

History 499.3: Senior Seminar in History  
*Late 20<sup>th</sup>-Century U.S. Women's History*  
Fall 2015, George Mason University

Professor Laura Moore

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Office Hours: Vary by week, but you will usually find me in my office before class

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History 499 is the capstone course for history majors. In this course, students build on their experience in History 300 and other advanced courses to write a full-length original research paper of around 6,000 words. In this particular section of History 499, we will focus on late 20<sup>th</sup> century U.S. history (approximately the 1960s-1980s) in the era of “second-wave feminism,” and paper topics will grow out of research related to women’s history. We will begin the course with readings and discussions about historical scholarship in general and the women’s movement specifically, and students will complete a series of research projects. By the fifth week of the semester, you will have developed a research question that will grow out of that “digging.” You will then spend the bulk of the semester on your own original research and writing, as well as on sharing findings and drafts with classmates.

In addition to its importance in the history major, History 499 officially fulfills several other aspects of a GMU undergraduate education. It is a Mason Core “synthesis” course, meaning it should “expand students’ ability to master new content, think critically, and develop life-long learning skills.” As a “writing intensive” course, students must write drafts and revisions based on the professor’s feedback. Finally, History 499 is “Research and Scholarship Intensive” providing students “the opportunity to actively participate in the process of scholarship” and to “create an original scholarly or creative project.”<sup>1</sup>

In the end, as the capstone to a history major’s liberal arts education, History 499 students gain experience with the methods, challenges, and collaboration required of advanced historical scholarship. In this class, YOU are the historian, YOU are the scholar.

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The course is organized around the four major elements that go into creating an original research project:

1. Reading scholarly works, **secondary sources** that relate to one’s research topic
2. Finding and analyzing **primary sources**
3. Organizing one’s findings and writing **drafts**
4. Getting **comments** and advice from colleagues

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<sup>1</sup> For information about these designations, see <http://masoncore.gmu.edu/general-education-at-mason-2/synthesis/>, <http://wac.gmu.edu/wi-courses/>, and <http://oscar.gmu.edu/students/Students-as-Scholars-Classes.cfm>

## HOW TO SUCCEED IN THIS COURSE:

**-Stay in touch with Professor Moore:** 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 the weekly journal and, most weeks, will catch up with you in class. In addition, you can always email me. Don't hide problems from me – I know this is a hard class, and I can help you to navigate it. But also please share exciting finds and insights!

**-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 advanced, 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 school work. 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 senior thesis paper. *In other words*, get the assignments (including all reading) done in the time you have to do them. Please don't make me give you a "zero" on anything.

**-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. We will not hold class every week, and often we will not use the full allotted time. When we are in class, we all need to be there, fully participating.

## TECHNOLOGY

I assume that all History 499 students have basic computer literacy and *daily* internet access, including on weekends.

I expect you to check your **GMU email** at least once every twenty-four hours. GMU's official policy is to use only Mason e-mail accounts to communicate with students, and you are required to use it for university communications, including this class.

Every week you will read and submit materials on our course page on **Blackboard**.

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/>. For installation advice go to <https://www.zotero.org/support/installation> .

I encourage you to bring a computer to class, but it should remain closed during class discussions except when I say otherwise. Cell phones, etc., should also be turned off. You will, of course, need a notebook and pen or pencil every day.

## READINGS

You can purchase the two required books at the campus bookstore or perhaps get better prices elsewhere.

Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8<sup>th</sup> edition (2013). You may use either the paperback or e-book (Kindle) version, as long as it's the correct edition. Bring your copy to every class meeting.

Nancy MacLean, *The American Women's Movement, 1945-2000: A Brief History with Documents*.

Two other main texts are online only:

William Cronon's *Learning Historical Research* at  
<http://www.williamcronon.net/researching/index.htm>

"Document Projects" in the *Women and Social Movements in the United States* database available through GMU's library:  
<http://asp6new.alexanderstreet.com.mutex.gmu.edu/was2/was2.index.map.aspx>.

Additional assigned reading will be available online or through the course Blackboard page.  
**Always bring to class copies of assigned readings and your notes on them.**

Finally, as part of your original research, you will find primary and secondary sources that you are, of course, required to read. You will find them in online databases, library shelves, archival collections and elsewhere, as we will practice in class. Always keep me up-to-date on what you're reading and bring notes or copies to class.

