



HIST 615
Fall 2011
203 Robinson B
W 7:20 10:00 PM
Prof. Paula Petrik
<http://www.archiva.net>

Office: 335 Robinson B
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Office Hours: 1:00 2:30 MW
and by appointment
ppetrik@gmu.edu

SCHEDULE

Wednesday,
August 31

Housekeeping Details and Introduction

Friday,
September 2

BLOG URL DUE

Tuesday,
September 6

LAST DAY TO ADD CLASSES
LAST DAY TO DROP WITH NO TUITION PENALTY

Wednesday,
September 7

Reading:
Josephine Tey, *Daughter of Time*
Census Extracts (primary document)
Problem #1: The Census

Wednesday,
September 14

Reading:
Suzanne Lebsock, *Free Women of Petersburg*
Louisa Cousselle Probate & Will (primary document)
Problem #2: Probates & Wills

Wednesday,
September 21

Reading:

Patricia Cline Cohen, *Who Killed Helen Jewett*
In re: Mollie Graham (primary document)

Problem #3: Coroner's Inquests

Wednesday,
September 28

Reading:

Michael Greenberg, *Governing the Hearth*
Hershfield v. Hershfield (primary document)

Problem #4: Civil Suits

Friday,
September 30

LAST DAY TO DROP CLASSES

Wednesday,
October 5

Reading:

Stephen Lubet, *Murder in Tombstone*
Territory v. Rehberg (primary document)

Problem #5: Criminal Suits

Wednesday,
October 12

NO CLASS-(CONFERENCE)

Wednesday,
October 19

Reading:

Errol Morris, *Believing Is Seeing*
George Roeder Jr., *The Censored War*
Selected Daguerreotypes (primary document)

Problem #6: Images: Photographs

Wednesday,
October 26

Reading:

1. Susan Schulten, "The Cartography of Slavery and the Authority of Statistics," *Civil War History*, Vol. 56, No. 1 (2010): 5-32 (online)
2. Susan Schulten, "Emma Willard and the Graphic Foundations of American History," *Journal of Historical Geography*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (2007): 542-564 (online)
3. Penny L. Richards, "Could I but Mark Out My Own Map of Life": Educated Women Embracing Cartography in the Nineteenth-Century American South," *Cartographica*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (2004) 1-17 (online)

Barrow's Plantation (primary document)

Problem #7: Maps

Wednesday,
November 2

Reading:

Kenneth Ames, *Death In The Dining Room*

John Lewis Krimmel, *The Quilting Frolic* (primary document)

Problem #8: Material Culture

Wednesday,
November 9

Reading:

Richard Cullen Rath, *How Early America Sounded*

TBA (primary document)

Problem #9: Sound

Wednesday,
November 16

Reading:

Richard White, *Railroaded*

Problem #10: Big Ideas

Wednesday,
November 23

NO CLASS (THANKSGIVING)

Wednesday,
November 30

Reading:

Simon Schama, *Dead Certainties*

Problem #10: Prose

Wednesday,
December 7

PRESENTATIONS

Wednesday,
December 15

FINAL PROJECT DUE
SELF-EVALUATION DUE

COURSE

This course is designed as an introduction to the practice and writing of history via examination of primary source documents that contain a “mystery.” The course involves learning how to ask questions and knowing by serendipity or logic the right question. It is also about knowing what is an irrelevant detail – a red herring – and what small detail will carry an inquiry to its main goal. It is about learning to interrogate (and to distrust) evidence and mastering the art of inference. The course is about piecing together the bits and pieces of evidence in an engaging narrative and convincing analysis. And last but not least, the course is about learning how to present findings to an audience, whether large and essentially anonymous. Doing history is much like solving a problem in any other discipline, and it’s a great deal like what a professional does every day. Note: You will probably not improve your Jeopardy won/loss record.

BOOKS

The following book is required for the course. It is available in the Campus Bookstore.

Josephine Tey,
Daughter of Time
Suzanne Lebsock,
The Free Women of Petersburg
Patricia Cline Cohen,
The Murder of Helen Jewett
Michael Grossberg,
Governing the Hearth
Errol Morris,
Believing Is Seeing: Observations on the Mysteries of Photography
Simon Schama,
Dead Certainties
Steven Lubet,
Murder in Tombstone
George Roeder Jr.,
The Censored War
Kenneth Ames,
Death In The Dining Room
Richard Cullen Rath,
How Early America Sounded
Richard White,
Railroaded: The Transcontinentals and the Making of Modern America

BLOG

Blogs have become an important element on the web and something that you might have already done in another course. Rather than have a group blog or design a blog from the ground up, you’ll be doing something a bit different. You can obtain a Plus-level subscription to [Typepad](#), a blog. The cost is \$8.95 per month or roughly \$27.00 for the semester (the cost of a modest textbook). The best thing to do is sign up for a free trial; this will furnish you with a two week's free service. At the end of the semester,

you can cancel your subscription. Or, you may discover that you like blogging so much that you retain your subscription. The advantages of TypePad are ease of use and the option to customize your design. No muss, no fuss. Alternatively, you can use [WordPress](#) software. Wordpress is free, and several services offer automatic installation. It also is easy to use and possesses a variety of themes. WordPress recommends several [hosting partners on its site](#) with various pricing options. There are other options, but whatever option you choose, it must have no advertisements and possess a spam filter. For these reasons, please do not choose Blogspot or any other free service that depends on advertising.

