

History 300
Postwar America: 1945-1975
Spring 2015

Professor: Dr. Suzanne Smith
Office: Robinson B345
E-mail: smisuze@gmu.edu
Phone: (703) 993-2147

1) Course Time and Place: Thursdays, 1:30-4:10 pm, Robinson Hall B102

2) Office Hours: Tuesdays, 4:00-5:00 pm; Thursdays, 10:30-11:30 am; and by appointment.

3) Course Description:

This section of History 300, which focuses on the history postwar America (1945-1975), is a **skills-based course** that introduces History majors to the methodology of researching, interpreting, and writing history. Over the course of the semester, students will learn how historians do their work and how to start becoming historians themselves. The course requires students to both learn the history of postwar America *and* make their own contribution to this history through original research and writing. Since the course offers the opportunity to explore the theory and practice of historical scholarship, it has been identified as a “scholarly inquiry” course, part of GMU’s “Students as Scholars” initiative; and it is also both a “synthesis” and a “writing intensive” course. For all of these reasons, the course is demanding, requires regular attendance, and good time management.

4) Goals:

This course is designed to prepare students for future upper-level courses in history and for HIST 499, the capstone course for the major. By the end of this course the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Define a research question.
- Use databases and the library to find relevant primary and secondary sources.
- Analyze primary sources.
- Analyze secondary sources.
- Cite their sources using footnotes and an annotated bibliography.
- Construct a historical argument.
- Craft an analytic essay based mostly on primary sources.
- Present their findings in a coherent oral presentation.

NOTE: Students *must* earn a grade of C or better in HIST 300 in order to register for the second required Writing Intensive course, HIST 499.

5) Grading:

In this course you will be graded in these areas:

- 15% Class participation
- 25% Weekly reports
- 15% Research proposal, peer critiques, and oral presentation (5% for each)
- 20% Rough draft
- 25% Final Research Paper

I. How to Succeed in this Course:

1) Communicate regularly: Always let me know right away if you get stuck, confused, or worried about any assignments and keep me updated on your research and writing. I'll follow your progress through your weekly reports and, most weeks, will catch up with you in class. In addition, you can always email me. Don't hide problems from me – this is a challenging class, but I can help you navigate it. But also please share exciting finds and insights!

2) Do EVERY assignment, on time and following instructions: This class emphasizes the research PROCESS. Assignments take you on the step-by-step journey of researching and writing an original research paper. You cannot succeed if you don't complete the steps in order and on time. You should be able to complete the readings and assignments averaging about ten hours per week outside of class time. We all have busy lives, though. Sometimes you won't have as much time as you'd like to do your schoolwork. Sometimes other classes or other parts of your life will take priority over this one. Even then, by following the steps, you can reach a successful end result in your final paper as long as you don't skip any assignments.

3) Come to EVERY class meeting, on time and well-prepared: For a small seminar like this one to succeed, every student **must attend every class** – with the reading done and assignments in hand. Because scholarship is a collaborative enterprise, your absence would also hurt other students. Attendance and class participation are also crucial to one's overall grade. Class participation will be assessed by attendance, participation in class discussions, and by maintaining progress on research project. The first third of the semester is devoted to readings and class discussion on the seminar topic. Therefore, as you do your reading for this class, begin as early as possible to envision potential research topics, any of which could become the basis of your thesis. The second third of the semester is devoted to research workshops, independent research; to the writing of early drafts of your paper. The final third of the semester is set aside for peer critique of rough drafts, oral presentations, and final drafts.

4) Decorum:

Please make every effort to arrive in class **on time**. Late arrivals to class are disruptive. Turn off or silence cell phones before class begins. **Laptops can be used for note taking ONLY.**

5) University Honor Code:

All of George Mason University's academic policies and honor code apply to this course. It is especially important that you do not commit **plagiarism** – that is using others' wording or ideas without attribution. You can avoid it by using proper citation methods (including to ALL internet sources used in any kind of research) and quotation marks when quoting. Remember that summary, paraphrasing, and quoting all require citations. And remember, as well, that plagiarism includes not just published sources, but also the writing or ideas of friends, family, or classmates without acknowledging them.

Violators of the GMU Honor Code will be brought before the University's Honor Committee for disciplinary action. For more details, see the Undergraduate Catalog.

