

Fall 2018
History 797: Research Seminar in History
War & Society
Tuesdays 7:20-10 PM, Innovation 323

Dr. Lair
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Office Hours
Tuesdays 5:30-6:30,
after class & by appt.



IMPORTANT DATES

Aug. 28:	First Day of This Class	Sept. 11-30:	Student Self-Withdrawal Period (100% tuition penalty, W on transcript)
Sept. 4:	Last Day to Add		
Sept. 10:	Last Day to Drop (no tuition penalty)	Dec. 4:	Last Day of This Class

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is the required research seminar for graduate students. The goals of the course are to produce an article-length research paper that makes an original contribution to knowledge; to present research to the class; and to assist other students in their work. Students are bounded by the topic “war and society,” but may pursue research in any time period of human history and in any geographic location on planet Earth. However, students should bear in mind limitations on the availability of sources and the instructor’s limitations (I am a 20th century US historian.)

Skills developed in the course:

- Note-taking
- Identifying and finding sources
- Analyzing sources
- Interpreting and contextualizing historical documents
- Framing questions
- Critical thinking
- Historical writing and citation
- Proof-reading and self-editing
- Editing others’ work
- Providing constructive feedback to others
- Preparing and delivering an oral presentation

LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course has one central requirement: a research paper of 8,000-10,000 words (plus citation) based on original research in primary sources on a topic of the student’s choosing that makes an original contribution to knowledge. There are a number of preliminary requirements along the way, but the writing of the final essay is the point of the course. It is through this essay that you will be able demonstrate the ability to:

1. Select a research topic.
2. Frame a research question.
3. Conduct research in relevant primary & secondary sources that span a variety of disciplines.
4. Evaluate the quality, credibility, and limitations of the arguments presented by scholars working on similar topics.
5. Situate your findings within the scholarly literature of your topic.
6. Craft a historical argument that is appropriately supported by the evidence you compile through your research.
7. Connect issues in your topic to larger intellectual or social concerns; that is, to appreciate and convey the broadest significance of your research.
8. Effectively communicate your research findings orally and in writing.

COURSE READINGS

Students are required to obtain or maintain access to a style manual. Standard, for historians, is Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. The University Library subscribes to the complete Chicago Manual of Style online, but it's nice to have a desk copy for quick reference.

We may also read some articles that will be provided on Blackboard.

COURSE ASSESSMENT

Assessment will be based on the following assignments. Students must complete every assignment, including the oral presentation, in order to pass the course.

- Book review
- Research paper proposal
- Annotated bibliography
- Historiographic essay
- Outline of research paper
- Rough draft of research paper Peer review assignment
- Conference-style presentation of research
- Final draft of research paper
- Class preparation & participation

How to Think about Grades: Grades represent an assessment of your work, not an assessment of you as a person, and they are not a reward or a sanction. Your focus this semester should be on improving your process and your results, not on achieving a particular grade. Everything you do as a graduate student deserves your best.

How to Think About Grades as a Graduate Student: Graduate school grades are different than undergraduate, because everyone is expected to be excellent. Students who maintain less than a 3.0 are removed from their programs, and in programs with funding, students lose their funding with less than a 3.5. Therefore, receiving a grade of B or B- in graduate school suggests that there is something wrong in your process that deserves your attention. Frequent B-grades, of any type, generally preclude admission to a doctoral program.

COURSE POLICIES

Please read these policies and make sure you understand them. If you have questions, please ask. You are expected to know these policies and to plan your work schedule, transportation, etc. accordingly.

Academic Integrity

Mason students are bound by an Honor Code (<http://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/full-honor-code-document/>), which states, “Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.” The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously, and violations are treated gravely. In this course, academic integrity means that:

- When you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task.
- When you rely on someone else’s work in any aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form.
- All aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions.
- You will tell the truth about the status of your work.

For a discussion of plagiarism, go here: <http://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/what-is-plagiarism/>

If you have questions, please ask for guidance and clarification. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. I will report students suspected of dishonesty to the University’s Honor Board for disciplinary action, including failure of the course and even expulsion.

Attendance, Punctuality, and Coming to Class Sick

Being in class is not the same as not being in class. Depending on the night you missed, you may be asked to do some additional work to make up for not attending.

If you need to arrive late or leave early, please sit near the door to minimize the disruption. Please do not come to class if you have a serious illness, especially a fever or an uncontrolled cough.

Communication & Office Hours

I encourage you to meet with me to discuss any facet of the course. Quick questions can be addressed before/after class or in email. More substantive conversations are best reserved for a meeting. Please email me if you would like to set something up. **I will only be using GMU email addresses to communicate with students. Please write to me from your GMU account, and check your GMU account regularly or forward your email.**

Decorum

Students are expected to be physically and intellectually present in class, to behave in a professional way, and to be respectful of others. Please refrain from eating, sleeping, talking when others have the floor, passing notes, multitasking, or anything else that demeans our class. Please silence your phones and put them away before class. If you get sleepy, please excuse yourself and go for a walk, drink water, or stand at your seat or at the back.

Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability and need academic accommodations, please see me privately and contact the Office of Disability Services. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please talk to me as soon as possible (though you can wait until office hours, in the interest of privacy). <http://ods.gmu.edu>

Diversity

George Mason University strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study and personal growth. Diversity is broadly defined to include such characteristics as, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, disability, and sexual orientation. Diversity also entails different viewpoints, philosophies, and perspectives. Attention to these aspects of diversity will help promote a culture of inclusion and belonging, and an environment where diverse opinions, backgrounds and practices have the opportunity to be voiced, heard and respected. **If you feel uncomfortable or unwelcome in class for any reason, please come and talk to me.**

Inclement Weather

On bad-weather days, consult the University's homepage for cancellation information. If the University is open, we will be having class. The weather where you live is not the operative variable; it is the weather at Mason.

