

Spring 2-1-2018

HSTA 471.01: Writing Women's Lives

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Recommended Citation

Jabour, Anya, "HSTA 471.01: Writing Women's Lives" (2018). *Syllabi*. 7737.
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HSTA 471: Writing Women's Lives

Professor Anya Jabour

Class Hours: W 2:10-5 p.m.

Office Hours: TR 10-11 a.m. and by appointment

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Course Description:

This upper-division writing-intensive seminar will provide students with the opportunity to research and write in the field of U.S. women's history. Students will design, research, and write an original essay based on primary source materials. Students will learn research methods, proper documentation, and analytical writing skills in this course. Students will also become familiar with the theory and practice of biography, micro-history, and case studies, as well as with the use of oral history, material culture, and information technology.

The major assignment for this class is an analytical paper based on original research in primary source materials (see attached guidelines). The paper will be a minimum of 20 pages (for undergraduates) or 30 pages (for graduate students). In the final paper, students will: incorporate theoretical material covered in class; model their writing on exemplary essays in the field; propose and support a thesis using original research in the library, archives, government documents, special collections, and/or digitized primary sources; use a history style guide and conform to the conventions of the historical profession, including proper documentation; and demonstrate correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Intermediate assignments, including workshops, worksheets, and short writing assignments, will provide students with skills in research, writing, documentation, and editing. Students will revise their paper several times based on instructor's written comments as well as peer review.

Course Objectives:

In keeping with UM guidelines for upper-division writing courses, students will develop the following skills as indicated:

1. Identify and pursue more sophisticated questions for academic inquiry.
Students will read both theoretical pieces and model essays in the field, discuss them to identify current trends and professional standards in women's history and biography, and apply these insights to their own final research paper.
2. Find, evaluate, analyze, and synthesize information effectively from diverse sources.
Students will undergo orientation to the library, archives and special collections, and government documents. Students will design their own research paper with individual guidance and conduct original research in a variety of sources, including professional books and journals, government documents, archival materials, scholarly databases, and edited document collections.
3. Manage multiple perspectives.
Students will evaluate different historical interpretations and multiple source materials in class discussion. They will then use these skills to make informed judgments and support a strong thesis in the final research paper.

4. Adopt the academic voice necessary for the discipline.
Students will read both theoretical pieces and model essays in the field to identify discipline-appropriate style. Students will participate in in-class writing workshops to acquaint them with the writing conventions and documentation expectations of the historical profession. Students will write a research-based paper using a history style guide designed for academics. Students will have the opportunity to present this material at a professional or student conference.
5. Use multiple drafts, revision, and editing.
In-class writing workshops, including peer review workshops, will be devoted to developing skills in revision and editing. Students will receive written feedback from the instructor on a rough draft, which they will revise for final submission.
6. Follow disciplinary conventions of citation, documentation, and formal presentation.
Students will use a history style guide and participate in in-class writing workshops to acquaint them with the writing conventions and documentation requirements of the historical profession. Students will also present their research both before their peers and at a student or a professional conference.
7. Develop competence in information technology and digital literacy.
Student orientation to the library will include a variety of databases, including journals, government documents, and historical newspapers. In-class workshops will address databases of primary source material in U.S. women's history and citation conventions for on-line source material. Students will be encouraged to use information technology in their research as appropriate to the topic selected.

Course Readings:

William Kelleher Storey, *Writing History: A Guide for Students*

Other readings may be found on Moodle, on the course LibGuide, or via the Mansfield library catalog journal databases

Grading:

Attendance & Participation:	10%
Reading Responses:	10%
Other Assignments:	10%
Oral Presentation:	10%
Rough Drafts:	10% each, or 30% total
Final Draft:	30%

Course Policies:

All assignments are due either on the date on which they appear on the syllabus or the date specified on worksheets distributed in class or via Moodle. Except in extraordinary circumstances, late assignments will not be accepted. Students are expected to attend class regularly and on time. More than one absence will result in drastic reductions in the attendance grade, i.e., one letter grade per subsequent absence. Late arrivals and early departures will count as one-half absence. Manifest inattentiveness (i.e., texting, reading non-class materials, sleeping) also will count as an absence. Please turn off cell phones and put away non-class related materials prior to class.

