History 630: 20th century American research  
Thursdays 4-6:40p, 545 Park Hall

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565 Park Hall  
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Office hours: Tuesdays 1-3pm or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar guides students in producing an original research paper of approximately 30-35 pages based on primary sources and engaged with relevant historiographical and methodological debates in the scholarly literature. Unless given advance permission by the instructor, topics should be related to the long 20th century (1877-2000) United States. Students will also develop their critical reading and engaging skills by providing peer feedback on others’ written work.

REQUIRED TEXTS

There are no required texts for this course. When assigned, readings will be available on UB Learns.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

I expect you to show up for all scheduled classes and complete all assignments on time. Because the class depends on everyone being at the same stage in their work, all deadlines for assignments are firm.

**Written assignments are due on UB Learns by 5pm on the Monday before the class in which they will be workshopped. This will give everyone time to read the material before class. Please plan in advance for technology troubles (i.e., don’t wait for the last minute), as these will not be accepted as excuses for late work.**

GRADING

Attendance is mandatory. Unexcused absences will lower your grade.

- **Class participation (10% of your grade):** You will be assigned a letter grade for your preparation and participation. This includes discussion of readings during those weeks when readings are assigned, but also the quality of your written and oral feedback on other students’ writing during workshopping.

- **Stages of research assignments (40% of your grade):**
  - Initial assignments (5% total):
    - One paragraph summary, due 5pm September 7th
    - Primary materials survey, due 5pm September 14th
    - One paragraph summary of your primary materials, due 5pm September 21st
o Formal prospectus (4-7 pages), due 5pm Sept 28th (10%)
  o Plot summary & thesis statement/argument outline, due 5pm October 26th (5%)
  o Complete rough draft, due 5pm November 9th (15%)
  o Polished 5-minute presentation, due in class December 10th (5%)
  - **Polished draft of research paper, due 5pm December 11th (50% of your grade)**

**PLAGIARISM & EXTERNAL SOURCES POLICY**

All students are expected to be familiar with and abide by the University's academic integrity policies, available in the Undergraduate Catalog (http://undergrad-catalog.buffalo.edu/policies/course/integrity.shtml) or the Graduate School Policies and Procedures Manual (http://www.grad.buffalo.edu/policies). Plagiarism detection software may be used by individual instructors or the institution to aid in determining the originality of student work.

What is plagiarism? Briefly, it is using the work and words of another writer (whether from print sources, from the Web, or from another student) without giving clear credit to her/him. Plagiarism is unacceptable in any course assignment, big or small, and will result in an “F” grade for the entire course. If you have any questions or doubts, ASK.

There are innumerable sources available for the study of post-WWII U.S. history, but I expect students to engage with the materials I have selected for this course. In your written work, therefore, do not refer more than briefly to sources other than those assigned for the course unless: (1) you have fully engaged all relevant course materials (including readings, lectures and discussion) and wish to add more to an already complete essay; and (2) you have received prior approval from me to bring in the additional source. This is particularly important for Web sources: absolutely no use of any Web sites for written work unless you have specifically cleared the Web site with me in advance.

**ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCES**

UB’s Accessibility Resources Office coordinates services and accommodations to ensure the accessibility and usability of all UB programs, services, and activities by people with disabilities. To receive accommodation for physical and learning disabilities, students are required to register with that office; more information can be found at http://www.student-affairs.buffalo.edu/ods/.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**

This course entails learning goals from three distinct yet interrelated categories:

1. *Acquisition of historical and historiographical knowledge:* Students in the 20th Century U.S. Research Seminar will acquire deep specialized knowledge in a historical topic of their choosing, including the historiography of that subfield as well as a close familiarity with primary sources providing new and rich information about relevant people and events.
2. *Development of advanced analytical thinking skills:* Students in the 20th Century U.S. Research Seminar will engage in oral and written analysis of historical and historiographical material, including extensive examination of primary source materials, over the course of the semester.
3. *Development of advanced research skills:* Students in the 20th Century U.S. Research Seminar will learn how to pick important topics and ask useful questions about them; identify and locate appropriate primary source materials; reframe questions and research goals based on an
engagement with those materials; organize research findings into a coherent and novel argument about the past; and write up those findings in clear, compelling prose.

Learning Outcomes Chart

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Class Discussion &amp; Peer Workshopping</th>
<th>Short essays</th>
<th>Research Paper</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Historical Knowledge</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Historiographical Knowledge</td>
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<td>Analytical Thinking</td>
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<td>Research Skills</td>
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**SEQUENCE OF CLASSES**

**September 3 (week 1): Thinking about the craft of history**

*Readings:*
- Cronon, “Getting ready to do history,” p. 1-6

*Due:*
- Nothing

**September 10 (week 2): How to turn a topic into a research question**

*Readings:*
- A historiography review of your research field

*Due:*
- A one-paragraph summary of your research topic
- List of major topics & approaches in your research field (from historiography review)

**September 17 (week 3): How to revise your research question to fit your sources**

*Readings:*
- No readings

*Due:*
- A one-paragraph summary of your primary document collection

**September 24 (week 4): How to fit your new project into existing literature**
Readings:
- No readings

Due:
- A polished, 7-page prospectus w/ topic description, annotated bibliography of primary/secondary sources, plus agenda/timetable.

October 1 (week 5): Research

NO CLASS

October 8 (week 6): Reports from the archives

Readings:
- No readings

Due:
- 2-3 minute oral report on your research experience thus far, with examples of what you have found, thoughts about how you might use the materials in your paper, and questions about next steps

October 15 (week 7): Research

NO CLASS

October 22 (week 8): Making sense of your notes: Narrative & analytical strategies

Readings:
- Al MacCoy, “Writing Heuristics”
- Bill Cronon, “A place for stories”

Due:
- A plot summary of your narrative, focusing on WHO and WHERE were the actors, WHAT they did, WHEN.
- Full statement of your thesis and of the logical steps & evidence required to prove that thesis.

October 29 (week 9): Writing

NO CLASS

November 5 (week 10): Writing

NO CLASS

November 12 (week 11): Workshop rough drafts / Schedule individual meetings
Readings:
- No readings

Due:
- Complete draft DUE TUESDAY BEFORE CLASS
- Read & complete a constructive review of papers assigned to you

November 19 (week 12): Individual meetings with students
SCHEDULE INDIVIDUAL MEETING

November 26 (week 13): THANKSGIVING
NO CLASS

December 3 (week 14): Polishing your paper: grammar, format, voice, etc.

Readings:
- No readings

Due:
- A finished version of your paper.

December 10 (week 15): Presentations

Readings:
- No readings

Due:
- Well organized, well practiced, 5-minute oral report on your research, with professional PowerPoint or other visual aids, followed by a Q&A period
- Final papers due December 11th by 5pm