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### HSTR 594.01: Graduate Research Seminar

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## **HSTR 594: Graduate Research Seminar**

Mondays, 3:00-5:50 p.m., Spring 2022

Professor Tobin Miller Shearer

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**Course Description:** This research seminar challenges graduate students to conduct original research in primary source material and to translate that research into a substantial essay (30-35 pages) of publishable quality. Students will develop a research project, construct a research proposal, engage in substantial research and reading, and produce multiple drafts of an original research essay. Students also will engage in peer review and professional development, including participating in a professional conference. There is no topical focus; students will develop research topics in consultation with the instructor and their advisor(s).

**Goals and Outcomes:** This course hones skills fundamental to the historical discipline: conducting original research in primary sources; making an argument based on analysis of primary sources; engaging with extant scholarship; crafting effective research proposals; presenting research to colleagues; providing and responding to constructive criticism/peer review; and writing clearly and convincingly. Ideally, students will not only refine these skills but also will advance the master's thesis or doctoral dissertation, either by writing a draft chapter or by producing an overview of the thesis or dissertation, and/or publishing an article in a peer-reviewed publication. Finally, students will gain familiarity with the historical profession's conventions and expectations including conference participation and peer-reviewed publication.

**Preparation:** This course is designed for graduate students in the History Department's M.A. and Ph.D. programs. Other students may be admitted by the consent of the instructor. All students should have experience working with primary sources and crafting original historical scholarship. If you have questions about your level of preparation, please speak with the instructor immediately.

**General Expectations:** Original research and compelling writing are the most important tasks of professional historians. This course should be your top priority this semester. All written assignments should be of professional quality, i.e., typed or word-processed, produced in the proper format, and carefully proofread. See Standard Writing Guidelines and consult style guides such as the *Chicago Manual of Style*, Kate Turabian's style manual,

Strunk and White's *Elements of Style*, and/or Lynn Truss's *Eats, Shoots, and Leaves*. You also should prepare carefully for discussions and oral presentations by making notes of the salient points and having your examples and citations ready to share with your colleagues. I strongly encourage you to outline your responses to discussion prompts, mark passages to share, and prepare scripts for oral presentations.

In the historical profession, as elsewhere, the devil is in the details. Be prepared to offer specific examples, buttressed with examples, quotations, and citations, in class discussions as well as in your papers. This means that you must bring marked-up hard copy of reading assignments and/or detailed notes (either in hard copy or on a fully-charged device) to class with you. Both to facilitate class discussion and to prevent entirely predictable "emergencies" with written assignments, you should make a habit of backing up your work in multiple ways—send yourself e-mail attachments, use Dropbox or Google Drive, make hard copies, etc. Technological glitches are not acceptable excuses. Always have a backup plan.

**Assessment:** Your performance in this course will be based upon the quality of your participation in oral presentations, class discussions, and peer review as well as the depth of research, clarity of writing, quality of analysis, and overall significance (both historical and historiographical) of your research paper. Timely attendance at all class meetings and timely submission of all assignments is a must. Missing class periods and/or individual meetings, arriving late, and/or leaving early will negatively affect your grade. You must turn in all written assignments to pass this class.

### **Basic Course Requirements:**

1. Attendance & Participation – 10%
2. Peer Review – 5%
3. Oral Presentations – 5%
4. Written Assignments – 20%
5. Conference Participation – 10%
6. Rough Drafts and Final Paper – 50%

**Course Readings and Research Costs:** In general, the readings for this course will be your own individual reading of the secondary literature on your topic. In addition, you will read sample papers, your peers' writing, and other readings posted on Moodle and described below. As there are no assigned books for this class, I also expect you to acquire and read style guides (see suggestions above) as well as important books in your field. You may also incur costs related to historical research, such as fees for photocopying, scanning, microfilming, and postage, and to presenting your work at a professional conference.

- *Individual project reading:* Most of your reading for this course consists of primary sources and secondary literature relevant to your topic.
- *Class methods and theory reading:* Together as a class, we will read and discuss several online guides and a few supporting articles and chapters:

- “Learning to Do Historical Research: A Primer for Environmental Historians and Others,” online guide developed by Prof William Cronon & his graduate students at the University of Wisconsin  
<http://www.williamcronon.net/researching/index.htm>.
- Credo’s Information-Literacy—Core (InfoLit—Core), a set of online videos, tutorials, and quizzes covering information literacy and critical thinking, available online through Mansfield Library:  
<https://libguides.lib.umt.edu/infolit-core>
- Lamott, Anne. “Shitty First Drafts.”
- *Peer work reading*: Throughout the semester, you will be reading your classmates’ writing in various stages. It is essential that you read thoughtfully and carefully, aiming to provide the most comprehensive and useful feedback possible

**Academic Honesty:** It should go without saying that all the work you do in this course should be your own. Plagiarism, cheating, or academic misconduct will result in a failing grade in the course. More severe penalties, including expulsion from the University, may apply. See UM’s policy here: <https://libguides.lib.umt.edu/infolit-core/citations-integrity>. Ignorance is no excuse for plagiarism. If you have questions, please consult the instructor before submitting an assignment. Note that while in this class, you may be doing work that is related to work for other classes and/or your thesis and/or dissertation, your research paper for this class should not substantially duplicate work done for other purposes. Please discuss what constitutes acceptable overlap with me in advance to avoid academic misconduct.