Course Schedule:

January 24: Introduction to Class

Film: *A Midwife's Tale*

Discussion: Researching and Writing Women's Lives

Workshop: Using Moodle and the LibGuide

January 31: Researching Women's Lives/Restoring Women to History

Meet in Archives & Special Collections, 4th Floor, Mansfield Library

Bring a valid ID and a pencil when you visit A&SC!

Workshop: Using Archives and Special Collections (2-3:30 p.m. w/ Donna McCrea)

**Assignment: Archives and Special Collections Worksheet (10 points)
Due Friday, February 2, at 5 p.m.**

Reading: Smith-Rosenberg, "Hearing Women's Words"; Lerner, "Placing Women in History"; and "Challenge of Women's History" (Moodle)

Discussion: The Challenge of Women's History

**Assignment: Reading Response #1
Due IN CLASS; bring a HARD COPY with you!**

Write 2-3 typed, double-spaced pages reflecting on the readings and addressing these questions: How does "placing women in history" or "hearing women's words" pose a "challenge" to conventional male-centered history? What are the unique challenges of writing women's history? How do historians address these challenges? What types of source material are available for researching women's history? What have you learned about researching and writing women's history from this week's readings?

February 7: Beginning a Research Project

Meet in Buckhous Room, 2nd Floor, Mansfield Library

Workshop: Using the Library: Catalog & Databases (2-3 p.m. with Jaci Wilkinson)

**Assignment: Library Worksheet (10 points)
Due Wednesday, February 14, by 8 p.m.**

Reading: Storey, *Writing History*, Chap. 1 (Getting Started); Review the list of potential topics posted on Moodle; Review source materials and research bibliographies available on the LibGuide; Read one of the sample papers posted on the course LibGuide (as assigned)

Discussion: Discovering Women in the Historical Record

Assignment: Reading Response #2
Due IN CLASS; bring a HARD COPY.

Write 2-3 typed, double-spaced pages responding to the reading and addressing 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? What ideas for potential topics (on Moodle) or source materials (on the LibGuide) are most interesting to you? What ideas does this all give you for your own research topic/preferred type(s) of source material?

February 14: The Challenges of Historical Research

Meet in Student Learning Center, 2nd Floor, Mansfield Library

Reading: Storey, *Writing History*, Chap. 2 (Interpreting Source Material); Sherry J. Katz, “‘Researching Around Our Subjects’: Excavating Radical Women”; Jill LePore, “Historians Who Love Too Much”; and Susan Ware, “The Book I Couldn’t Write” (find in journal databases)

Assignment: Reading Response #3
Due IN CLASS; bring HARD COPY

Write 2-3 typed, double-spaced pages addressing these questions: What do the readings for this week suggest are some of the challenges of researching women’s history, and what strategies do they offer for dealing with these challenges? What insights do these readings offer about how to go about selecting a topic and finding sources (or should it be the other way around)? What different approaches to writing women’s history do these readings reveal?

Discussion: Research Methodology and Organizational Strategies

Workshop: Using and Documenting Digitized Sources

Assignment: Research Review (10 points)
In-class presentation (5-10 minutes) to your classmates about using one of the on-line or database collections of primary sources available via the LibGuide (if you do not request one, it will be assigned to you to avoid duplication)

February 21: From Research Question to Central Argument

Reading: Storey, *Writing History*, Chap. 4 (Using Sources). Read at least one book, article, or essay that you found while working on your Library Worksheet (You may need to read several in order to find a suitable candidate for the instructions that follow. If you read a book, focus on the introduction to address these questions). Mark or highlight the author’s topic, source base, and research question and/or central argument. You also should indicate the author’s main points (used to support the thesis or central argument).

