

History 200  
Rhode Island College  
J. Schneider  
Spring Semester

## **THE NATURE OF HISTORICAL INQUIRY** Course Syllabus

### **PURPOSE**

This course introduces students to the principal concerns of historical investigation. Such areas as the tools of historical inquiry, the nature of historical sources, extraction and evaluation of evidence, the role of individual judgment and the conceptual framework of historical interpretation will be explored. What exactly does this mean? The course forces students to get behind the end product, a historical narrative for example, to understand the hows and whys of doing history. Beyond the nuts and bolts aspect of collecting and analyzing evidence to produce a historical work, students will also confront larger issues such as motive and intent in writing history; the professional historian's role in contemporary life, in and outside the classroom; and, concerns about the status of the historical profession in the United States. What does it mean to be a student of history and a teacher of history? The course also stresses writing skills and improvement thereof.

### **STRUCTURE**

History 200 meets twice a week for 1 hour 50 minutes. The course is a workshop, format will vary from class to class. There will be very little by way of formal lectures, the professor will make introductory or explanatory remarks, but primarily pose questions for the students to discuss. Also, various assignments will serve as the focus for in-class discussions.

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

#### **READING**

The following books are required:

Richard Marius and Melvin E. Page, *A Short Guide to Writing About History*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed.  
Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, 7th ed.  
Michael Neiberg, ed., *The World War I Reader Primary and Secondary Sources*

Books are available for purchase at the college bookstore.

Various short articles, available on the class WEB-CT will be used in the class during the semester. Noted as "selections" in the calendar, students are expected to **print** the materials and **bring** them to class for specific exercises

#### **WRITTEN**

Short Papers

During the semester, students will submit various 2-3 (typewritten, double-spaced) page papers, based on reading or research assignments given them, and some worksheets. Other exercises such as a synopsis of a primary source and a precis of a scholarly article will also be required. Details about these assignments will be made at the appropriate time. Classes marked with an asterisk denote the dates on which short papers are due.

### Research Log/Diary

As you begin the research process, you will keep a diary that outlines how you began the research process. This diary will include such items as mining an article's or a book's footnotes/bibliography for printed references. It will also include electronic sites that were visited and the results of those searches i.e. title of a journal article, website of primary sources etc. Diaries will be shared with the professor and the reference librarian at appropriate times.

### Research Paper

**Due May 4<sup>th</sup>**

Each student will choose within the framework of World War I a topic about which to research and write. Research efforts will focus on the outbreak of war, the leading personalities of the war, social or cultural issues, such as propaganda, the home front, the non-combatants' experiences among others. Students will not be allowed to dissect battles or more traditional military history themes. The topic must be such that the student has access to primary and secondary sources that concern it. The research cannot take place without the instructor's approval. Following this, the student will collect evidence, and shortly after mid-term, meet with the professor in individual conferences to discuss the status of the research. In early November students will present, in class, progress reports on their research. The 10-12 (typewritten, double-spaced) page paper, complete with proper footnotes and annotated bibliography are due the last week of the semester. Other details about required materials that will be handed in with the research paper will be distributed on separate handouts.

### EXAMINATIONS

There will be one formal exam in History 200, on Mar. 4<sup>th</sup>. It will have an essay format, and some short answers and fill in the blanks. The final will consist of a brief essay (prepared outside of class) describing and analyzing what important skills etc. students learned and will take with them from History 200 to other courses. (The essay's length will be discussed at the appropriate time.)

### EVALUATION

Various assignments in the course are weighted with respect to the final grade as follows:

Mid-Semester Examination	15%
Research Paper (includes oral presentation)	30%
In-Class Projects, Assignments, and the Final Essay	45%
Attendance	10%

### COURSE CALENDAR

*	Denotes when a short paper/assignment sheet is due	
Jan 21	Introductions; What Do You Know About History? “The Battle of Verdun; The Battle of the Somme” (video clip)	
Jan 26 *	What is History? The Contemporary Plight of History; The History of History Part I-lecture	Foner editorial Western Civ text, Ch. on WWI, start reading
Jan. 28	The History of History Part II -lecture	Western Civ text, Ch.

	Why Study History?	on WWI, complete reading, Neiberg Intro
Feb. 2 *	Varieties of Historical Writing: Examining the Assassination of Franz Ferdinand	Hayes, Remak, Ferro, Keegan, "Intimate Voices" <b>selections</b>
Feb. 4 *	Primary and Secondary Materials	Brundage <b>selection</b> and various readings from Neiberg
Feb. 9	LIBRARY REFERENCE I Tertiary and Secondary Sources	Marius, Chs. 4 & 6
Feb. 11 *	Historical Journals and the Sub-Fields of History	
Feb. 16	Primary Sources and "How to Read a Document" "They Shall Not Pass"	Kishlansky <b>selection</b>  Primary Source <b>Selections</b> ; Neiberg, pp. 175-194
Feb. 18 *	How History Works The Essay in History: Ground Rules	Marius, Chs. 1-3
<b>RESEARCH TOPIC AND BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE!!!</b>		
Feb. 23	LIBRARY REFERENCE II: How to Find Primary Sources	
Feb. 25	Analysis of Materials and Notetaking	Marius, Ch. 5, Turabian, Ch. 4
Mar. 2 *	Analysis of Materials and Notetaking	Benjamin <b>selection</b>
Mar. 4	MID-TERM EXAMINATION	
Mar. 9	<b>Spring Break No Classes!</b>	
Mar. 11		
Mar. 16	Student Individual Conferences	
Mar. 18	Student Individual Conferences	
Mar. 23	Student Progress Reports on Research Nature of Historical Argument	Turabian, Ch. 5
Mar. 25 *	Setting the Historical Context Putting a Primary Source in Its Place	
Mar. 30	Developing Outlines, a Thesis Statement	Neiberg, pp. 158-172

## and Other Mechanics

Apr. 1 *	Historians Write for other Historians:	Book review <b>Selections</b> , Marius Appendix B
Apr. 6	Journal Articles and Writing a Précis	Marwick, Gullace, Gilbert or Lunn
Apr. 8 *	Scholarly Articles as Learning Tools <b>selection</b>	Marius, Ch. 8 Turabian, Chs.15-17
Apr. 13	Footnote and Bibliographical Citations Plagiarism Issues	Marius, Ch. 8 Turabian, Chs.15-17
Apr. 15	Stylistic Considerations	Marius, Ch. 7 Lanham <b>selection</b>
Apr. 20	Preparing an Effective Paper	
Apr. 22	Student Individual Conferences	
Apr. 27	Student Individual Conferences	
Apr. 29	Course Evaluation Student Oral Reports and Discussion	
May 4	Student Oral Reports and Discussion	

**RESEARCH PAPER DUE**

May 5-11              Final Exam Week