

HIST 7315

SEMINAR IN HISTORICAL METHODS

Dr. Barclay Key (btkey@ualr.edu)
Fall 2019

Stabler Hall 601M
Thursday, 6:00-8:30 p.m.

“I THINK THAT A MAN AT ANY MOMENT OF ACTION IS THE LIVING SUM OF HIS PAST...THAT MAN AT THE VERY MOMENT AT WHICH HE IS DOING SOMETHING, HE DID THAT PARTICULAR THING EXACTLY IN THAT WAY BECAUSE OF THE HUNDRED YEARS BEFORE HIM THAT MADE HIM...BECAUSE HE IS THE SUM OF HIS ANCESTORS AND HIS CONDITION, HIS TIMES.”—WILLIAM FAULKNER (1957)

WELCOME!

Regardless of your background or career plans, I am pleased to have you in this course and believe that you will benefit from this study of historical methods. Required courses occasionally elicit groans from students and instructors alike, but I confess that I look forward to this particular class. We have much to learn!

To that end, we must cultivate our interest in people’s stories. Everyone has a story to tell. Today, our lives are defined by the stories that we create daily. Perhaps you have stories to share, both joyful and painful, about your family and friends, about your beliefs, about your travels or hobbies, or about your experiences at work or in college. In a sense, our identities are defined by the stories we live and create for ourselves. The same is true for history. Our subjects, the people we study, have stories to tell about themselves and their times. Historians tease these stories out of available sources, explain why they are important, and debate their meaning and significance. Such activities broadly define my goal for us: learning stories from the past and discussing their significance for understanding history and, perhaps, ourselves.

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

Basic skills, techniques for historical research; models for use, interpretation of evidence; problem of historical causation; bibliography, techniques for defining, focusing research projects; steps in research planning, design, presentation.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND FORMAT

During most classes, we will spend our time discussing the reading assignment as it relates to historiography, the art of writing history, and your aspirations as public historians. You will likely learn something during class, but I hope that you learn more outside of class as you read, think, and write about the practice of history. While I will happily participate in class discussions, each student will be responsible for leading one class, and students will also participate in shaping the content of every discussion by submitting comments and questions in advance of each class. Since we have other obligations and will frequently be disappointed to leave at 8:30 p.m., we will also provide space on Blackboard for follow-up comments and questions.

Please be advised that we will pose many challenging questions this semester. Answers will often prove elusive, much less certain. We will have disagreements. Of course, I expect everyone to listen closely. Carefully consider other opinions as your own ideas take shape. If you disagree with someone, you will have ample opportunity to explain why. Together, we will sharpen our historical understanding and improve our critical thinking skills. By the end of the semester, my hope is that you will be conversant in these challenging questions and answers, that you will know where one might further study those questions and answers, and that your fluency in historical jargon will make you a better public historian, humble in mind but confident in spirit.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will

- develop empathy. \ 'em-pə-thē\ : “the action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experience of another of either the past or present without having the feelings, thoughts, and experience fully communicated in an objectively explicit manner”
- effectively communicate historical knowledge in written and oral forms.
- use critical thinking and analytical skills to examine primary and secondary source documents.
- connect and compare primary and secondary source documents from multiple perspectives.
- use evidence from written and visual sources to draw conclusions and support an argument.
- evaluate sources to determine if they are appropriate, scholarly sources.
- understand the principles of academic integrity, including how to cite sources.
- analyze how historical narratives are created and evolve over time.

REQUIRED READING

You must acquire these books to successfully complete all assignments. They are available from the usual outlets, including online stores. They are listed in the order that we will read them, so please prioritize the top of the list.

Foundational Texts

- Jenny L. Presnell, *The Information-Literate Historian: A Guide to Research for History Students*, 3rd ed. (ISBN 9780190851491). On reserve in library. Earlier editions are acceptable.
 - Why was it assigned? This book contains the nuts-and-bolts information about research that you should know as a historian.
- Lynn Hunt, *Writing History in the Global Era* (ISBN 9780393351170). On reserve in library.
 - Why was it assigned? Numerous books provide an overview of historiography, or the history of histories. This one is more thought provoking than most, and it suggests a trajectory for future histories.

The Great Triumvirate

- Karl Marx, *Communist Manifesto* and *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. Available online for free.
 - Why was it assigned? Everyone should read these essays because of their influence on history, but we will also use them to discuss class analysis in historical writing.
- Gerda Lerner, *The Majority Finds Its Past: Placing Women in History* (ISBN 9780807856062). On reserve in library.
 - Why was it assigned? Numerous books, including more recent publications, might introduce us to women’s history. But Lerner played such a formative role, and these essays provide context for understanding the evolution of the history profession in the 1960s and 1970s.
- Ibram X. Kendi, *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* (ISBN 9781568585987). Electronic copy available from the library to one user at a time.
 - Why was it assigned? This recent National Book Award winner traces the history of racist ideas from the colonial era to the present. It is particularly helpful in dissecting various strands of racism and employing language that might help us write more effectively about the history of race in the United States.