Assignment: Reading Response #4

Due IN CLASS; bring HARD COPY of both your response and the marked/highlighted article with you.

Write 2-3 typed, double-spaced pages addressing these questions: What is the item's topic? What sources did the author use to research the topic? If the author approached the topic with an initial research question (or set of questions), what was it (or what were they)? Did the research question(s) change in the course of the research? What is the author's central argument, or thesis? What main points does the author offer in support of the argument? Does the author make any claims that you would like to address—affirm, extend, modify, or challenge—in your paper? Explain.

Discussion: Getting From the Trees to the Forest

Assignment: Conference Abstract (10 points)

Due IN CLASS; Bring a HARD COPY.

Review guidelines for submission, sample abstracts, and rubrics at <http://www.umt.edu/ugresearch/umcur/call-submissions.php> and <https://www.umt.edu/sell/cps/gradcon/Call%20for%20Submissions.php>. Write an abstract based on these guidelines (300 words for UMCUR; 500 words for GradCon). Your abstract will be submitted to UMCUR (April 27; deadline February 23), GradCon (April 20; deadline March 23), or Phi Alpha Theta (in Spokane, April 20-21; deadline TBA).

Workshop: Paper Proposals and Conference Abstracts

4 p.m.: Class relocates to Buckhous Room, MLB 284 (2nd floor Mansfield Library) for UMCUR Abstract Writing Workshop. You must bring a rough draft of your abstract to the workshop.

February 28: Refining Your Topic (Individual Meetings)

Assignment: Paper Proposal (10 points)

Due IN CLASS; Bring a HARD COPY to your meeting.

Paper proposals should define the topic, pose a question that the paper will attempt to answer, and explain what primary sources you will use. Head your proposal with a title and subtitle that indicate your topic (including the place and time period) and the direction of your paper. Paper proposals should be a minimum of 2-3 typed, double-spaced pages long.

March 7: The Ongoing Research Process

Assignment: Research Report (10 points)

In-class presentation (5-10 minutes) about your progress on research, including identifying your primary source base and addressing any limitations or difficulties.

Discussion: The Pleasures and Perils of Historical Research

Workshop: Documenting Your Discoveries

Reading: Storey, *Writing History*, Chap. 3 (Writing History Faithfully); re-read Chaps. 2 (Interpreting Source Materials) and 4 (Using Sources).

Assignment: Bibliography (10 points)
Due IN CLASS; bring a HARD COPY.

Your bibliography should list at least five secondary sources (books and articles) as well as your primary sources (archival collections, maps, government documents, photographs, etc.) in proper format.

Assignment: Methodology Section (20 points)
Due Friday, March 9, by 5 p.m.

A methodology section should explain what sources you will use in your paper. You should write 2-3 typed, double-spaced pages explaining why these sources are appropriate and useful, acknowledge any limitations or bias of the sources, and explain what you will do to offset these limitations or biases (i.e., use multiple types of sources from different perspectives). The methodology section should be accompanied by a complete and correct bibliography of your primary sources. See sample papers on LibGuide for further guidance.

March 14: From Research to Writing

Reading: Storey, *Writing History*, Chaps. 5 (Get Writing), 6 (Build an Argument), and 7 (Narrative Techniques); and “Shitty First Drafts” (Moodle)

Discussion: Writing and Research

Assignment: Literature Review (20 points)
Due Friday, March 16, by 5 p.m.

A literature review (or historiography section) offers an overview of the secondary scholarship (published work) on your topic. Your literature review should be 2-3 typed, double-spaced pages long and should summarize the state of the field for your subject, calling attention to important work on the topic, identifying gaps or areas for further research. It should be accompanied by a complete and correct bibliography of your secondary sources. See sample papers on LibGuide for further guidance.

March 21: The Writing Process

Reading: TBA

Discussion: Organization and Argument

Assignment: Paper Outline (20 points)

Your paper outline should provide the following information about your paper: title (with subtitle if relevant); thesis (one or two sentences maximum), and outline of your paper's organizational structure.

