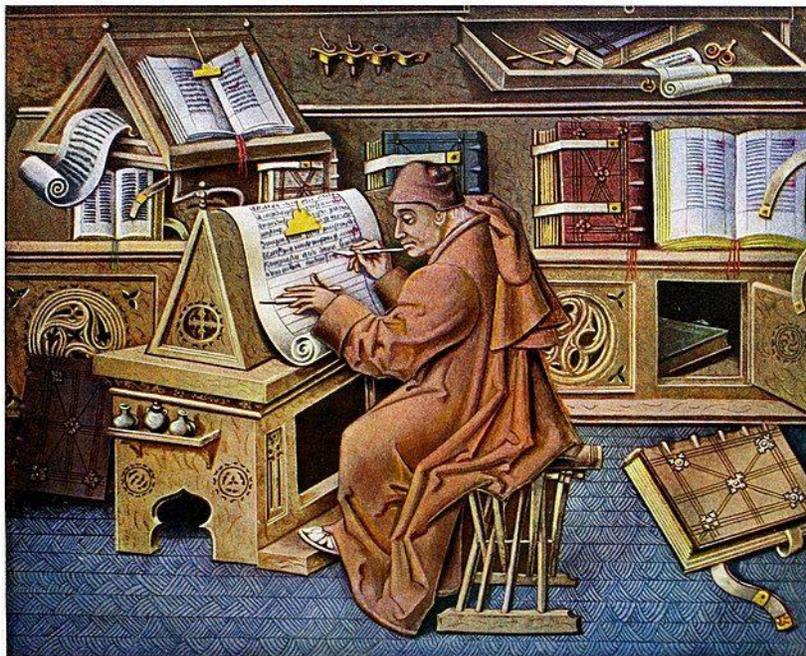




**EAST TEXAS A&M**  
UNIVERSITY

**HISTORY 309.01E: PRESENTING THE PAST  
COURSE SYLLABUS: SPRING 2026**



**Instructor:** Professor John Howard Smith

**Course Location/Time:** McDowell Business Admin. 257 / Tues. & Thurs., 9:30–10:45 a.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

*Recommended:*

Kate L. Turabian, et al., *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018.

**Course Description:**

This course introduces students to the practice of history, including historical thinking, research methods, and source interpretation. Students will engage in project-based learning, the shaping of collaborative scholarship for public audiences, and using digital tools. Through this course students will explore the ways these skills can prepare them for careers in education, public history, journalism, law, government, administration, and/or related fields. Non-majors may enroll with consent of the department.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. Students will develop a greater familiarity with the fundamentals of historical research and writing, including knowledge of various types of source materials of the primary, secondary, and tertiary natures, as well as of the proper use and citation of such sources in scholarly writing.
2. Students will produce a research project that employs writing conventions appropriate for historical scholarship, including proper citation and grammar, for multiple audiences.
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 demonstrate an understanding of historical reasoning including change over time, historical causation, and historical significance.

<b>ASSIGNMENTS, STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES, EXPECTATIONS, &amp; TIPS FOR STUDENT SUCCESS</b>
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**Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments**

The focus of this course will be on developing the skills, professional practices, and habits of mind of a professional historian. Through a series of exercises students will learn skills related to topic selection, project proposals, research, devising viable theses, and construction of a defensible argument. 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.

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

Attendance & Participation: (100 pts., 25% 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. Grading will be assessed according to the following rubric:

- A = Always well prepared, frequently participates without solicitation, never absent without a valid excuse
- B = Always generally prepared, participates only when called on, rarely absent without a valid excuse
- C = Usually prepared to some extent, rarely speaks, sometimes absent without a valid excuse
- D = Often unprepared, several unexcused absences
- F = Always unprepared, frequent unexcused absences

Quizzes: (25% of course grade)

The quizzes will be randomly administered, and based partly on the assigned readings as well as material covered in lectures and class discussions. They will only take up about 10-15 minutes of class time at the beginning of each class meeting. Some in-class exercises and short homework assignments will be counted as quiz grades.

Research Elements Project: (25% of course grade)

The research elements project will be an exercise in the fundamentals of historical research and essay construction. It is intended to demonstrate the degree to which the student has absorbed and comprehended these fundamentals. **See below for further details.**

Book Review: (25% of course grade)

The book review is to be a substantive analysis of a secondary source monograph of the student's choosing—presumably as part of their research for a project in another history course, but could otherwise be of a book independently selected solely for this course—that identifies and assesses the author's thesis, and places it in the relevant historiographic context. **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.)	25%
Quizzes (10 pts. each)	25%
Research Elements Project (100 pts.)	25%
Book Review (100 pts.)	25%

