

Nov. 4: Citing Your Sources Properly

Nov. 6: Narrative Techniques

**Readings:** Storey, *Writing History*, chap. 6 (entire); chap. 8G–8J

Nov. 11: Publishing in History

**Readings:** Smith, *A Dream of the Judgment Day*, "Preface" and any 3 chapters of your choosing

**\*Rough Drafts Due for Team Peer Review\***

Nov. 13: Editing and Revising

**Readings:** Storey, *Writing History*, chap. 9 (entire)

Nov. 18: Careers in History

Nov. 20: Presentations, Conferences, & Public Speaking

**\*Peer-Reviewed Drafts Due for Instructor Evaluation\* (submit an electronic copy to D2L—see below)**

**Nov. 25–27: Thanksgiving Break**

**Dec. 2–4: Paper Presentations**

**\*Portfolio Draft Due Dec. 2\* (bring them to class)**

**Dec. 8–12: Finals Week—Final Paper Draft Due Dec. 8 at 11:59 p.m.; Final Portfolio Draft Due Dec. 11 at 12:00 p.m.**

## THE RESEARCH PAPER

The research paper, to be thirteen (13) pages in length (*not* including a cover page [which is unnecessary] and the bibliography), is to be written on a subject of the student's choosing, and must meet the following criteria:

1. Both primary and secondary sources must be used in composing this paper (reference works [dictionaries, encyclopedias (*especially* Wikipedia, etc.), textbooks [i.e., U.S. or world history surveys, edited document collections, etc.], book reviews, juvenile literature, or articles in the popular media [i.e., *History Illustrated*, *History Channel Magazine*, *Newsweek*, etc.], and documentaries [such as on PBS or the History Channel] **are not acceptable** as valid sources),
2. You must use at least *five* (5) distinct primary sources, and at least *nine* (9) secondary sources,
3. At least *six* (6) of your secondary sources must be scholarly books, and at least *three* (3) of your secondary sources must be scholarly journal articles accessed from JSTOR and/or ProjectMUSE,
4. At least *three* (3) of the primary and *five* (5) of the secondary sources must be predominantly relied upon, rather than just one or two of each,
5. Your source citations must be in footnote—*not endnote*—format,
6. Your bibliography (which may contain no sources that go uncited) must contain at least *fifteen* (15) items, with primary sources comprising *at least* one-third of your evidence base (i.e., 5 sources), and
7. The formatting must adhere to the physical parameters established in the departmental Style Guide.

This essay must analyze an event or sequence of events, presenting a cohesive and logical argument supported by the primary and secondary sources, and should devote an initial two pages to a historiographic survey of the subject matter, followed by the analysis which may or may not concur with the dominant interpretation(s). Whether or not you agree with a certain historian's or historians' interpretations, your analysis must be supported by the evidence and take oppositional interpretations into account. In other words, pick a topic wherein there is some disagreement as to causes and/or interpretation, choose a side, and defend that position.

Begin casting about for a topic early, as you will be submitting components of the paper to me in stages leading to the crafting of a full-fledged essay. **Do not leave any aspects of this assignment to the last minute.** Late submissions of any component part(s) of the paper will be assessed at five (5) points for every business day it is late, with no late final drafts accepted except under mitigating circumstances (see above). The component parts must be word-processed. No hand-written work will be accepted, and **assignments may not be submitted electronically** (meaning I will only accept "hard" copies—nothing may be emailed or handed in on disk). The paper will be graded on the basis of the following criteria: (1) compliance with the assignment; (2) the presence, strength, and originality of a thesis; (3) the use of evidence to support the thesis; (4) the degree to which the paper is evaluative and analytical rather than descriptive; (5) evidence that the primary and secondary sources in the bibliography were read and understood; (6) organization; and (7) mechanics, that is, spelling, grammar, syntax, and punctuation.

The grade for the paper will be calculated through a process of cumulative construction of each component submitted over the course of the semester, with each assignment given a total point value as follows:

**Research Question: 50 pts.**

\* **Paper Proposal (with working bibliography of at least 5 secondary sources): 50 pts.**

**Historiography Report: 50 pts.**

\* **Formal Thesis Statement (with expanded bibliography to include at least 3 primary sources): 100 pts.**

\* **Revised Thesis Statement, Argument and Counterargument/Refutation: 100 pts.**

\* **Rough Draft (minimum of 10 pp. in length): 100 pts.**

**Peer Review: 100 pts.**

**Presentation: 50 pts.**

\* **Final Draft: 200 pts.**

\* **Portfolio Draft: 100 pts.**

\* **Portfolio Final: 100 pts.**

**Total: 1,000 pts. (the final grade for the project will be the point total divided by 10)**

### **Research Question**

The research question is a simple statement of intent to investigate a historical event or phenomenon, the theoretical answer to which cannot be a simple “yes” or “no,” and must lead to an understandable series of follow-up questions that begin with “what about \_\_\_\_\_?” This will begin a process of narrowing down a topic from something large and probably too difficult to undertake in the space of a semester down to something manageable.

### **\*Paper 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.

### **\*Formal Thesis Statement**

The thesis statement will be an assertion of the proposed paper’s argument, and will include an expanded working bibliography. The argument proposed must be one to which another scholar could argue against using the very same bibliographic resources.

### **\*Revised Thesis Statement**

Following guidance from the Instructor and additional research, students will submit a revised thesis statement that *may or may not* be the same as that originally proposed, and will be augmented by three evidence-based arguments supporting the thesis, as well as two arguments against the thesis followed by counter-arguments likewise citing evidence.

### **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 an expanded working bibliography of secondary sources you are examining for your project. Material from this submission may be used directly in the project paper.

### **\*Research Paper**

The research 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 13-15 pages in length, excluding the bibliography. It should include a title page and bibliography and should follow the extensive guidelines provided in class and through D2L. Two rough drafts will be submitted—one for peer review, and a second revision based on those reviews. Students will then submit a final, revised draft on Monday, Dec. 8.

Late submissions of any component will be penalized a total of five (5) points for every business day that it is late. **No final drafts will be accepted beyond Dec. 12 (at a substantial penalty of 5 points per day late), and total failure to submit any one or more components marked with an asterisk (\*) will result in immediate failure of the course.**

### Presentations

Each student will be responsible for presenting their research project to their colleagues in the class. Each student will have a maximum of 10 minutes for a presentation that 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.

### 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 History 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.