**Standard Writing Guidelines:** All written work should be typed, double-spaced, with one-inch margins, and in a standard font such as Times New Roman, 12 point. Do not insert extra spaces between paragraphs or use title pages. Do include your name, the course information, and the assignment name on the first page of written work, and provide page numbers on all assignments. Use quote marks—not italics—to indicate quotations. Write about the past in the past tense. You may use the present tense to refer to scholars or to works of art or literature. Avoid passive voice; the easiest way to do this is to construct sentences in S-V-O (Subject-Verb-Object, i.e., The student wrote the paper) format. Provide proper footnote citations following the *Chicago Manual of Style* and/or the 7-step footnoting process I will provide in class. Proofread & edit your work. Use the direct, concise, and effective wording possible; eliminate unnecessary words, phrases, and sentences. Read your paper aloud and correct any sentences that were difficult to speak. I will also provide additional writing input in scheduled class writing workshops.

**Course Schedule:** The course schedule and assignments outlined below may be modified to meet the group’s needs. In addition, further guidelines for assignments will be posted on Moodle. You are responsible for checking Moodle regularly for any updates. *Unless otherwise noted, all written assignments are due via Moodle by 5 p.m. the Sunday before the relevant class meeting.* The course schedule includes reminders about GradCon and Phi Alpha Theta dates. Your abstracts and papers for these conferences must be submitted to the conference organizers according to the conference guidelines as well as via Moodle for class purposes.

**Conference Participation:** Part of your work this semester should include presenting your research findings at one or more professional conferences. Here are some possibilities:

- Phi Alpha Theta Western Regional Conference, Bellingham, WA, **April 22-23, 2022**. Deadlines and process for abstract submission and registration forthcoming. Open to Graduate and Undergraduate Students. You must be a Phi Alpha Theta member: <http://hs.umt.edu/history/undergraduate/phi-alpha-theta/default.php>. Members receive financial support to attend the conference.
- UM Graduate Conference (GradCon), Missoula, MT, **March 4, 2022**. <http://www.umt.edu/ces/conferences/gradcon/default.php>. Abstracts due **January 23, 2022**: <https://www.umt.edu/ces/conferences/gradcon/submissions.php>
- UM Conference on Undergraduate Research (UMCUR), Missoula, MT, **April 22, 2022**: <https://www.umt.edu/ugresearch/umcur/default.php> Abstracts due **March 14, 2022**: [Link forthcoming]
- National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR), virtual, **April 4-8, 2022**: [https://www.cur.org/what/events/students/ncur/2022/ncur\\_2022/](https://www.cur.org/what/events/students/ncur/2022/ncur_2022/). Abstract submission deadline was in November; but registration to attend is open now.
- Other Upcoming Conferences (\* remember that submission deadlines are often well in advance of the conference) National Council on Public History (NCPH) Conference, **March 23-26, 2022, in Montreal, Quebec, and virtually May 4-6, 2022**; Organization of American Historians (OAH) Conference, Boston, MA, **March 31-April 3, 2022, and concurrently virtually**; Rocky Mountain Council for Latin American Studies (RMCLAS), Las Cruces, NM, **April 6-9, 2022**; Western History Association (WHA) Conference, San Antonio, TX, **October 12-15, 2022**; American Historical Association (AHA) Conference, New Orleans, LA, **January 6-9, 2022**.

**Research and Writing:** The Moodle site contains links to helpful websites on research and writing.

**Local Archives and Libraries:** Depending on your topic, many of your primary sources may be acquired through online databases and interlibrary loan (or perhaps from previous work out of state). Some of you, however, might choose topics for which sources exist in local archives; do not assume that just because your topic is not about Montana or the West that you won't find things here. I recommend meeting with appropriate archivists early in your project conceptualization. At the Mansfield Library, Donna McCrea is Head of Archives and Special Collections ([donna.mccrea@umontana.edu](mailto:donna.mccrea@umontana.edu)); and Natalie Bond is the Government Information librarian ([natalie.bond@mso.umt.edu](mailto:natalie.bond@mso.umt.edu)).

