DOCTORAL RESEARCH SEMINAR IN HISTORY

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Office hours: Mondays, 10:00 a.m.-noon and by appointment (zoom appointments available)

Date:           Topic/Assignment:

Jan. 26         Conceptualizing Your Research Project

Reading Assignment: David L. Ransel "The Ability to
Recognize a Good Source," AHA Perspectives (Oct. 2010); Sarah Maza, Ch. 4, "How is
History Produced?" in Thinking About History (Chicago, 201), pp. 118-156
(BLACKBOARD)

Writing Assignment: Make sure that you have submitted a
short (one paragraph) statement of your research project/questions. Make certain that
your Advisor has notified me, approving the topic. Also, be prepared to make a brief oral
statement about your project to the class.

Feb. 2         Historical Sources and Resource (Bring your laptops.)

Listening: Listen to Ben Franklin's World Podcast #092,
Sharon Block, "How to Research History Online" (approx. one hour) at

Reading Assignment: Chris D. Cantwell, "From Index Cards
to Text Files: Digital Workflows for Today's Historian," The American Historian (Nov.
2015), 16-19, available on BLACKBOARD or online at http://oah.org.

Feb. 9         Answering the “So What?” Question

Reading and Writing Assignment: Locate a historiographical
ey essay related to your topic. It must be from a scholarly journal or volume of academic
ey essays, published within the last quarter century or so. Because of the specificity of
individual topics, it may not be possible to find an essay that focuses precisely on your
topic. Nonetheless, you should find an article that is related in some general way to your
interests, subject, or approach. Write a three-page essay that highlights important
developments in the field and explains the relevance of the recent historiography to your
conceptualization of the topic.
Feb. 16  Anatomy of a Journal Article
Reading Assignment: Christopher Tomlins, “Your Name in This Space,” AHA Perspectives (May 2002) and Peter Coclanis, "Publishing in Journals in the 21st Century," AHA Perspectives (April 2011), available on BLACKBOARD or online at http://theaha.org

Writing Assignment: Analyze the structure of: Michael Kwass, "Big Hair: A Wig History of Consumption in Eighteenth-Century France," American Historical Review, (June 2006), 631-59 (available through JSTOR). Think about the historical article as a distinctive genre of writing, possessing a recognizable structure and particular scholarly conventions. Print out the article. In the margins of the article, identify the distinctive parts of the article (such as introduction, historiography, theoretical framework, discussion of sources, body of the essay, conclusion, addressing the so-what question). Also note the different kinds of evidence the author uses; how the author qualifies or modulates his claims; and how the author makes transitions from one part of the essay to the next. Bring the essay to class for discussion. Be prepared to turn in your annotated copy of the essay.

Feb. 23  Writing Strategies

Writing Assignment: Turn in a preliminary bibliography that lists the relevant primary sources, secondary source books, and journal articles pertaining to your project. Make sure the bibliography is presented in the correct Chicago Manual of Style format.

March 2  INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS

March 9  Practicalities of the Profession

March 23  Oral Reports
Writing Assignment: Turn in a revised topic statement and process paper (one-to-two pages). Discuss your research process to date. Describe how your topic has evolved over time, your major research questions, and the major genres of primary sources that you are using. Discuss where you are in the research process: what you have accomplished thus far and what you need to do before beginning to write your essay. Be prepared to provide a brief, informal (no more than 5 minutes) oral summary of your paper.
March 30  Conventions of Peer Review  

*Reading Assignment:* Guide for Reviewers, sample review  

(BLACKBOARD)

Writing Assignment: Turn in a draft Introduction, 3-5 pages in length. The Introduction usually includes a discussion of the historical background or context, an analysis of the relevant historiography, a discussion of your primary sources base and/or the paper’s theoretical framework.

April 6  Individual Meetings--Bring a brief preliminary outline of your paper to the meeting, along with your thesis statement.

April 13  Independent Research/Writing (optional individual meetings)

April 20  PAPERS DUE BY 5:00 P.M.  
Please send an email copy of your paper to your reviewer and to me. Email a short abstract of your paper to all class members.

April 27  Discussion and Critique  

*Reading and Writing Assignment:* Carefully read the paper assigned to you. Prepare a 1-to-2 page critique, keeping in mind the conventions of scholarly peer review. Bring two hard copies to class, one for the author and one for me. Prepare a short (no more than five minutes) oral presentation in which you discuss the reviewed paper’s thesis, major kinds of primary sources, one major area of strength in the paper, and one major area in need of improvement. Also, read the abstracts for the other papers. Be prepared to pose salient questions to the authors.

May 4  Thinking about the Dissertation and Beyond  


**FINAL PAPERS are due via email by 5:00 pm on Wednesday, May 11.** Papers should be approximately 25-35 pages long, plus notes, and must use the appropriate scholarly apparatus for citations and bibliography found in *The Chicago Manual of Style* (available through Fenwick Library online databases) or in the shorter version, Kate L. Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations.*
Grading:
Research Paper (first and second versions): 75%
Class discussions, oral presentations, other written assignments: 25%

Failure to attend class regularly and complete the preliminary assignments may result in failure for the class, even if a research paper is submitted.

Research papers will be evaluated using the following criteria:

--use of historiography
--range and depth of historical research (especially the use of primary sources)
--clarity of writing and organization
--statement of a historical argument; depth of analysis; and significance of historical contribution

DROP DEADLINES
The last day to drop a class with 100% tuition refund is February 15. The Selective Withdrawal period, with no tuition refund, is from March 2-April 11.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS
Students who require academic accommodations should contact the Disability Services at (703) 993-2474 or ods@gmu.edu, who will then be in touch with me.

HONOR CODE
ALL STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO ABIDE BY THE UNIVERSITY’S HONOR CODE. Violations of the Honor Code will be brought to the Office of Academic Integrity. For further information, see https://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code.