

**HIST 4309**  
**Historian's Craft**  
**Fall 2019 (online)**

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Office hours: Tuesdays, 1:00-2:30 and Thursdays 12:30-2:00 or by appointment

**Course Description**

This course offers an introduction to historical methods (how historians go about reading, writing, and doing history) and historiography (the study of the many ways in which historians have written about the past). We will read and analyze primary and secondary sources in order to gain skills in chronological thinking, historical comprehension (including comparison and contextualization), historical analysis and interpretation, historical research (including crafting historical arguments from evidence), and historical issues-analysis and decision-making.

**Learning Objectives**

Upon successful completion of this course, the students will:

- Recognize, analyze, and engage in the various kinds of historical writing.
- Recognize, analyze, and interpret various historical sources (primary, secondary, and tertiary).
- Design and create historical timelines.
- Develop a firm grasp of what historiography is and how to identify historiographical debates and trends in the field of history.
- Develop a firm grasp of historical research methods.
- Analyze and evaluate references to history in print, audiovisual, and social media.
- Master the Chicago Style to create notes and bibliographies.

**Textbook and Additional Readings**

Our textbook is **Jules R. Benjamin, *A Student's Guide to History* (Macmillan Learning)**. \*Note on the edition: Benjamin's book is currently in its 14<sup>th</sup> edition (2019). It's quite an expensive textbook, particularly for its size, but you can buy used copies of older editions. As long as you buy an edition published in 2010 or later (2010-2019), it will work. You may also buy or rent an e-book at Macmillan: <https://store.macmillanlearning.com/us/product/Students-Guide-to-History/p/1319109705>.

Because you all might use different editions, the schedule below assigns chapters and sections, not pages. Make sure you locate appropriate pages in the edition you use.

Additional readings are posted on Blackboard.

Note on buying v. renting: Renting a textbook is often a cheaper option but in this case, I strongly encourage you to buy a copy. This textbook is a great tool for every historian and you will find it useful for any history class.

## Assignments and Requirements

### Mark your calendars:

- Every week: You will submit your original response to the question posed on the discussion board by Wednesday, 11:59 PM and responses to your peers by Friday, 11:59 PM (see details below).
- All the additional assignments [six original assignments and one peer assessment assignment, where you will assess your peer's work so you don't need to produce anything new for it] are always due on a Thursday by 11:59 PM (seven Thursdays; see below for details)

### The students will:

- **Complete all the assigned readings and participate in weekly discussions** via Blackboard Discussion Board: 5 points each week → 14 weeks x 5 = 70 points total

You are required to participate in weekly discussion assignments by submitting an original response to the questions I will raise each week about the assigned content and by responding to the posts of your peers. Your original post should demonstrate your comprehension of the assigned content and advance the discussion with a well-developed response that is concise, substantive, and factually correct. To receive full credit, you must also advance the discussion by responding to at least two other student's posts in a way that demonstrates your analysis of their work.

Your original posts should be **minimum 250 words** and address all of the required material for the week. Your response posts should be **minimum 150 words**. Original posts for each week must be submitted by Wednesday 11:59PM and replies by Friday 11:59PM.

- **Create parallel timelines:** 30 points → DUE: Thursday, August 29 by 11:59 PM

You will choose a historical figure and prepare parallel historical timelines, which place the figure (your subject) in the historical context of U.S. or world history (\*note that U.S. might imply both national and/or local, e.g., state history). The timelines should include 20 key dates that are important to understanding the life of the historical figure and the relevant time period.

- **Complete a primary source assignment:** 40 points → DUE: Thursday, September 19 by 11:59 PM

You will read a set of primary sources that examine the same event or issue from conflicting or contradictory viewpoints. First you will analyze the documents, considering APPARTS (author, place and time, prior knowledge of context, audience, reason, the main idea, significance). Then, you will compare and contrast the documents: How do their interpretations differ? How might the different interpretations be explained? Which interpretation is the more credible and why? This assignment should be analytical, not narrative, so you must go beyond summarizing what your primary source documents say. This assignment, which must be a minimum of 500 words and no more than 1000 words, is intended to improve your critical and analytical thinking and writing skills.