## HONOR CODE

I take my obligations under the University Honor Code seriously and expect you to do the same. All the work you do in this course is subject to the policy. 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. You have signed the Honor Code stating that you understand what plagiarism is. I also expect you to review the Writing Center's plagiarism handout available here:  
<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/writing-resources> and the Honor Code statement on plagiarism available here: <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code-2/>

If you are at all worried that you (or a classmate) may be in danger of an honor code violation, you should talk to me immediately. Any suspicions of any kind of cheating will be referred to the Office of Academic Integrity.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER/CAMPUS CLOSINGS

If campus closes because of bad weather (or any other reason), you are still responsible for completing all work as scheduled, and we will be in touch via email and Blackboard – so, you need to make sure you can contact me. If the University is open, no matter what the weather is like, we will be having class as scheduled and all of the rules regarding attendance and punctuality apply.

## RESOURCES

I encourage you to utilize the many support services available to GMU students. For example, **Learning Services** at CAPS (Counseling and Psychological Services) offers workshops in academic skills, some of which are particularly well-suited to history majors:  
<http://caps.gmu.edu/learning-services/>.

I also expect History 499 students to make use of the **Writing Center**. You can make an appointment for a writing tutor session (which I recommend you do at least once this semester) at <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>.

If you are a student with a disability who needs academic accommodations, please see me privately and contact the **Office of Disability Resources** at (703) 993-2474 (<http://ods.gmu.edu/>). All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Finally, please note the following key dates:

Last Day to Add: September 8, 2015

Last Day to Drop: October 2, 2015

Selective Withdrawal Period: October 5 – October 30

## ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Participation: 10% of course grade

Journal: 10%

Research Digs: 10%

Quizzes: 5%

Writing Assignments (drafts and comments): 15%

Paper Proposal: 10%

Senior Thesis: 40%

**Participation:** This part of the grade credits you for coming to class well-prepared and for participating actively in discussions. More generally, it reflects my expectation that every student will be a “good citizen,” that is, treat the course and fellow students with attention, respect, responsibility and professionalism.

Being *well prepared* means, at a minimum, that you have reviewed the syllabus as well as notes and handouts from the previous class, that you have the assigned readings with you along with ideas for discussing them, and, of course, that you know what’s due that day. Attendance is also a factor – after all, you cannot participate if you’re not there.

If you do come to every class meeting, on time and prepared, offer something substantial to every discussion, and listen respectfully and take notes, then you will earn at least a “B” for your participation grade, and participation will not lower your course grade. If, however, you miss more than one class meeting (or arrive late), assume you will not earn better than a “C” for participation, and if you miss more than four meetings, you will likely NOT PASS THE COURSE.

**Journal:** Throughout the 14 weeks of semester, you will use Blackboard to keep a weekly journal on the reading, research, and writing that you’re doing for this course. I will check the journals every Monday at 1:00pm, so you need to post at least one entry every week by that time. If you miss more than one journal entry, you can earn at best a “C” for the journal grade, missing more than four earns an “F” on the journal, and missing more than six means you FAIL THE COURSE.

To get credit, journal entries must detail how you spent approximately ten hours that week on the class, and they should reflect on what you learned doing that week’s reading, research, and writing. It will take at least 300 words every week to log this work in your journal, usually more.

When reading is assigned, it must also be clear from the journal entry that you have done it ALL and have given it some serious thought. You might respond in your journal to reading questions I provide. At least, let me know, what especially interested or confused you about the assigned readings, what you think is especially important, what questions you have, and what you might like to talk about in class.

In addition, use the journal to brainstorm and to communicate with me about how your research and writing go, to reflect on the process by which you’re conducting your research, where you run into roadblocks, where the research leads in different directions than you expected, which resources are especially helpful, problems or questions you’re wrestling with, ideas for writing paragraphs or sections of your paper, and so on.

**Research Digs:** During the first five weeks of the semester, you will complete a series of research assignments using different methods to find a variety of sources. They will require you to go to the library, to make printouts and photocopies, to include citations, to take notes, and to informally address questions I give you about the sources and research tactics. The research question and topic for your senior thesis will emerge out of these “digs.”