6) Technology:

Students in History 300 are expected check their GMU e-mail account regularly for course announcements and updates. All assignments for the course are to be uploaded onto the course's Blackboard site. In addition, this course requires that you use the bibliographic management software **Zotero**. We will use class time to go over Zotero, but first you need to download the most recent version at <http://www.zotero.org/>. To download it, you need the internet browser Mozilla Firefox which you can download at <http://www.mozilla.org/>.

II. Course Content and Schedule

A. Readings:

William H. Chafe, et. al., *A History of Our Time: Readings in Postwar America*
Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8th edition (2013) – either the paperback or e-book (kindle) version.

Bring this book to every class meeting.

William Cronon, et. al., “*Learning to Do Historical Research*,” Available on Blackboard

Any additional readings will assigned via Blackboard.

B. Class Schedule:

Week 1: Jan. 22 **Course Introduction**

Week 2: Jan. 29 **History Topic:** Cold War Politics
Paper Agenda: Finding a Question and Picking a Topic
Reading: Chafe, *A History of Our Time*, Part 1:

		<p>“America Becomes a World Power” Turabian, pp. 3-23 Cronon, et.al., “How To Frame A Researchable Question”</p>
	Assignment:	Weekly Report uploaded to Blackboard by Thursday at 9:00 am.
Week 3: Feb. 5	History Topic:	<u>The Affluent Society: Postwar Consumption</u>
	Paper Agenda:	<u>Finding and Analyzing Sources, Part I</u>
	Reading:	Chafe, <i>A History of Our Time</i> , Part 2: “The Politics and Culture of the Affluent Society” Cohen, Lizabeth. “From Town Center to Shopping Center: The Reconfiguration of Community Marketplaces in Postwar America.” <i>American Historical Review</i> 101, No. 4 (October 1996): 1050-1081. (Available on Blackboard) Turabian, pp. 24-36
	Assignment:	Cronon, et. al., “Searching for Information” Weekly Report uploaded to Blackboard by Thursday at 9:00 am.
	**NOTE:	Class this week meets in Fenwick Library, Room A-214 for our research workshop.
Week 4: Feb. 12	History Topic:	<u>Civil Rights and Racial Justice</u>
	Paper Agenda:	<u>Finding and Analyzing Sources, Part II</u>
	Reading:	Chafe, <i>A History of Our Time</i> , Part 3: “Civil Rights and Racial Justice” Cronon, et. al., “Finding Documents”
	Assignment:	Weekly Report uploaded to Blackboard by Thursday at 9:00 am.
Week 5: Feb. 19	History Topic:	<u>Gender Politics and Sexual Revolutions</u>
	Paper Agenda:	<u>Interpreting Sources</u>
	Reading:	Chafe, <i>A History of Our Time</i> , Part 6: “Struggles over Gender and Sexual Liberation” Turabian, pp. 37-48 Cronon, et. al., “Taking Notes”

	Assignment:	Weekly Report uploaded to Blackboard by Thursday at 9:00 am.
	**NOTE:	Paper Proposal is due this week and should be uploaded to Blackboard by noon.
Week 6: Feb. 26	History Topic: Paper Agenda: Reading:	<u>The Counterculture</u> <u>Constructing an Argument</u> Chafe, <i>A History of Our Time</i> , Part 5: “Rebellion and the Counterculture” Turabian, pp. 49-62 Cronon, et. al., “Arguing and Telling Stories”
	Assignment:	Weekly Report uploaded to Blackboard by Thursday at 9:00 am.
Week 7: March 5	History Topic: Paper Agenda: Reading:	<u>The Vietnam War</u> <u>Refining Your Thesis</u> Chafe, <i>A History of Our Time</i> , Part 4: “The Vietnam War” Schrag, “How to Write a Thesis Statement” (available on Blackboard)
	Assignment:	Weekly Report including a draft of your introduction and proposed thesis statement should be uploaded to Blackboard by Thursday at 9:00 am.
Week 8: March 12	Spring Break: Assignment:	Enjoy! Work independently on your project.
Week 9: March 19	Paper Agenda: Reading:	Library of Congress Field Trip Cronon, “Positioning Yourself Relative to Others” “Writing an Annotated Bibliography” (available on Blackboard)
	Assignment:	Weekly Report including annotated bibliography uploaded to Blackboard by Thursday at 9:00 am.
Week 10: March 26	Paper Agenda: Reading:	Individual Conferences Turabian, pp. 63-72 Cronon, “Drafting, Revising, Editing”
	Assignment:	Weekly Report including final paper outline uploaded to Blackboard by Thursday at 9:00 am.