Additional Angles of Inquiry

- Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (ISBN 9781784786755). On reserve in library. Earlier editions are acceptable.
 - Why was it assigned? This classic warrants our attention, especially since many of us are called upon to construct histories rooted in national or state identities.
- Edward Said, *Orientalism* (9780394740676). On reserve in library. Earlier editions are acceptable.
 - Why was it assigned? This classic warrants our attention, especially since our work inevitably engages many people who have imbibed the full import of Orientalism.
- Charles Reagan Wilson, *Judgment & Grace in Dixie: Southern Faiths from Faulkner to Elvis* (ISBN 9780820329659). On reserve in library. Earlier editions are acceptable.
 - Why was it assigned? Since we are situated in the South and will likely employ our skills as historians here, then we should wrestle with southern culture (variously defined) and its distinctly (?) religious overtones.
- Jack Davis, *The Gulf: The Making of an American Sea* (ISBN 9781631494024). On reserve in library.
 - Why was it assigned? This recent Pulitzer Prize winner traces the history of the Gulf of Mexico from ancient times to the present and invites us to broaden the scope of historical understanding to prioritize environmental concerns.

Practical Matters

- Ari Kelman, *A Misplaced Massacre: Struggling Over the Memory of Sand Creek* (ISBN 9780674503786). Electronic copy available from the library to an unlimited number of users.
 - Why was it assigned? This recent Bancroft Prize winner permits us to witness how public history unfolds in the aftermath of unspeakable tragedy.
- We will read the following essays to understand the recent historiography of the civil rights movement. PDFs will be provided.
 - Charles Eagles, "Toward New Histories of the Civil Rights Era," *Journal of Southern History* 66 (November 2000): 815-848.
 - Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *Journal of American History* 91 (March 2005): 1233-1263.
 - Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua and Clarence Lang, "The 'Long Movement' as Vampire," *Journal of African American History* 92 (Spring 2007): 265-288.
 - Peniel Joseph, "Community Organizing, Grassroots Politics, and Neighborhood Rebels," in *Neighborhood Rebels*, ed. Peniel Joseph (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 1-20.
 - Emilye Crosby, "The Politics of Writing and Teaching Movement History," in *Civil Rights History from the Ground Up*, ed. Emilye Crosby (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011), 1-39.
 - Why were they assigned? These essays provide insights into historiographical discussions that historians have had over the past twenty years concerning the civil rights movement. They provide good examples of the type of historiography that you will need to write for your thesis.

ASSIGNMENTS

- Read actively: You must complete the required readings! Reading will provide the means for us to investigate methodologies for researching and presenting history. Reading actively will require you to engage authors, ask questions of texts, and immerse yourself in the worlds they describe.
- Regularly attend class: I expect you to be here! How will we know what you think, if you're not present? Indeed, your absence may prevent someone from learning something new or looking at a topic in a different perspective. I expect graduate students to attend every class.

