



HIST 492.01E Senior Research Seminar

COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2026

SS #141, CRN: 80497

Last Updated August 2026

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Derrick McKisick, Ph.D.

Office Location: SS #119

Office Hours: Tuesday 9:00 -11:00 am / 3:30 – 4:30 pm / Thursday 9:00 – 11:00 am

Office Fax: 903.468.3230

University Email Address: derrick.mckisick@etamu.edu

Preferred Form of Communication: **email**

Communication Response Time: Within 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

Theda Perdue, *The Cherokee Removal: A Brief History with Documents* (Bedford Series in History and Culture) 3rd edition, NY: Bedford/St. Martin, 2016.

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

Recommended Materials

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 develop and demonstrate the skills necessary to conduct historical research through classroom discussions and activities, out-of-class assignments, and independent research. Students will engage in discussions about the discipline of history; explain how historiography and sources are 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 suitable for presentation at a history conference or submission for publication.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students will identify, gather, formulate, validate, and analyze information from a variety of sources appropriate to historical study (critical thinking).
2. Students will demonstrate the ability to articulate and present (orally and/or in writing) the content and context of ideas relevant to historical study (communication).
3. Students will demonstrate behavior consistent with professional standards, skills, and expectations for careers in education, public history, journalism, law, government, public administration, or other related fields (professionalism).
4. Students will demonstrate the ability to understand, assess, and employ various digital tools, platforms, and technologies relevant to historical study (digital literacy).

COURSE OVERVIEW

Instructional Methods

Course meetings will consist of interactive lectures, discussions, and workshops. Class meetings will not be recorded, and remote attendance will not be offered. Additional course materials will be available asynchronously in D2L under the Content tab. The course schedule is organized by class meeting. Unless otherwise indicated, assignments, quizzes, and exams are due during class on the date listed in the schedule. Quizzes will be administered during class.

This course is designed as a research seminar. Accordingly, the emphasis is on developing the skills, professional practices, and habits of mind of a professional historian rather than mastering a particular field of historical scholarship. Each student will conduct a research project on a topic of their choice from the last two centuries (1800-2000 CE), using sources available through the library's digital primary-source archives. Students will locate and analyze primary and secondary sources related to their research question. Because much of the work is cumulative, proactive engagement from the beginning of the semester is essential to success. Students who remain consistently engaged and respond thoughtfully to instructor and peer feedback will be best positioned to succeed. Most class meetings will include workshops focused on research, analysis, and writing in progress. Students are expected to continue refining their research, writing, and analytical skills outside of class. Please review the Waters Library History: Introduction guide.

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 responsive to student needs. Please contact me with questions or concerns. I am available to discuss course content, expectations, research, and other relevant topics during in-person or virtual (Zoom) office hours listed above.

Departmental Orientation and Guides

The History Department has uploaded orientation materials to the history major D2L shell (HIST 500). These materials are designed to help students develop the basic skills, professional norms, and departmental expectations required of history majors. Please consult them as needed throughout the semester. All work submitted for this course should follow the History Department style guide and the guidance provided in the department orientation materials on the history major D2L page. Failure to follow these expectations may negatively affect an assignment grade.

Classroom Participation

Students are expected to participate in classroom discussions. Thoughtful participation does not necessarily mean speaking frequently. Instead, it means demonstrating knowledge of the material, a willingness to think critically, and, most importantly, a willingness to learn from others. Humility and attentive listening are essential to productive classroom discussion. Students are encouraged to engage with the professor, the course material, and one another when 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
	Participation	100
	Total	1000

Assignments

Analysis Posts

To keep students on track with course readings and prepared for class discussions, Analysis Posts will be due most weeks through the D2L Discussion tab. Posts should be 1-2 paragraphs (approximately 200 words) and should fully answer the assigned question using course materials. All sources must be cited using Turabian footnotes. Although these assignments are completed in D2L discussion forums, students are not required to respond to classmates' posts. 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 will write one 600-word review of a historical monograph identified as a key secondary source for the research project. The review should summarize the book's central argument and critically evaluate its content. See the Book Review Guide posted under Guides in D2L and the History Department orientation materials for additional instructions. Submit the review to the D2L Assignments dropbox and bring a printed copy to class for written feedback.

Research Proposal

The research proposal establishes the foundation for the semester research project. It should contain no more than 500 words of text and include a working bibliography, in proper Turabian format, of primary sources and annotated secondary sources. The proposal must follow the structure and guidelines provided in the D2L guide. Because the proposal will guide the remainder of the research and writing process, students will develop it through multiple workshop sessions.

Historiography Report

As part of the research project, students will read broadly in the secondary literature surrounding their proposed topic and research question. The Historiography Report is a 500-700 word working explanation of the central questions, debates, and interpretations in the historiography of the topic. The submission should include a working bibliography of the secondary sources being examined for the project. Material developed for this report may be incorporated into the final project paper.

Project Paper

The Project Paper is the culmination of the semester research project and serves as a capstone for the history major. It should clearly pose a historical question, present and interpret relevant historical sources, and develop an evidence-based answer to that question. The paper should be 3,000-4,000 words, including notes, and must include a title page and bibliography. It should follow the detailed guidelines provided in class and through D2L. Students will complete an in-class peer review of the draft and submit a revised final paper during finals week.

Presentations

Each student will present their research project to a group of 3-4 fellow students. The presentation should clearly explain the research question, outline the relevant historiography, discuss the research and evidence, and present a clear historical analysis. Each student will also answer questions from the audience. Presentations will be recorded and submitted to D2L along with copies of any visuals used.

Peer Review

After submitting the rough draft, each student will participate in a small-group peer review. Feedback should be specific, honest, constructive, and submitted in writing. After receiving anonymous peer feedback, each student will write a one-page response identifying which suggestions will be incorporated into the revision and which will not, with a clear explanation for each decision.