Workshop: Writing Introductions

**GradCon Abstract Workshop, Student Learning Center (Library 283)
Wednesday, March 21, Noon-1 p.m. OR March 22, 4-5 p.m.**

March 28: **NO CLASS--SPRING BREAK**

April 4: Writing Well

Workshop: Paragraph and Sentence Structure

Reading: Storey, *Writing History*, Chaps. 8 (Writing Sentences) and 9 (Choose Precise Words)

**Assignment: Draft Introduction (20 points)
HARD COPY to be submitted IN CLASS.**

Your introduction should: Identify the topic and explain its significance; clearly state the thesis or central argument; devote one sentence to each main point/portion of the paper; restate the thesis and explain how your paper contributes to the scholarly literature. See sample papers on LibGuide for further guidance. An introduction should be 1-3 typed, double-spaced pages long. The thesis should appear on the first page.

April 11: Taking Stock (Individual Meetings)

Rough Draft # 1 (Instructor Review Version) Due Sunday, April 8, by 5 p.m.

This version should reflect the bulk (or body) of your paper (excluding the literature review and methodology section) and should be 10-15 typed, double-spaced pages long (15-20 pages for graduate students). It should contain an introduction that clearly lays out the topic and its significance, identifies the major primary sources used, and states the thesis and main points. The body of the paper should provide supporting evidence from primary sources and include proper documentation (parenthetical citations are acceptable.) If this version does not take up all the points or make use of all the sources that you intend to include in the final paper, indicate places where you intend to add material. A conclusion should restate the thesis and contribution of the paper. Bibliography is optional.

**Assignment: Action Plan (10 points)
Due Friday, April 13, by 5 p.m.**

The Action Plan explains what steps you will take, based on your individual meeting, to improve the next draft, i.e., conduct additional research, incorporate additional secondary sources, reorganize or expand material in the paper, etc.

GradCon Presentation Workshop, 4-5 p.m., Lommasson 272

April 18: Presenting Your Research

Workshop: Mock Conference (NB: Class time may be extended for this session)

Paper Presentations Due (IN CLASS)

In-class, 10-15 minute oral presentations with 5-10 minute Q&A.

Turn in HARD COPY of your text/notes IN CLASS.

This version of your paper should be approximately 5-7 pages typed, double-spaced pages long (practice and time yourself beforehand to be sure you are meeting time requirements). You do not need to provide a literature review or methodology discussion although you should explain your paper's contribution and source base briefly. Grade for this assignment will be based on the organization of the prepared text, the professionalism of the oral presentation, and the quality of your responses to questions. You may use PowerPoint or other A/V if you wish, but if you do so, please familiarize yourself with the equipment beforehand.

April 25: Re-Visioning, Re-Organizing, and Re-Writing

Rough Draft #2 (Peer Review Version) Due (HARD COPY IN CLASS)

This version should be a minimum of 15 typed, double-spaced pages long (20 pages for graduate students) and substantially complete with respect to content (literature review and methodology section are optional). The body of the paper should provide evidence for each of the main points laid out in the introduction, organized in coherent paragraphs. Parenthetical citations are acceptable; bibliography of secondary sources is required.

Workshop: Peer Review

Reading: Storey, *Writing History*, Chap. 10 (Revising and Editing)

Assignment: Peer-Review Rough Draft Critiques (10 points)

May 2: Revising and Proofreading

Rough Draft #3 (Proofreading Version) Due (HARD COPY IN CLASS)

This version should be a minimum of 20 typed, double-spaced pages long (30 pages for graduate students) and should include the literature review and methodology section. It should be a well-organized and coherent throughout, should make use of proper footnotes or endnotes using the *Chicago Manual of Style* or Turabian's *Manual of Style*, and should include a properly formatted bibliography of both primary and secondary sources (not counted in the overall page length).

Workshop: Proofreading and Punctuation

Assignment: Peer Proofreading (10 points)

May 9: **FINAL PAPERS DUE 5 P.M. via Moodle**