## 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). **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](#)

### **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.

### **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.

### **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.

### **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).



<http://telusproduction.com/app/5108.html>

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

- Jan. 13: Introductions
- Jan. 15: What is History, and Why Do We *Do It*?
- Jan. 20: Ancient and Medieval Historiography
- Jan. 22: Modern Historiography
- Jan. 27: The Philosophy of History
- Jan. 29: History as a Science and a Profession

## **PART II: BECOMING A HISTORIAN**

- Feb. 3: 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)
- Feb. 5: What Historians Work With—Secondary Sources  
**Readings:** Storey, *Writing History*, chaps. 1D–1L, 1N, 2A and 2C  
**\*Research Question Due\***
- Feb. 10-12: No Class Meeting**
- Feb. 17: What Historians Work With—Primary Sources  
**Readings:** Storey, *Writing History*, chap. 2A and 2C (again!), and 2D  
**\*Topic Statement Due\***
- Feb. 19: Getting the Facts Straight  
**Readings:** Storey, *Writing History*, chap. 4A–4F
- Feb. 24: Scholarship as Conversation  
**Readings:** Graff and Birkenstein, “Introduction” and chap. 1; Storey, *Writing History*, chap. 3A-3B
- Feb. 26: No Class Meeting**  
**\*Research Paper Proposal Due\***

Mar. 3: Summarizing and Paraphrasing

**Readings:** Graff and Birkenstein, "Introduction" and chaps. 1-2; Storey, *Writing History*, chap. 5M

Mar. 5: Quoting Effectively

**Readings:** Graff and Birkenstein, chap. 3

**Mar. 9-13: Spring Break**

Mar. 17: Going to the Archives (meet on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of Waters Library)

Mar. 19: Using Databases

Mar. 24: Building an Argument

**Readings:** Graff and Birkenstein, chaps.4-5; Storey, *Writing History*, chap. 5A–5D

Mar. 26: Making Your Points

**Readings:** Graff and Birkenstein, chaps. 6-8; Storey, *Writing History*, chap. 5H

Mar. 31: Answering the "So What?" Question

**Readings:** Graff and Birkenstein, chap. 7

Apr. 2: 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\***

**PART III: BEING A HISTORIAN**

Apr. 7: Beginning to Write

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

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

Apr. 9: Nuts and Bolts

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

Apr. 14: Citing Your Sources Properly

Apr. 16: Narrative Techniques

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

Apr. 21: Editing and Revising

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

Apr. 23: Careers in History

Apr. 28: Presentations, Conferences, & Public Speaking

Apr. 30: Digital History

May 5: **Book Review Due by 11:59 p.m.**

## **THE RESEARCH ELEMENTS PROJECT**

The research elements project revolves around a formal scholarly paper investigating a historical event or phenomenon, either of one for which you are undertaking in another history course in which students are already enrolled, or a different theoretical project devised solely for this course. However, rather than completing said project in the form of a complete essay, students will only concentrate on progressive aspects of such a project, described below. The major writing assignment for this course will be a substantive book review of a monograph appearing in the student's working bibliography.

The grade for the research elements project 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: 20 pts.**

**Topic Statement: 20 pts.**

**Paper Proposal: 30 pts.**

**Formal Thesis Statement (with expanded bibliography): 30 pts.**

**Total: 100 pts.**

### **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 \_\_\_\_\_?" The question can be with regard to a research project undertaken for another history course in which the student is enrolled, but may also be of a different theoretical project devised solely for this course.

### **Topic Statement**

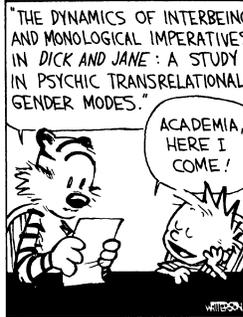
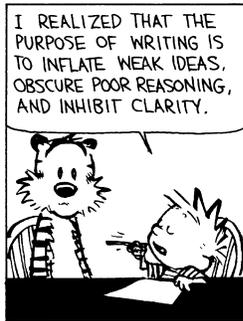
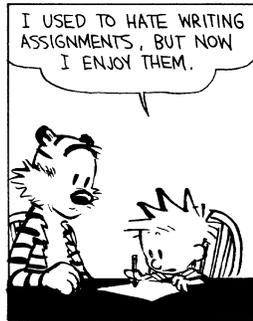
Upon acceptance of the Research Question, there will submission of a statement identifying the subject area of the student's choosing that succinctly defines the topic the student wishes to examine. The topical statement can be with regard to a research project undertaken for another history course in which the student is enrolled, but may also be of a different theoretical project devised solely for this course.

### **Paper Proposal**

The research proposal represents the foundation of a history research project that you are undertaking in one of the upper-division history courses in which you are currently enrolled, but may also be of a different theoretical project devised solely for this course. It should be no more than 500 words of text along with a working bibliography (in proper Turabian format) of at least 5 primary and 10 secondary sources (books and journal articles).

### **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 viably argue against using the very same bibliographic resources.



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