Portfolio

Throughout the semester, students will compile a printed, bound portfolio to be submitted to the department as a summative artifact representing their learning across the history program. Detailed portfolio instructions will be provided in class and through D2L. Students will submit both a draft portfolio and a final portfolio during the final exam period.

Participation

One goal of this course is to foster an academic community in which students learn from one another while practicing civic and academic virtues. Meaningful participation includes arriving on time, preparing to engage with the day's material, and being willing both to contribute and to listen to the professor and classmates. The participation grade will reflect consistent preparation, engagement, and professionalism throughout the semester.

COURSE CALENDAR

Week 1

August 25

What is history? What is historiography?
 Read: Popkin, Chapter 1
 History as Detective Work – Assessing Sources
 Read: Nelson, Chapters 1-2
 Post: Defining History
 Post: Student Introductions
 Activity: Building Personal Mission Statement and SMART Goals

Week 2

September 1

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

Week 3

September 8

Research Proposal Components
 Read: Sample Proposal (D2L)
 Bring to class 3-4 potential sources from
<https://etamu.libguides.com/az.php?t=30298>
 Read/Discuss: Perdue, *The Cherokee Removal*, 1-22.
 Reading: Sugden, "Early Pan-Indianism: Tecumseh's Tour of the Indian Country, 1811-1812," *American Indian Quarterly*, Vol. 10, No. (1986): 273-304.

Week 4

September 15

AI and the History Profession
 Project Topic Workshop
 Bring revised topic ideas to class to circulate
 Post: AI and the History Profession
 Article Analysis: Primary Sources and Research Process
 Post: Sugden and Primary Sources
 History and Memory
 Read: Nelson, Chapters 7-8
 Post: History and Memory

Week 5

September 22 Sugden Article Analysis: Writing Structure and Narrative
 Post: Sugden's Writing
 From Reading History to Doing History
 Research Proposal Workshop
 Bring a Draft Research Proposal to class
 Must have completed Research Proposal Consultation by this point

Week 6

September 29 The History of History
 Read: Popkin, Chapters 2-5
 Test: What does it mean to do history?
 Due: Research Proposal

Week 7

October 6 Teaching as a Profession
 Test: Historiography
 Project Book and Historiography Discussion
 Read: Project Book
 Read: Popkin, Chapters 6-7

Week 8

October 13 Book Reviews
 Due: Project Book Review
 Book Reception Discussion
 Read: Four book reviews of the Project Book
 Post: Reception Report

Week 9

October 20 Historiography Workshop
 Due: Historiography Report
 Primary Source Workshop
 Working with Sources (citations and quotations)
 Read: Rampolla, parts 6-7
 Bring 2-3 primary sources to discuss

Week 10

October 27

Young and History discussion

Read: Young, "Conflict Resolution on the Indian Frontier," *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol. 16, No. 1(1996): 1-19.

Post: Article #2

How to Organize your Writing: Outlines and Notecards

Read: Rampolla, Part 4e-4g

Quiz: Citations and Formatting

Week 11

November 3

How to Write: Tone and Perspective

Writing Workshop

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 7, 2026)

Week 12

November 10

Peer Review Launch

Discussion: Critique, Peer Review, and Historical Publishing

The Politics of History

Read: Matthew Karp, "History as End," *Harpers*, July 2021 ([online](#))

Primary Source Paper – Perdue, The Cherokee Removal (Due)

Week 13

November 17

Thinking in projects and career trajectory

Portfolio Discussion (CV's and Cover letters)

Due: Peer Review

Week 14

November 24

No Class

Thanksgiving Break – University Closed 11/25- 11/30

Week 15

- December 1 Presentations, Conferences, and Public Speaking
 Watch Guide to Public Speaking: [TED](#)
 Guide to History Conferences: [online](#)
 Workshop presentations
 Due: Peer Review Response
 Meeting 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 5 Due: Paper Final Draft (December 5, 11:59 PM)
- Final Exam Tuesday, December 8 Final Portfolio Due

Statement on AI (ChatGPT)

At East Texas A&M University, we recognize that artificial intelligence (AI), chatbots, and other generative software may have legitimate uses. AI can be a powerful tool for organizing and consolidating information, but its use requires students and faculty to consider carefully how it can be used wisely, ethically, and responsibly. Generative AI can also reproduce or combine the work of others without appropriate citation or attribution, creating serious concerns about academic integrity and authorship.

The goals of this course are to practice historical thinking, engage with historical scholarship, interpret evidence and scholarly arguments, and deepen our understanding of the past and of how people have sought to understand it. Because these goals require students to develop and demonstrate their own research, analysis, and writing skills, the use of generative AI for course assignments is not authorized unless the instructor gives explicit permission for a specific activity. Unauthorized use of AI-generated content constitutes academic dishonesty and may be treated as plagiarism. Students are fully responsible for the accuracy, originality, citations, and content of every assignment they 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, so check it regularly. Contact me at derrick.mckisick@etamu.edu. I generally check university email between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and I typically respond within 24 hours, excluding weekends.

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 withdraw from this course, it is your responsibility to complete the required university procedures and paperwork. I will not drop you from the course simply because you stop attending.

Attendance

Regular attendance is vital to success in this course. Unexcused absences will affect the participation grade. Only medical or family emergencies and university-approved absences will be excused. If you anticipate difficulty attending a class session, contact the instructor as early as possible.

Late Work

Make-up tests will be offered only for excused absences as described above. Students who anticipate university-approved absences must make arrangements in advance to complete required work at an alternate time. Unexcused late work will be penalized one letter grade for each day it is late, excluding weekends, up to a maximum penalty of 50 percent.

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.