POLICIES

I am explaining and stating these policies now, in the clearest possible terms, so there can be no dispute over what I expect. If you have questions about my expectations, please raise them. But whenever you ask me to modify my expectations because you failed to plan and use your time efficiently, you put me as well as the rest of the class in the ethically difficult position of applying different standards to different people. I ask that you accept responsibility for your actions rather than put us all in an uncomfortable position.

Attendance

At this point in your intellectual development, you should have some sense of personal responsibility. Class attendance, therefore, will be up to you. It will be very difficult, however, to pass the course without attending class because the assignments are the focus of many of the class discussions. Attendance is especially important when a course meets once a week.

Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Email

Please check your Carroll mailbox periodically or arrange for your Carroll mailbox material to be forwarded to your preferred email address. In addition, be sure that your mailbox has not exceeded its capacity so that your mail bounces back to me. If I send out announcements, I use the Carroll mailing class mailing lists per university regulations. If you need to email me, please put HI 389 in the subject line and sign your full name. Putting something like “Hi” or “Have a question” is a common “spam” technique, and my emailer is trained to junk these messages. Using HI 389 in the subject line will help my spam detector route you to the proper folder, guarantee that I read your email, and ensure that I know who you are. Do not, however, expect an immediate response.

A Note on Computer Use

Computers are a great boon to the student writer. But, as with any technology, you must take steps to minimize the problems that computers inevitably cause. Do not expect to get through the semester without having at least one computer crisis. Prepare for this well in advance. Back up your work constantly and have alternative plans for obtaining computer use, if your primary options fail you. We will never accept computer problems as excuses for missed assignments. You must also keep backup copies of submitted assignments – either in electronic form or hard copy.

Similarly, computers and email permit around-the-clock communication. If you have questions or need to apprise the instructor of an emergency situation, contact me via email. Should you need to discuss an issue with the instructor, contact me via email or by phone. Many of your questions can be answered by consulting the website at:

<http://www.archiva.net>

The site contains a duplicate of the syllabus, including the schedule and writing assignments. Since the course makes use of the Internet, you might find it more convenient to use the Web version of the syllabus and its links.

Grades

Grades, including +s and -s, will be assigned in the following manner. REMEMBER THEY REPRESENT AN EVALUATION, NOT A REWARD. To rephrase Solomon, Smith-Barney, the (now defunct) investment folk, we do grades the old-fashioned way – earn them.

- A Outstanding work, complete mastery of the material presented, combined with some originality.
- B A solid command of the material with some gaps or mistakes in a basically sound essay or discussion.
- C Some knowledge of the material; mistakes and confusion are acceptable if mixed with some understanding. Not a reward for attendance or effort.
- D An incomplete and minimal knowledge of the material, major confusions and errors.
- F A failure to present the material in a reasonably accurate and comprehensible manner.
- I There are no “incompletes” given in this course except in cases of bona fide and documented instances in accordance with the regulations of the university.
- P For a “pass” a “C” average is required.

The nature of the course suggests that breaches of academic integrity will be difficult to accomplish. If, however, a class member engages in plagiarism or other forms of cheating, he or she will receive a zero for that assignment and be reported to the Honor Board for further academic action.

If you receive a grade or criticism that seems unfair or if you desire further explanation, see me. If you come to argue for a better grade, come prepared to present your case in the most coherent and organized manner possible.

REQUIREMENTS

The requirements for the course are as follows: (1) Blog (40%); (2) class participation (10%); (3) a final essay (10-15 pages, typed, double-spaced) based on a document similar to one studied in the course (40%); (4) an oral *pecha kucha* presentation (10%); (5) self-evaluation (1 page, typed, single-spaced) assessing your performance in the course (not graded but required).

SELF-EVALUATION GUIDELINES

Oftentimes, a letter grade does not reflect the effort that students put into a course, the amount a student has learned, or the skills that a student has acquired. A self-evaluation is one way of remedying this deficiency by illustrating and documenting your participation in the course from your perspective. This is the time to argue for yourself and put your best foot forward. In fact, it is in your interest to do the best job that you can on this assignment. The self-evaluation should be a one-page, typed single-spaced paper in which you address the following topics:

- I. Evaluation of your participation in the class
 - A. Attendance
 - B. Time devoted to the materials
 - 1. reading
 - 2. primary document
 - 3. blog
 - 3. final essay
 - C. Class participation
 - 1. In-class discussions
 - D. The ways in which you think you improved or not
 - E. The problems you encountered in your effort to complete the class assignments to your satisfaction.
 - F. What you would have done differently
 - G. Some of the skills or knowledge that you acquired
- II. A general assessment of how you will apply what you have gained (or not) from the class in the future
- III. Other activities of a historical nature that you participated in