- **Submit a book review:** 45 points → DUE: Thursday, October 10 by 11:59PM

You will choose a scholarly book by a historian published by a university press\* on any subject and write a book review according to the guidelines provided in the assigned readings. This assignment, which

should be no more than 750 words, is intended to help you identify and analyze historical monographs, and critically evaluate them.

\*The book you choose must be published by a press that has the word “university” in its name (e.g., Chicago University Press, Arkansas University Press, Ohio University Press, etc.). We will explain what this means and why it is important when we discuss details of this assignment.

- **Revise footnotes and bibliography in Chicago Style:** 17 points → DUE: Thursday, October 17 by 11:59PM +
- **Assess your peer’s revisions:** 8 points → DUE: Thursday, October 24 by 11:59PM
- Total → 17 + 8 = 25 points

You will edit footnotes and bibliography in a provided document so that it meets the Chicago Style standards. The original document will contain multiple formatting mistakes in the footnotes and bibliography and you will serve the role of an editor that needs to fix them. This is a very practical assignment that will help you learn, strengthen, and/or master Chicago Style citation skills.

For the second component of this assignment (due the Thursday after the original due date), you will assess one of your peer’s work. You will receive a randomly selected anonymous assignment submitted by your classmate, check their work, and fix the remaining mistakes if necessary. Note that if you happen to work on a well-executed assignment, your editing task will be very easy.

- **Complete a research proposal with annotated bibliography:** 50 points → DUE: Thursday, November 7 by 11:59PM

You will do some original research on a historical question of your choosing using a source base that you have discovered in a local archive, museum, UALR library’s collections, or a reputable online database. You will be asked to write a research proposal that includes an annotated bibliography of the secondary and primary source materials to be read for the project.

- **Submit a comparative media assignment:** 40 points → Thursday, December 4 by 11:59PM

You will choose at least two popular, non-academic media sources (website, podcast, video, movie, television episode, video game, etc.) that cover a historical subject. You will compare them to each other and analyze their portrayal of the historical subject in relation to primary and secondary sources, including historical monographs and/or journal articles. You will also determine and discuss reasons for similarities and differences between the media sources and primary and secondary sources.

### Grading Scale

Grades are determined on the following point scale:

Total Points Possible: 300

A: 90-100% (300-269 points)

B: 80-89% (268-239 points)

C: 70-79% (238-209 points)

D: 60-69% (208-179)

F: 59% or less (178 points or below)

### **Late and Make-up Work**

Students must keep on schedule. All assignments will receive late penalties of 5 points for each 24-hour period beyond the due date. If you are experiencing an emergency situation and you know you are unable to submit work on time, please contact me before an assignment is due.

### **Re-write Policy**

I allow rewrites for students who are regular in discussion participation and have met all assignment deadlines. These re-writes will be due two weeks after I return the original assignments. (I will post specific dates as we go along.) The point of re-writes is not to earn you a few extra points on your grade but to help you learn from mistakes and improve your analytical, critical thinking, and writing skills. If you plan to re-write your assignments you must meet with me (via video chat or, preferably, in person) to ensure that you understand what you need to do to correct your mistakes and improve your skills. I will not accept re-written assignments from students who have not met with me about their original assignments.

### **Class Conduct, Attendance, and Time Expectations**

Online classes pose an additional challenge of time management and require more self-discipline and independent planning than traditional face-to-face classes. It is essential that you plan time to participate in class. Remember that you should expect 75 minutes of class time two times a week, as well as 3-5 hours for reading and homework. This requires your commitment and regular access to a computer with Internet access (you cannot successfully take this course with only a phone). We have two student computer labs in the History Department offices (601 Stabler Hall) and you can always reach out for help via email or in person. Although this is an online course, I am on campus regularly and can meet any given week of the semester. Plan ahead. If you know that you will be unable to log on to Blackboard for a period of time, make sure that you look ahead to see which assignments will need to be turned in. Note that Blackboard tracks your log-in times. If a student does not log in for two consecutive weeks and does not contact me, they will be administratively withdrawn from this course.