IT Policy

Laptops: I want my students to be intellectually present in class, and it is my responsibility to forge a productive classroom culture that encourages best-practices for learning. Studies have shown that students retain more information when they take notes by hand. Further, laptops with Internet connections provide intense temptation to multitask, dividing the user's attention. The screens' contents are also distracting to other students, and the glazed look of disengaged students staring at said screens is distracting to me. If you have to use a laptop to take notes, you should be prepared to send me your notes on a moment's notice via Mason's wireless. If you plan to multitask during class, you should stay home. Please join me in creating a space for learning and discussion, in which we are all focused on our work, our own learning and improvement, and each other.

Cell Phones: Please silence your phone prior to class and put it *away*. If you have some kind of emergent situation that requires monitoring your notifications, you can notify *me* prior to class. Otherwise, if you insist on constantly looking at your phone, I will stop liking you immediately.

Late Assignments

Writing assignments will be accepted late, but a grade penalty may attach.

Submitting Your Work

Some work will be submitted in hard copy, and some will be submitted in soft copy via Blackboard. For the latter, submit your work using Microsoft Word, not as a pdf.

USEFUL CAMPUS RESOURCES

Blackboard: <https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu/>

Citing Sources in Chicago Style: <http://vle.credoreference.com/george-mason/citing-sources-chicago>

Counseling and Psychological Services (for free counseling): SUB I Room 3129, 703-993-2380, <http://caps.gmu.edu>

Financial Literacy (assistance understanding your finances and financial aid): <https://www2.gmu.edu/admissions-aid/financial-aid/financial-literacy>

Graduate Student Life: <http://gradlife.gmu.edu/>

Human Subjects Ethics Training: <http://oria.gmu.edu/research-with-humans-or-animals/institutional-review-board/human-subjects-training/>

Learning Services (for free coaching & academic skills workshops): <https://learningservices.gmu.edu/>

Library Info Guides: <http://infoguides.gmu.edu/>

Mason Alerts: Sign up at <https://ready.gmu.edu/masonalert/> for alerts related to campus emergencies and closings.

The Office of Academic Integrity: <https://oai.gmu.edu/>

Office of Disability Services: <http://ods.gmu.edu>

Patriot Pantry (for free food assistance): <https://ssac.gmu.edu/patriot-pantry/> or email pantry@gmu.edu to make an appointment to use the pantry.

Patriot Web (to register for courses or view your transcript & degree evaluation): <https://patriotweb.gmu.edu/>

Stay Mason Student Support Fund (for students in acute financial distress who are at risk of dropping out): <https://ulife.gmu.edu/forms/stay-mason-student-support-fund-application/>

Student Support & Advocacy Center (for health, well-being, and support): SUB I Suite 3200, 703-993-3686, <https://ssac.gmu.edu/>

University Policies: The University Catalog, <http://catalog.gmu.edu> , is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in university academic affairs. Other relevant policies are available at <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/> and <http://chssundergrad.gmu.edu/>. All members of the university community are responsible for knowing and following established policies.

Writing Center, Robinson A114, 703-993-1200, <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>

CLASS SCHEDULE

The following schedule is subject to change. The shaded areas indicate nights when we do not have class formally, though you may have to meet with me individually. Readings may be added to any week. Students should be prepared to provide updates about their work on every night of class, even if nothing is due.

Wk	Date	Topic	Reading	Deliverable(s)
1.	Aug. 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions & Expectations • How To: Framing Research Topics 	The course syllabus.	Any questions you might have!
2.	Sept. 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History, Historiography, & Memory • How To: Finding & Reading Sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "How to Read a History Book" • "How to Build a Bibliography for a Literature Review" • A scholarly book or article related to your interests that you wish you had written. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A short (750-1000 words) review of the source you found. • Bring the book/article in hard copy to class.
Last Day to Add				
Last Day to Drop (no tuition liability)				
3.	Sept. 10			
	Sept. 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •How To: The Library (Meet in Fenwick 3001.) •How To: Research Proposals & Annotated Bibliographies 		1-para. on a project idea, in hard copy in class and emailed to George at goberle@gmu.edu
4.	Sept. 18	No Class: Research Night!	Email me an update or meet with me in person.	
5.	Sept. 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Discuss research proposals. •How To: Historiographic Essays 		Research proposal with annotated bibliography.
Last Day of Student Self-Withdrawal (100% tuition liability, W on transcript)				
6.	Sept. 30			
	Oct. 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Project updates. •How To: Analyzing & Contextualizing Primary Sources •How To: Outlines 		Come prepared to talk about your projects.
7.	Oct. 9	Fall Break: No Tuesday Classes	Historiographic essays due by Friday, Oct. 12 at 10 PM.	
8.	Oct. 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss outlines. • How To: Rough Drafts 		Paper Outline
No Class: Mandatory meetings with Dr. Lair!				
9.	Oct. 23			
10.	Oct. 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •How To: Effective Peer review. •How To: Revising a Draft 		N/A (keep working on your draft)
11.	Nov. 6	No Class: Writing Night	Rough drafts due by Friday, Nov. 9 at 10 PM.	
12.	Nov. 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •How To: Introductions & Conclusions •How To: Giving a Conference-Style Presentation. 		Provide a copy of your latest draft to your peer partner.
13.	Nov. 20	No Class: Writing Night	Peer's rough draft.	Provide peer feedback.
14.	Nov. 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Panel Presentations I •Workshop Introductions 	N/A	Bring the intro to your paper.
15.	Dec. 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Panel Presentations II •Workshop Conclusions 	N/A	Bring the conclusion to your paper.
16.	Dec. 11	Due: Final drafts by 11:59 PM!		