I will provide detailed instructions on these assignments. If you turn the digs in on time, following instructions exactly with nothing missing, you will earn an “A” for this part of the course grade. Just one zero, however, that is missing just one dig, means FAILING THE COURSE. I *may* accept one research dig a little late, with a grade reduction, but *only* if you contact me before it’s due to let me know you’ve run into difficulty and to make arrangements to turn it in.

**Quizzes:** I will occasionally give you an in-class or take-home quiz that will require you to refer to your notes on class discussions and readings. Sometimes these will be “pop” quizzes, given without warning. They will vary in length and style. They will always be open-note, because a main point of the quizzes is to encourage you to practice note-taking skills. As long as you keep up with all class assignments and meetings and take good notes, then, you will be prepared for quizzes. Please note that quizzes cannot be made up or rescheduled under any circumstances.

**Writing Assignments:** The key to writing well is writing steadily and learning how to revise drafts effectively. You will start writing early and spend much of this semester helping each other. During the sixth week of class, I will divide you into writing groups. For the rest of the semester, you will write comments on drafts written by your group members.

I will provide detailed instructions for each writing assignment, including questions you must address for the comments. To get credit, a draft must follow instructions carefully and demonstrate care and serious thought as well as attention to previous comments. In the comments, I’ll be looking for thoughtful insights and useful, concrete advice, again *following instructions* and addressing all of the questions seriously.

**DRAFTS:** You must turn in each of these assignments or YOU WILL NOT PASS THE COURSE. They must also be on time. If you need a little extra time, you must contact both me and your group members before the deadline to obtain permission – which I may not grant.

Research Question: Due

First Draft:

Second Draft:

**COMMENTS:** Missing a set of comments will LOWER YOUR COURSE GRADE by one full letter grade. As with the drafts, you must obtain permission from me and your group members, before the deadline, if you want some extra time.

Comments on Paper Proposals: Due

Comments on First Drafts:

Comments on Second Drafts:

**Paper Proposal:** A graded assignment, the proposal will lay out your research question, discuss relevant secondary sources, explain your primary source research strategy, and include an annotated bibliography. I will provide detailed guidance on this assignment. The proposal is **REQUIRED TO PASS THE COURSE**.

**Senior Thesis:** This paper is the end result of the semester's work and the capstone of your career as a history major. It will be an original research paper of approximately 6,000 words (around 20 pages), plus the bibliographies. As with any history paper, this one will be evaluated on how clear, convincing, logical, original, and insightful the argument is and how well it uses evidence from primary sources. It must show solid understanding of relevant scholarly literature, while being grounded in primary source research (at least half of its footnotes should be to primary sources).

In format, the paper must follow standard scholarly practice (which we will discuss in class), relying on Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*. In addition to footnotes, the paper must also include an annotated bibliography of primary sources and a separate bibliography of secondary sources, which should include every source you used during your research, including websites, whether or not you refer directly to them in the paper. Obviously, you must turn in the senior thesis to pass the course.

In addition to the written version of the paper, you will do an **ORAL PRESENTATION** of your research at the end of the semester. This presentation constitutes 5% of the senior thesis grade. I will provide instructions and advice. The oral presentation is required in order to **PASS THE COURSE**, which means you must attend class both those days.

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I look forward to exploring history with you and to learning from your research!

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After re-reading the entire syllabus, please sign the following statement and show it to me in class on September 14:

*I have read the entire syllabus for Fall 2015 Hist 499.3. I have noted all due-dates. I understand that missing assignments, including readings and participation, means failing the course or a substantially lowered course grade. I understand that if I have problems completing an assignment on time, I should contact Professor Moore and that she may or may not grant extra time. I have asked Professor Moore any questions I have about the syllabus, and I will ask her when I realize I need any further clarification. I will also make sure I receive and read all forthcoming instructions and handouts.*

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: I reserve the right to make changes to the course and to the assignment schedule in ways that I deem in the best interests of the class. It is **your responsibility** to use the syllabus, to keep track of any changes, and to make sure you have received all handouts and other instructions. The key to success is to be proactive!