### **Communication**

Feel free to come to my office any time during the office hours (see the top of the first page of this syllabus), no appointment required. If you can't make it to my office hours and would like to talk in person, email me and we will schedule a virtual (via Blackboard) or in-person appointment. I usually respond to emails between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM on business days and I try to do that within the 24 hours since receiving an email. I do not respond to emails on weekdays after 5:00 PM and on weekends. This means that if you email me on a Friday evening, you will not hear back from me until Monday.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Your success in this class is important to me, and it is the policy and practice of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock to create inclusive learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you have a documented disability (or need to have a disability documented), and need an accommodation, please contact me privately as soon as possible, so that we can discuss with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) how to meet your specific needs and the requirements of the course. The DRC offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process among you, your instructor(s), and the

DRC. Thus, if you have a disability, please contact me and/or the DRC, at 501.569.3143 (V/TTY) or 501.683.7629 (VP). For more information, please visit the DRC website, <http://ualr.edu/disability>.

### **Academic Integrity**

All of your work for this class should be original, or you will not receive credit for the assignment. Plagiarism is copying work without giving credit to the source, or copying extensive passages from other work, or the use of words or ideas produced by another person without acknowledging its source. University regulations regarding academic dishonesty, as set forth in the UALR student handbook and other university documents and publications will be strictly enforced in this class. In accordance with Section VI: Statement of Student Behavior, under the code of student rights, responsibilities, and behavior, the university defines academic dishonesty under the classifications of cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and duplicity. Any student who submits work that they did not produce for the given assignment will be assigned a grade of zero points (F) for the assignment in question and may possibly fail the class. Cheating and blatant plagiarism in this class can result in disciplinary sanction.

All sources, including information gathered on the Internet, must be correctly cited in weekly assignments, papers, and essay exams. You should include footnotes and a bibliography in Chicago Manual of Style-Humanities format unless instructed otherwise.

### **UA Little Rock Inclement Weather Policy**

During inclement weather, UA Little Rock will make a decision whether or not to close based on all available information. The chancellor will decide whether or not conditions warrant canceling classes and activities and closing the campus or whether classes and activities will be canceled but with specified campus offices open. Online or web-enhanced classes will continue as scheduled at the discretion of the faculty member. For details see: <https://ualr.edu/policy/home/admin/weather/>.

### **Student Success Resources**

UA Little Rock offers a plethora of resources that are here to help you succeed, ranging from Blackboard support and the Writing Center to counseling services and help with childcare if you are a parent. For more information, check the Student Success Resources website: <https://ualr.edu/cals/student-resources/>

