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### HSTR 400.02: Historical Research Seminar

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Professor Frey  
Fall 2014

History 400

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

Samuel Johnson

Office: LA 252 T 6-9:30, Th 6 - 9:30. Other times by happenstance. Please feel to make an appointment if you cannot make those times and/or to catch me in the office.

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### 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.**

Grades are based on a 100 point scale. 93 for an A, 90 for an A-, 87 B+, 83 B, 80B-, 77 C+, 73 C, 70 C-, 67D+, 63 D, 60 D-, below 60 F.

Grading Options. According to University policy: “Courses taken to satisfy General Education Requirements must be taken for a traditional letter grade. Courses required for the student’s major or minor must be taken for a traditional letter grade.”

**This course is only offered for a traditional grade.**

Drops require the consent of the instructor after the 15<sup>th</sup> instructional day. After the 45<sup>th</sup> instructional day, drops are available only in extraordinary circumstance and only through a petition that must be approved by the advisor, the instructor, and the dean.

Seek help if you need it and seek it early.

**Attendance at the class is mandatory.**

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 in the order in which they were due.

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."

Students with disabilities will receive reasonable modifications in this course. Please contact Disability Services for Students (<http://www.umnt.edu/disability>) to provide verification of the disability and its impact and then present this documentation to me with your accommodation request (for which forms are available from DSS) at least forty-eight hours in advance of any requested accommodation.

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

August 26<sup>th</sup> 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

**Discussion of Reference Sources, Electronic Resources, and websites.**

Presentation Mansfield Library 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Student Learning Center

September 2

**Assignment: Comparison of the Dictionary of National Biography, 1908-1971**

**(920 D554 1908-) with the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (electronic resource)** Check the coverage and then take an individual and compare and contrast the two sources. **Try to pick someone who is less well known.**  
**Also select an entry that has not been rewritten or just edited.** 200-400 words.

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

Early English Books online- find an illustration and bring the hard copy to class.

September 9 **HISTORIANS AT WORK.**

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

Assignment: Discussion of Thucydides' Melian dialogue.

<http://lygdamus.com/resources/New%20PDFS/Melian.pdf>

Discussion of Himmelfarb, “History with the Politics Left Out”  
Discussion of Hémardinquer’s “The Family Pig.”

September 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:**

**Orwell: Politics of the English Language**

[http://www.george-orwell.org/politics\\_and\\_the\\_english\\_language/0.html](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.pbs.org/marktwain/learnmore/writings_fenimore.html)

[http://www.llumina.com/mark\\_twain\\_on\\_cooper.htm](http://www.llumina.com/mark_twain_on_cooper.htm)

**Extra credit for egregious examples.**

September 23 **PAPER DUE**

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

Braudel

**On reserve: 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.

Read Zinsser - Simplicity reserver

September 30 **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?

### **Material on style reserve**

#### **Checklist reserve**

### **Assignment Safire’s Rules,**

<http://www.chem.gla.ac.uk/research/groups/protein/pert/safire.rules.html>

October 7 **OUTLINE AND BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE.**

**Discussion of Kegan, Mattingly, Blanning reserve**

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

October 14 **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

October 21 **PRESENTATIONS .**

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

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

October 28 **PRESENTATIONS** “Only a dying civilization rejects its dead.”

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

November 4 Election Day

November 11 Veterans Day

November 18      **PRESENTATIONS PAPERS DUE**

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

November 25      **PRESENTATIONS**

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

December 2      **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://oll.libertyfund.org)

<http://www.loc.gov>

<http://melvyl.worldcat.org>

<http://www.hathitrust.org>

<http://orbis.stanford.edu>