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HSTR 200.01: Introduction to Historical Methods

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Introduction to Historical Methods

HSTR 200.01—Fall 2014

M 2:10-3pm / LA 138

Professor Kyle G. Volk

LA 260 / (406) 243-2989 / kyle.volk@umontana.edu

Office Hours: F 11:10-12:30pm and by appointment

Course Description:

This 1-credit introductory course exposes students to tools and concepts fundamental to the historical discipline. We will survey some of the sources historians regularly use and will learn the basics of conducting research online and in the archives.

Required Texts:

All course readings are available through the Mansfield Library's resources or through the course's MOODLE site. Please print these readings, read them, and bring them to class.

Learning Outcomes:

Students successfully completing this course should gain an introductory understanding of how historians work—their questions, methods, and perspectives. Students should also gain an understanding of the foundations of doing original historical research.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & ASSESSMENT:

1. Attendance, Participation, & Reading Quizzes (25%)
2. Assignment #1 – Joint Source Description Paper (due 9/21) (15%)
3. Assignment #2 – Morgan Reading Guide (due 10/6) (10%)
4. Assignment #3 – Wiltse Assignment (due 10/20) (15%)
5. Assignment #4 – 4-5-page Primary Source Analysis (due 12/1) (35%)

ACADEMIC HONESTY – All students must practice academic honesty. It should go without saying that all the work you do in this course should be your own. Plagiarism, cheating, or any other instances of academic misconduct will result in a failing grade in this course. The academic dean will also be notified and offenses could result in expulsion. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The code is available at life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php. If you have questions, please ask the instructor BEFORE turning in an assignment.

Students with documented disabilities will receive reasonable modifications in this course. Your responsibilities are to request them from me with sufficient advance notice, and to be prepared to provide verification of disability and its impact from Disability Services for Students. Please speak with me after class or during my office hours to discuss the details. For more information, visit the Disability Services for Students website at www.umt.edu/disability.

*****Schedule of Activities and Readings*****

8/25—Week 1—Introductions

9/1—Week 2—No Class, Labor Day

9/8—Week 3— Library Introduction w/Karen Jaskara
(Meet in Mansfield Library's Student Learning Center, Level 2)

- Read: Jules R. Benjamin, *A Student's Guide to History*, Chapters 1 and 4 [MOODLE]

9/15—Week 4—Writing & Re-Writing History: The Living Past

- Find, print out, and read: Carl Becker, "Every Man His Own Historian," *American Historical Review* 37 (Jan. 1932), 221-236. [Find this article using J-STOR database.]

9/22—Week 5—The Sources of History: Primary Sources in Mansfield Library

- Read: Marius and Page, *A Short Guide to Writing About History*, Chapter 2 [MOODLE]
- In teams of 4 find and examine 4 primary sources in the Mansfield Library pertaining to some aspect of 19th-century American History. At least two of your sources must be from microfilm. (You don't have to bring the microfilm reels to class. Rather, print four pages from the microfilm and bring them to class.)
- **Assignment #1** Due: Jointly construct a 4-paragraph source description (1 paragraph for each source). In each paragraph please identify the type of source, the author, and the year it was produced. Describe the general content of the source and suggest the source's potential utility in a research paper on 19th-century American history.
- Come to class prepared to discuss your findings.

9/29—Week 6— **SPECIAL MONDAY EVENING SESSION—6:00-8:30pm Room: TBD**

- **No Regular Class at 2:10pm**
- Microhistory & the Historian at Work – Film: *A Midwife's Tale* & Discussion

10/6—Week 7—Argument, Evidence, & Interpretation

- Using J-STOR, find, print out, and read the following article:
Edmund S. Morgan, "Puritans and Sex," *New England Quarterly* 15 (Dec. 1942), 591-607.
- **Assignment #2:** Complete and turn in the reading guide (available on MOODLE)

10/13—Week 8—Digging in Online Newspaper Databases w/Karen Jaskar
(Meet in Mansfield Library’s Student Learning Center, Level 2)

10/20—Week 9—Social History & Historical Newspaper Databases in Action

- Using online resources available through the Mansfield Library web site, find print out, and read: Jeff Wiltse, “‘I Like to Get Around’: City Girls in Chicago Music Saloons, 1858-1906,” *Journal of Urban History* 39 (2013), 1125-1145.
- Use an electronic newspaper database to find and print out a newspaper article that Wiltse did not use but might have used as part of his research on music saloons in the second half of the nineteenth century. Use a database other than the *Chicago Tribune Historical*.
 - **Assignment #3:** Write (and turn in, along with the article) 2 paragraphs about how this source supports, undercuts, or adds complexity to the historical claims Wiltse made in his article.

10/27—Week 10—Digging in Government Documents (w/Susanne Caro) (Meet in Mansfield Library’s Buckhouse Room)

11/3—Week 11—Historical Ethics, Public Historians, & Others

- Read: Anthony Grafton, “The Death of the Footnote,” *The Wilson Quarterly* 21 (Winter 1997), 72-77. [J-STOR]
- Other Selected Readings [MOODLE]

11/10—Week 12—Digging in the Archives: An Introduction w/Donna McCrea

Meet at Mansfield Library Archives Teaching Room (adjacent to the Archives and Special Collections Department on Level 4)

11/17—Week 13—NO CLASS: Visit the Archives

11/24—Week 14—In-Class Discussion of Archival Findings

12/1—Week 15—Conclusions: **Assignment #4** Due – Archival Source Exploration