**The Writing Center:** The University of Montana Writing Center offers individualized sessions for undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty members, at any stage of the research and writing process. All eligible writers, from novice to expert, should avail of this free service early and often: [www.umt.edu/writingcenter](http://www.umt.edu/writingcenter); 243-2266. The website also has some very useful handouts under the "Resources for Writers" tab.

## **Course schedule:**

January 17 - Week 1: Class does not meet due to MLK holiday, but students are responsible for developing preliminary research proposals and doing advance reading for Week 2 as described below

Due: Preliminary Research Proposals **Due Sunday, January 23, 2022**

The Preliminary Research Proposal should define your intended topic (including geographical region and time period) and discuss your potential primary sources (including location and accessibility). Be as specific as possible in listing your sources and in indicating their usefulness and/or limitations and how they work together to provide a full picture of your subject. The point of the proposal is to demonstrate that you have selected a “researchable” topic, i.e., one for which sufficient primary sources exist and are available to you. You also should indicate how your proposed topic relates to your proposed M.A. thesis or Ph.D. dissertation.

To reiterate, your proposal should include:

- \*Topic, including time period and geographical region
- \*List of primary sources, including where they are and how you will get them
- \*Discussion of primary sources
- \*Explanation of connection to your thesis/dissertation

## **GradCon Abstracts Due Sunday, January 23, 2022:**

<https://www.umt.edu/ces/conferences/gradcon/submissions.php>

January 24, Week 2: Using Manuscript and Digitized Sources; Organizing and Evaluating Evidence; Note-taking techniques

Reading: Prior to the class meeting, review “Resources for Finding Archival and Other Primary Sources,” (Word document on the left-hand column of the 471 LibGuide - <http://libguides.lib.umt.edu/hsta471>) AND evaluate the usefulness of several digitally available resources—newspapers, periodicals, government documents, etc. Review handout on note-taking strategies; research potentially useful note-taking/bibliography programs and apps AND Read at least one sample paper at <http://libguides.lib.umt.edu/hsta471> and be prepared to discuss the paper’s sources/methodology; contribution/historiography; argument; organization; evidence; introduction, etc. over the next few weeks. Some of these papers were written by undergraduate students, others by graduate students, but all were completed (or in the case of the published article, drafted and later revised) in the course of a single semester, so they will give you an idea of what is possible. For today, be prepared to answer these questions: *What type(s) of source material—newspapers, organizational records, oral histories, individual papers, family manuscript collections, local records, government documents, etc.—did the sample paper you read utilize? What does this suggest to you about the possibilities for your own research?*

Oral Presentations: The Research Process (discuss your progress thus far; detail any additional types of sources you have located; describe your favorite website or source base; explain your note-taking strategies; identify next steps, keeping in mind that next week you will be presenting your initial findings and handing in your primary source bibliography and methodology statement)

January 31, Week 3: Framing an Argument/Answering Historical Questions

Oral Presentations: Initial Research Findings

Due: Primary Source Bibliography and Methodology Statement

February 7, Week 4: Making a Contribution/Answering Historiographical Questions

Oral Presentations: Historiography

Due: Annotated Secondary Source Bibliography and Historiography Statement

February 14, Week 5: Writing a Research Proposal

Workshop on Getting your work Published

Peer Review of Research Proposals

Due: Research Proposal

February 21, Week 6: No class – President’s day

Due: Conference Paper Proposals for Phi Alpha Theta [**confirm date**]

**Phi Alpha Theta Paper Proposals Due [confirm date]**

February 28, Week 7: Individual Meetings

Read: “Shitty First Drafts”

Due: Introductions and Outlines

**GradCon March 4 – please attend and support each other’s presentations**

March 7, Week 8: Rethinking and Reorganizing

Peer Review of Draft #1

Due: Draft #1

March 14, Week 9: Condensing Your Evidence and Refining Your Argument

Writing Workshop

Peer Review of Conference Papers

Attendance required at Lockridge workshop, March 16, 2022, **Cody Ewert**, Associate Editor, South Dakota Historical Society Press, “Making Schools American: Nationalism and the Origin of Modern Educational Politics”

Due: Draft Conference Papers

March 21 - NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK!

March 28, Week 10: Presenting Your Research  
Peer Review of Oral Presentations  
Oral Presentations: Conference Papers

**Phi Alpha Theta Papers Due [date forthcoming]**

April 4, Week 11: Re-Writing and Revising  
Peer Review of Draft #2  
Due: Draft #2

April 11, Week 12: Individual Meetings  
Sign up for 30 minute slot  
Due: Revision Plan

April 18, Week 13: Proofreading and Polishing  
Peer Review of Draft #3  
Due: Draft #3

**Phi Alpha Theta Conference, April 22-23, 2022**

April 25, Week 14: Individual Meetings  
Sign up for 30 minute slot  
Discuss: Proofreading Checklist

May 2, Week 15: Finals Week  
Due: Final Draft