- Actively participate: Not only do we want you here, but we also want you to speak! You should remain engaged in class discussions, sharing your thoughts about the concepts we examine. To facilitate our dialogue, each student will be responsible for leading one class discussion. By noon on Thursdays, students who are not leading that evening's discussion will need to e-mail at least three questions or thoughts on the reading assignment to me and the classmate who will lead the discussion.
- Complete weekly writing assignments: In addition to the intellectual exercises of reading, critical analysis, and discussing historical methods, you will have an opportunity to improve your writing through weekly assignments. In addition to basic syntax and clarity, please practice writing good transition sentences between paragraphs, rather than numbering answers to the questions. Carefully follow the instructions for each writing assignment. Save each assignment as .doc, .docx, or .rtf and send to btkey@ualr.edu **by noon on the assigned date**. (You are exempt from the writing assignment on the day that you lead the class discussion.)
 - **Week 1—August 22** (500-750 words): Explain three or four of the most important research suggestions that you learned from reading *The Information-Literate Historian*. How will these suggestions help you? What did you learn that you did not already know?
 - **Week 2—August 29** (750-1,000 words): Based on your reading of *Writing History in the Global Era*, address at least three of the following questions: (1) How and why has the writing of history evolved? (2) Evaluate the author's assertions regarding globalization as a paradigm for history, especially as it may or may not relate to concepts of modernity. (3) Assess the author's conclusions regarding "the synergistic growth of self and society" in Chapter 4. (4) Propose another paradigm for historical understanding and writing that was unexplored in this book.
 - **Week 3—September 5** (750-1,000 words): Choose a historic event or phenomenon from the last 120 years and apply a class analysis to it. What does the application of class analysis tell us that we might not already know? How might class consciousness change how your story is told? Cite at least one primary source in your essay.
 - **Week 4—September 12** (750-1,000 words): Based on your reading of *The Majority Finds Its Past*, address at least three of the following questions: (1) Based on chapters 5 and 7, what particular challenges do historians face when investigating the history of black women in the US? How do these challenges differ (if any) from histories of other women? (2) The introduction to Chapter 10 noted, "Some of these priorities and questions are as open and unanswered today as they were 25 years [now 40] ago." To what priorities and questions might she have been referring? (3) Chapter 12 was based on a 1977 lecture. Use its main points to explain the extent, if any, that the historical profession (broadly defined) has evolved since 1977. (4) Choose a chapter other than the ones named above, and explain how it may shape your future historical endeavors.
 - **Week 5—September 19** (750-1,000 words): Based on your reading of the first three sections of *Stamped from the Beginning* (Mather, Jefferson, Garrison), address at least two of the following questions: (1) Evaluate the author's definitions of antiracist, assimilationist, and segregationist. Are these terms able to carry the weight that he ascribes to them across the centuries? (2) Might you have chosen another pre-twentieth-century figure around whom a section might be written? (3) What information in these sections was new to you, and how might your reading influence your practice of public history in the future?
 - **Week 6—September 26** (750-1,000 words): Based on your reading of the last two sections of *Stamped from the Beginning* (Du Bois, Davis), address at least two of the following questions: (1) On page 266, the author explained, "In buying this New South, Americans had adopted a new tool for blaming racial disparities on Black people: faith in racial progress (and ignoring the simultaneous progression of racism)." Evaluate this assertion in light of the history of the US in the twentieth century. (2) Might you have chosen another twentieth-century figure

- around whom a section might be written? (3) What information in these sections was new to you, and how might your reading influence your practice of public history in the future?
- **Week 7—October 3** (750-1,000 words): Based on your reading of *Imagined Communities*, address at least three of the following questions: (1) Explain the relationships between print languages, capitalism, and the origins of nationalism. (2) According to the author, why did nationalism first emerge in the New World, not the Old? (3) How did the author clarify in the second edition of this book his initial assumption “that official nationalism in the colonized worlds of Asia and Africa was modelled directly on that of the dynastic states of nineteenth-century Europe” (page 163) with the concepts of census, map, and museum? (4) What challenges (if any) might a public historian anticipate related to nationalism (or nationalisms?) in the US? Do you foresee a future with more muted nationalism or perhaps a future without nationalism?
 - **Week 8—October 10** (750-1,000 words): Based on your reading of *Orientalism*, address at least three of the following questions: (1) In the introduction, the author stated “that without examining Orientalism as a discourse one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage—and even produce—the Orient . . .” (page 3). From a methodological standpoint, how does one research such a discourse? (2) On page 96, the author asserted, “The closeness between politics and Orientalism, or to put it more circumspectly, the great likelihood that ideas about the Orient drawn from Orientalism can be put to political use, is an important yet extremely sensitive truth.” Why and how did such an assertion become extremely sensitive? Is this assertion still valid today? (3) In addition to the observations made by the author in the fourth section of Chapter 3, might you identify contemporary manifestations of Orientalism? How might they challenge your work as a public historian? (4) Wrestle with one or more of the questions that the author posed on pages 325-326.
 - **Week 9—October 17** (750-1,000 words): Based on your reading of *Judgment & Grace in Dixie*, address at least three of the following questions: (1) Does the South exist? If so, where is it, and what are its characteristics? (2) Should the State engage the public with religious history? If so, how? If not, how might public history account for the role of religion in history? (3) How and to what extent should public historians engage histories of art, literature, music, and/or sports? (4) Based on your reading of Chapter 11 and/or recent events, is it possible to unify prominent symbols of southern culture? Are there any unifying symbols of southern culture that public historians might utilize?
 - **Week 10—October 24** (750-1,000 words): Based on your reading of *The Gulf*, address at least three of the following questions: (1) Explain at least two ways in which *The Gulf* is conceptually distinct. (2) Explain at least two ways in which the environment is the active agent in this narrative. (3) How might *The Gulf* inform the work of a museum that created an exhibit on the history of food? (4) What vignettes from this book might you utilize if you worked as a public historian on the Gulf coast?
 - **Week 11—October 31** (750-1,000 words): Based on your reading of *A Misplaced Massacre*, address at least three of the following questions: (1) What dangers (if any) inhered to the author as “participant-observer [who] became part of the memorialization process” (page x)? (2) How does the author most effectively employ race, class, and/or gender analysis? (3) The epilogue concluded that the Sand Creek massacre “left behind no simple lessons for federal commemorators hoping to bend public memory to nationalist ends.” With regard to public history, what lessons (if any) might be gleaned from this saga? (4) Among the public historians discussed in this book (excluding the author), whose job did you envy most?
 - **Week 12—November 7** (750-1,000 words): Based on your reading of the historiographies of the civil rights movement, address at least three of the following questions: (1) How has

writing on the civil rights movement in the US evolved over the past twenty years? (2) What research and writing remains for historians who wish to chronicle the history of the civil rights movement in the US? (3) In what ways might Arkansas fit into the larger historiography of the civil rights movement in the US? (4) What objectives should public historians pursue with regard to the civil rights movement in the US?