**Course Outline (Schedule subject to change in class)**

Date	Topic & assignment due	Assigned readings/videos/discussion board prep assignments
<b>Unit 1: Chronological Thinking</b> <i>How do historians think about the past?</i>		
Week 1 (8/19 – 8/23)	Why study history?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mary Lynn Rampolla, “Why Study History?” in <i>A Pocket Guide to Writing in History</i>, 6th ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2010) 1-5.</li> <li>2. T.W. H. McDowell, “The Nature and Value of History” in <i>Historical Research: A Guide</i> (London: Longman, 2002) 3-14.</li> <li>3. Benjamin, Chapter 1</li> <li>4. *Optional reading (not required but you might find it very useful now and in the future): Benjamin, Chapter 2</li> </ol>
Week 2 (8/24-8/30)	Historical chronology  *Parallel timelines activity due Thursday, 8/29 by 11:59PM.	Peter N. Stearns, “A World History Skeleton,” in <i>World History: the Basics</i> (London: Routledge, 2011): 17-47
<b>Unit 2: Historical Comprehension</b> <i>How do historians sort through competing evidence?</i>		
Week 3 (8/31 – 9/6)	Types of historical evidence	Benjamin, Chapter 3
Week 4 (9/7 – 9/13)	Making sense of primary sources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Patrick Rael, “How to Read a Primary Source,” in <i>Reading, Writing, and Researching for History: A Guide for College Students</i> (Brunswick, ME: Bowdoin College, 2004): <a href="https://courses.bowdoin.edu/writing-guides/reading/how-to-read-a-primary-source/">https://courses.bowdoin.edu/writing-guides/reading/how-to-read-a-primary-source/</a></li> <li>2. Making sense of unwritten sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oral history: <a href="http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/oral/">http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/oral/</a></li> <li>• Documentary photos: <a href="http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/photos/">http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/photos/</a></li> </ul> </li> </ol>
Week 5 (9/14 – 9/20)	Evaluating, interpreting, and analyzing primary sources	Benjamin, Chapter 4, + the entire section “Writing about Primary Sources” in Chapter 5

	*Primary source assignment due Thursday, 9/19 by 11:59PM	
<b>Unit 3: Historiography</b> <i>How do historians make sense of other historians' work and form their own research questions?</i>		
Week 6 (9/21 – 9/27)	Reading secondary sources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Patrick Rael, “What Happened and Why? Helping Students Read and Write Like Historians,” <i>The History Teacher</i> vol. 39, no. 1 (November 2005): 23-32.</li> <li>2. Patrick Rael, “How to Read a Secondary Source,” <i>Reading, Writing, and Researching for History: A Guide for College Students</i> (Brunswick, ME: Bowdoin College, 2004): <a href="https://courses.bowdoin.edu/writing-guides/reading/how-to-read-a-secondary-source/">https://courses.bowdoin.edu/writing-guides/reading/how-to-read-a-secondary-source/</a></li> <li>3. Patrick Rael, “Predatory Reading,” in <i>ibid.</i>: <a href="https://courses.bowdoin.edu/writing-guides/reading/predatory-reading/">https://courses.bowdoin.edu/writing-guides/reading/predatory-reading/</a></li> </ol>
Week 7 (9/28 – 10/4)	Book review  *Decide what book you will review for the book review assignment. You will discuss your choice with your peers this week – See details on Blackboard	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Benjamin, the entire section “Writing about Secondary Sources” in Chapter 5</li> <li>2. Watch two videos by Dr. Kristin Mann on Blackboard: “Types of Historical Writing” and “Reviewing a Book”</li> <li>3. For this week’s discussion: Using JSTOR, identify and read two book reviews of the book you choose for your book review assignment (see details on Blackboard)</li> <li>4. “How to Write a History Book Review,” University of Iowa: <a href="https://clas.uiowa.edu/history/teaching-and-writing-center/guides/book-review">https://clas.uiowa.edu/history/teaching-and-writing-center/guides/book-review</a></li> </ol>
Week 8 (10/5 – 10/11)	Historiography  *Book review assignment due Thursday, 10/10 by 11:59PM	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Daniel Woolf, <i>A Global History of History</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011): 1-21</li> <li>2. Michael Kort, “The Historiography of Hiroshima: The Rise and Fall of Revisionism” [revised version of an essay originally published in <i>The New England Journal of History</i>]</li> </ol>
Week 9 (10/12 – 10/18)	Citing: Standing on the shoulders of giants  *Footnotes/bibliography editing assignment due Thursday, 10/17 by 11:59PM	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Benjamin, Chapter 10 [*don’t read this chapter but rather use it as a guide to complete this week’s assignment]</li> <li>2. Patrick Rael, “Citing Sources,” <i>Reading, Writing, and Researching for History: A Guide for College Students</i> (Brunswick, ME: Bowdoin College, 2004): <a href="https://courses.bowdoin.edu/writing-guides/working-with-sources/citing-sources/">https://courses.bowdoin.edu/writing-guides/working-with-sources/citing-sources/</a></li> </ol>