Week 11: April 2	Paper Agenda: Assignment:	**First Drafts Due** Upload copy of rough draft to Blackboard by Thursday at 9:00 am. Copies of drafts will be distributed to peer groups online.
Week 12: April 9	Paper Agenda: Reading: Assignment:	Peer Critiques Turabian, pp. 100-110 Cronon, "Drafting, Revising, Editing" Upload one copy of each of your peer critiques to Blackboard by Thursday at 9:00 am. Bring one hard copy to class to share with the authors of the papers you critiqued. Do NOT exchange critiques online to each other.
Week 13: April 16	Paper Agenda: Assignment:	Oral Presentations Weekly Report uploaded to Blackboard by Tuesday at 9:00 am.
Week 14: April 23	Paper Agenda: Assignment:	Oral Presentations Weekly Report uploaded to Blackboard by Tuesday at 9:00 am.
Week 15: April 30	Paper Agenda: Assignment:	Submit Final Draft Final Paper uploaded to Blackboard by 4:00 pm; NO late papers will be accepted for a grade.

III. The Research Paper:

A. Objective:

One of the major assignments for this course is a 10-12 page research paper on postwar America. The specific topic of the paper is your choice. You can focus on any aspect of postwar American history that interests you, but I would warn everyone to be as *narrow* as possible in your focus. For instance, writing a 10-12 page paper

on “Suburbanization in America” will only produce a paper full of broad generalizations. If, however, you are sincerely interested in the development of the suburb, there are many ways to narrow your paper into something manageable. You could research a particular development or a specific conflict (e.g. white resistance to minority homeowners in a particular neighborhood). There are endless possibilities, but you have to make a choice and keep it as reasonable as possible.

B. Research Proposal:

The first stage of this project is the research proposal. The proposal will allow me to assist you in designing a productive project. **The proposal should be uploaded to Blackboard by noon on Thursday, February 19.** Your proposal should address the following questions:

- 1) What is your topic and why did you choose it? What is your main research question? What is the chronological scope of your project? How do you plan to narrow yourself to keep the project manageable?
- 2) What argument will you make about your topic? What is the contribution you will make to the area of study you are researching? How, in other words, will your paper offer new historical insights?
- 2) How do you plan to research the topic? Are there enough primary and secondary sources available to you to finish the project? What archives or libraries do you need to consult? What is your general timetable for accomplishing these tasks?
- 3) What specific primary and secondary sources are available on your topic? In this part of the proposal, I would like to see **a preliminary bibliography** on your project that includes at least **five secondary sources** on your topic and at least **one set of primary sources** (e.g. an archive, manuscript collection, periodicals, oral histories).

The proposal should be approximately 3-typed, double-spaced pages, not including the bibliography.

C. Individual Research Phase

Beginning in week 7 of the semester through week 11, you will be responsible for researching and writing your first draft of your paper. In this phase of the class, you will be working on a variety of assignments that will help you produce the most complete first draft of your paper.

Please make note of the following assignments:

Week 7 (March 5):	Draft of your introduction to your paper including your proposed thesis due.
Week 8 (March 12):	Spring Break!
Week 9 (March 19):	Library of Congress Field Trip and Annotated Bibliography due.
Week 10: (March 26):	Individual Conferences and Final Paper Outline due.
Week 11 (April 2):	First Drafts Due.

D. First Drafts and Peer Review

To facilitate your best performance on your research project, you will write a first draft of your paper that will be critiqued by your peers. Your first draft will be **due on Blackboard by 9:00 am on Thursday, April 2**. You will upload your draft to Blackboard and I will distribute the drafts to small peer groups online via e-mail attachment. The following week, you will upload one copy of your critique to Blackboard and bring hard copies to share with your classmates. Please do not share peer critiques online. They should be saved for in-person discussion.

E. Oral Presentations:

At the end of the semester, we will devote the last three weeks of the class to oral presentations on research projects. Each student will give a more formal presentation (approximately 15-20 minutes) on his or her research project. These presentations will give students an opportunity to share their final papers and learn some of the techniques go into successful scholarly presentations.

F. Final Due Date:

The final draft of the research paper should be uploaded to **Blackboard by 4:00 pm on Thursday, April 30**. **No late papers will be accepted for a grade under any circumstances.**