➤ Complete final project:

- **Option 1:** If you already know the topic of your thesis, you may write a draft of the introduction (~3,000 words for now). It should include historiography, methodology, and the most important primary sources that you will utilize.
- **Option 2:** Imagine that you work at a history museum that is constructing new exhibits. Write interpretative panels (125-150 words per panel) based on primary sources that might be featured in the exhibit. You must compose five panels for three different exhibits (for a total of 15 panels), and you should interpret 1-2 primary or secondary sources on each panel. Possible exhibitions will be discussed in class.

A NOTE ON WRITING

Please understand that I have the highest expectations for your writing assignments. Poor grammar, misspelled words, and the like are unacceptable for graduate students. I will be glad to assist you in writing good papers but if you are struggling after the first two weeks, then I also urge you to utilize the University Writing Center. See <http://ualr.edu/writingcenter/> for details.

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 document a disability) 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 at ualr.edu/disability. (UA Little Rock Policy 404.9)

RULES THAT I FEEL COMPELLED TO INCLUDE EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE ADULTS

- Class will begin promptly at 6 p.m. Compulsive tardiness is annoying and rude. Be on time.
- Except for emergencies or answering historical questions, I prefer that you not use laptops or phones during class. Among other reasons, see Susan Dynarski, "Laptops Are Great. But Not During a Lecture or a Meeting," *New York Times*, November 22, 2017, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/22/business/laptops-not-during-lecture-or-meeting.html>.
- Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Please consult with me if you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, as excuses (especially ignorance) will not be accepted. You may also wish to consult the university's policies on academic integrity, available at <http://ualr.edu/deanofstudents/index.php/home/academic-integrity/>.

CONTACT INFORMATION

E-mail is the best way to contact me. You may expect a reply within a few hours if you send an e-mail during regular business hours. If you send one after regular business hours, I will reply the following business day. You are also welcome to visit my office with or without an appointment.

E-mail: btkey@ualr.edu

Office: 604N Stabler Hall

Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:00-10:00 a.m. or any day by appointment

GRADING

Attendance/Participation 200 points
 Weekly papers 400 points
 Final project 400 points

A 900-1000 points
 B 800-899 points
 C 700-799 points
 D 600-699 points
 F 0-599 points

SCHEDULE

(Discussions on dates in **bold** will include student leaders.)

DATE	READING ASSIGNMENT	DISCUSSION TOPICS
August 22	Presnell, <i>The Information-Literate Historian</i>	Introductions, definitions, research questions, research methods, citations, sources
August 29	Hunt, <i>Writing History in the Global Era</i>	Evolution of historical thought, presentation, and modes of inquiry
September 5	Marx, <i>Communist Manifesto</i> and <i>The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte</i> GUEST: Dr. Nate Marvin	Application of class analysis to historiography
September 12	Lerner, <i>The Majority Finds Its Past</i>	Women's history and application of gender analysis to historiography
September 19	Kendi, <i>Stamped from the Beginning</i> , Parts I-III	Origin and dynamics of racial ideologies in U.S.
September 26	Kendi, <i>Stamped from the Beginning</i> , Parts IV-V	Application of racial analysis to historiography
October 3	Anderson, <i>Imagined Communities</i> GUEST: Dr. Andrew Amstutz	Origin and dynamics of nationalism; how nationalism shapes public history
October 10	Said, <i>Orientalism</i> GUEST: Dr. Katrina Yeaw	Construction of ethnic, national, and religious identities through othering
October 17	Wilson, <i>Judgment & Grace in Dixie</i>	Does the South exist? If so, who/what/where is it?
October 24	Davis, <i>The Gulf</i>	Application of environmental analysis to historiography
October 31	Kelman, <i>A Misplaced Massacre</i>	Public history praxis amid competing narratives and ideologies
November 7	Historiographies of the CRM	Structure, style, and purpose of contemporary historiographies
November 14	Various primary source collections	Goals for final projects
November 21		
November 28	NO CLASS—FALL BREAK	
December 5		Review of the semester

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

The UALR inclement weather policy is available at <https://ualr.edu/policy/home/admin/weather/>.