August 31 Introductions and review

September 7 Labor Day – no class meeting – Post first journal entry to Blackboard  
Read: American Historical Association’s “Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct” sections 1-4 (only) at <http://www.historians.org/pubs/free/ProfessionalStandards.cfm>  
“Learning Historical Research: Introduction” at <http://www.williamcronon.net/researching/index.htm>  
Turabian, “A Note to Students,” “Preface,” “Overview of Part I” and Chap 1  
MacLean, “Foreword,” p. v  
“Chicago-Style Citation Quick Guide” at [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)

Fri, Sept 11 Post to Blackboard: Digs 1 & 2

September 14 Meet at Special Collections & Archives, Room C-204, Fenwick Library  
Turn in: Review Quiz and Digs 3 & 4  
Read: “Learning Historical Research: On the Search” at <http://www.williamcronon.net/researching/searching.htm>  
Turabian, chapters 2-3  
“Learning Historical Research: Prowling the Periodicals” at <http://www.williamcronon.net/researching/periodicals.htm>  
“Learning Historical Research: Manuscripts and Archives” at <http://www.williamcronon.net/researching/manuscripts.htm>  
SC&A Finding Aids, to be assigned in previous class, links at <http://sca.gmu.edu/collections-alpha.php>  
MacLean, Preface, pp 1-14 and Document # 40, pp. 169-174  
“Document Projects” LIST at the *Women and Social Movements* database

September 21 Turn in: Secondary Source Analysis Quiz and Digs 5 & 6  
Read: Turabian, chapter 4  
“Learning Historical Research: Pleasures of Note-Taking” at <http://www.williamcronon.net/researching/notetaking.htm>  
MacLean, pp. 14-33, and pp. 54-146  
GMU’s Best Senior Seminar Paper prize winner  
Murray, “How Did Suburban Development and Domesticity Shape Women’s Activism in Queens, New York, 1945-1968” and  
Sklar, “How and Why Did Women in SNCC Author a Pathbreaking Feminist Manifesto, 1964-1965”  
both in *Women and Social Movements* database



- Sun, Sept 27      Post to Blackboard: **Research Question**
- September 28      Turn in: Dig 7  
 Read: MacLean, pp 33-43 and documents # 24 and pp. 146-169  
 Turabian, chapters 15, 16, and skim chapter 17  
 “Learning Historical Research: Positioning Your Argument” at  
<http://www.williamcronon.net/researching/positioning.htm>  
 One of the Document Projects in the *Women and Social Movements*  
 database, to be assigned  
 Zotero “QuickStart Guide,” and “Screencast Tutorials” at  
<http://www.zotero.org/support/>  
 Review: “Chicago-Style Citation Quick Guide” at  
[http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)
- October 5      Turn in: PAPER PROPOSAL
- Fri, Oct 9      Post to Blackboard: **Comments** on your group members’ Proposals
- Tues October 13      (Monday classes meet Tuesday for Columbus Day)  
 Read: Comments on all your group members’ Proposals  
 Turabian, chapters 5, 6, 7 and skim chapter 25  
 “Learning Historical Research: Arguments and Narrative” at  
<http://www.williamcronon.net/researching/arguing.htm>  
 “Learning Historical Research: Drafting, Revising, Editing” at  
<http://www.williamcronon.net/researching/writing.htm>
- Oct 19      Come to class prepared to discuss progress on your first draft
- Wed, Oct 21      Post to Blackboard: **First Draft**
- Sun, Oct 25      Post to Blackboard: **Comments** on group members’ first drafts
- October 26      Read: Comments on your group members’ drafts  
 Turabian, chapters 9, 10, 11, 12  
 Skim: Turabian, Appendix (pages 371-408) noting especially Figures A.1, A.9,  
 A.10, A.12, A.14, and A.15
- November 2      Individual Meetings – We will not gather together in class

- Nov 9            Come to class prepared to discuss revisions
- Nov 16            Turn in: **Second Draft**
- Sun, Nov 22        Post to Blackboard: **Comments** on your group members' Second Drafts
- November 23        Read: Comments on your group members' drafts  
                          Turabian, chapters 13 and 14  
                          Stearns, "Why Study History" at <http://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/archives/why-study-history-%281998%29>  
                          "History Discipline Core: American Historical Association Tuning Project" at <http://www.historians.org/teaching-and-learning/current-projects/tuning/history-discipline-core>
- November 30        ORAL PRESENTATIONS
- December 7         ORAL PRESENTATIONS, cont.  
                          Turn in: SENIOR THESIS
- December 14        Keep the scheduled final exam period available