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HSTR 400.02: Historical Research Seminar

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“What is written without effort is in general read without pleasure.”

Samuel Johnson

Rules of the Game

Submissions: All submissions must be in paper copy and turned in at the beginning of the class. .

No electronic submissions will be accepted.

No late papers will be accepted.

Failure to complete an assignment can mean failure in the class.

Style manual: Turabian or Chicago Manual of Style. Use the documentary note style. There are several useful sources on the web including: <http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/DocChicago.html> Papers should be 12 to 15 pages in length. Please use footnotes. NO embedded notes. Please include a title page and a bibliography.

Portfolio. Please keep a portfolio of all versions of all the assignments.

Plagiarism can mean not just failure of the assignment, but failure in the class.

According to the university catalogue: “Plagiarism is the representing of another’s work as one’s own. It is a particularly intolerable offense in the academic community and is strictly forbidden. Students who plagiarize may fail the course and may be remanded to Academic Court for possible suspension or expulsion. . . . Students must always be very careful to acknowledge any kind of borrowing that is included in their work. This means not only borrowed wording but also ideas. Acknowledgment of whatever is not one’s own original work is the proper and honest use of sources. Failure to acknowledge whatever is not one’s own original work is plagiarism.”

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE The schedule may be changed to protect the innocent.

January 26 Introduction and General Orientation

“The aim of the historian, like that of the artist, is to enlarge our picture of the world, to give us a new way of looking at things.” James Joll

February 2 Donna McCrae presentation Mansfield Library, 2nd floor, Student Learning Center

Discussion of Reference Sources. Ereserve: pp. 1-9.

Comparison of the Dictionary of National Biography, 1908-1971 with the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. Check the coverage and then take an individual and compare and contrast the two sources. **Try to pick someone who is less well known.**

Take a look at the electronic article by Darnton at <http://americanhistoricalreview.org>. What advantage does the electronic form have?

“I have always imagined that paradise will be a kind of library.” Jorge Luis Borges

February 9 **Reference Questions due.** Please type the answers and use footnote form for citations.

Discussion of Reference Sources, Electronic Resources, and websites.

“It is better to know some of the questions than all of the answers.” James Thurber

February 16 Questions of Style

“The difference between the right word and the nearly right one is that between lightning and a lightning bug.” Mark Twain

Assignment: ereserve: Safire’s Rules, pp. 10-11.

Orwell: Politics of the English Language

http://www.george-orwell.org/politics_and_the_english_language/0.html

Twain on Cooper

http://www.pbs.org/marktwain/learnmore/writings_fenimore.html

http://www.llumina.com/mark_twain_on_cooper.htm

Extra credit for egregious examples.

February 23 **PAPER DUE**

“I confess that the more research I did, the more disconcerted I became.” F. Braudel

On ereserve: A. J. Youngson, *The Prince and the Pretender*, pp. 1-31, 52-56, 141-149, 171-175, and 251-256.

Discuss how the author presents two different points of view through selection of evidence, line of argument, choice of words etc.

3-5 double-spaced pages: one original to the instructor, one copy to the critic, one for the writer.

Rewrite the sentences on ereserve pp. 20-27. In class discussion ereserve pp. 13-27.

March 2 CRITIQUE DUE

“Research is endlessly seductive; writing is hard work. . . But it brings a sense of excitement, almost a rapture; a moment on Olympus. In short it is an act of creation.” Barbara Tuchman

Critiques should be short, one to three pages in length. They should both praise and criticize. Critiques should be typed and reproduced in triplicate: the original to the instructor, the first copy of the author being criticized, and the last by the critic to be read aloud.

You should address such general questions as the failure or success of the writer in communicating his thesis. How well is it organized? What are the strengths of the organization? Its weaknesses? Does the evidence support the argument? How well does the author evaluate the evidence? You should also address questions of style and mechanics. Do misspellings mar the text? Does the author use the passive voice or any form of “to be” excessively?

Use **Checklist ereserve, p. 12.**

In class order puzzles, ereserve, pp. 28-32.

March 9 OUTLINE AND BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE. Discussion of Kegan, Mattingly, Statistics, ereserve, pp. 33-35.

“In the republic of scholarship, every citizen has a constitutional right to get himself as thoroughly lost as he pleases.” D. Hackett Fisher

March 16 FIRST PAGE DUE Please underline your thesis. Put your papers in my box, We will not meet.

“Writing is easy. All you do is stare at a blank sheet of paper until drops of blood form on your forehead.” Gene Fowler

March 23 We will not meet but your papers will be available in my mail box.

“Cheshire-Puss, would you tell me, please which way I ought to go from here?” Alice in Wonderland

March 30 PRESENTATIONS

10 minutes in length. Emphasize your thesis, main arguments and the evidence, both primary and secondary.

“So I suppose you are at the old trade, again, scribble, scribble, scribble, scribble, scribble.” Duke of Cumberland to Edward Gibbon

April 6 **SPRING BREAK**

April 13 **PRESENTATIONS**

“Everyone has fantasies. Mine are historical daydreams, a way of playing Rip Van Winkle in reverse.” Robert Darnton

April 20 **PRESENTATIONS PAPERS DUE**

“History is rather interesting when it repeats itself; historians are not.” Philip Guedella.

April 27 “Only a dying civilization rejects its dead.”

May 4 **EVALUATIONS AND DISCUSSION**

“Them that asks no questions isn’t told a lie.” Kipling

Electronic resources

Early English Books Online - From the first book published in English through the age of Spenser and Shakespeare

Eighteenth Century Collections Online - Full text of over 100,000 English-language books, tracts, and printed ephemera published between 1701 and 1800.

JSTOR - Scholarly journals in the arts, humanities, social sciences, business, and sciences

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography - Biographical dictionary of notable people

Oxford English Dictionary - Complete text of the 20-volume OED online

WorldCat - Catalog of materials in libraries worldwide

Websites

oll.libertyfund.org

<http://www.loc.gov>

<http://melvyl.cdlib.org>