		3. A useful concise citation guide from the University of Oklahoma: <a href="http://explorehistory.ou.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/CitationGuide2014.pdf">http://explorehistory.ou.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/CitationGuide2014.pdf</a>
<b>Unit 4: Historical Research Skills</b> <i>How do historians research, write, and document the past?</i>		
Week 10 (10/19 – 10/25)	Research topic and research question  *Peer assessment of the editing assignment due Thursday, 10/24 by 11:59 PM	Benjamin, Chapter 7
Week 11 (10/26 – 11/1)	Thesis statement and argument	1. Benjamin, Chapter 6 2. Patrick Rael, “The Thesis,” <i>Reading, Writing, and Researching for History: A Guide for College Students</i> (Brunswick, ME: Bowdoin College, 2004): <a href="https://courses.bowdoin.edu/writing-guides/structuring-your-paper/the-thesis/">https://courses.bowdoin.edu/writing-guides/structuring-your-paper/the-thesis/</a> 3. “Writing a Research Proposal” (University of South California): <a href="https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/researchproposal">https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/researchproposal</a>
Week 12 (11/2 – 11/8)	Writing and editing  *Research & annotated bibliography proposal due Thursday, 11/7 by 11:59PM	1. Benjamin, Chapter 8 2. “Effective Proposal-Writing Style,” Northwestern University: <a href="https://nuwrite.northwestern.edu/communities/writing-in-the-humanities/docs/history-writing-and-research/effective-proposal-writing-style-history.html">https://nuwrite.northwestern.edu/communities/writing-in-the-humanities/docs/history-writing-and-research/effective-proposal-writing-style-history.html</a>
<b>Unit 5: History, Media, and Decision-Making</b> <i>How has history been used by non-historians and what is the impact of this process?</i>		
Week 13 (11/9 – 11/15)	Popular culture as a source of historical consciousness	1. Scott Alan Metzger, “Pedagogy and the Historical Feature Film: Toward Historical Literacy,” <i>Film &amp; History</i> 37, no. 2 (2007): 67-75. 2. Making Sense of Films: <a href="http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/film/">http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/film/</a> 3. Molly Osberg, “The Assassin’s Creed Curriculum: Can Video Games Teach Us History?” (2014), The Verge: <a href="https://www.theverge.com/2014/9/18/6132933/the-assassins-creed-curriculum-can-video-games-teach-us-history">https://www.theverge.com/2014/9/18/6132933/the-assassins-creed-curriculum-can-video-games-teach-us-history</a> 4. Melvin Barnes Jr. and Derek Green, “Top Ten Origins: Historically Themed Video Games” (2017), ORIGINS:



		<a href="http://origins.osu.edu/connecting-history/top-ten-origins-historically-themed-video-games">http://origins.osu.edu/connecting-history/top-ten-origins-historically-themed-video-games</a> 5. Watch a short video: Ken Burns, “On Story”: <a href="https://vimeo.com/40972394">https://vimeo.com/40972394</a>
Week 14 (11/16 – 11/22)	Credibility of Internet sources	1. Evaluating Web Content, SUNY Albany: <a href="https://library.albany.edu/infolit/evalweb/blogswikis">https://library.albany.edu/infolit/evalweb/blogswikis</a> 2. Evaluating Internet Source, University of Illinois: <a href="https://www.library.illinois.edu/ugl/wp-content/uploads/sites/42/2017/07/evaluate_internet.pdf">https://www.library.illinois.edu/ugl/wp-content/uploads/sites/42/2017/07/evaluate_internet.pdf</a> 3. Watch video “Wikipedia: Beneath the Surface”: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QY8otRh1QPc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QY8otRh1QPc</a> 4. For this week’s discussion: Evaluate a Wikipedia site following a Wikipedia Evaluation Sheet (see details on Blackboard)
Finals week	<b>*Media review due</b> Thursday, 12/4 by 11:59PM	