

Practice of History

Sample Syllabus- Andrea Davis

Course Description

This project-based course is divided into three modules: approaches to historical writing, developing a research paper, and communicating your research to a public audience. The first module introduces some of the most exciting approaches to historical writing, including: micro history, gender history and environmental history. While we study these historiographical trends, you will gain proficiency using the research management system [Zotero](#) and practice evaluating primary and secondary sources. During the second module, you will write a 6 to 8-page research paper on a topic of your choosing. To help you develop your paper, you will complete short assignments and participate in a variety of workshops throughout the module. The last section of the course is dedicated to communicating your research to a public audience. In this module, we will examine different methods for communicating historical knowledge and you will gain experience using digital tools to present your research.

Module 1: Approaches to Historical Writing

The “New” History

Assignment: Read and annotate Peter Burke, “Overture. The New History: Its Past and its Future” in *New Perspectives on Historical Writing* [shared Zotero library].

History and the Question of Scale: Micro-History

Assignment: Read and annotate Robert Darnton “The Great Cat Massacre” in *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* [shared Zotero library].

Book Review Workshop (Meet in Computer Lab)

In-class activity: Use JSTOR to find a review of *New Perspectives on Historical Writing* or *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History*. Add your selected review to the designated folder of our shared Zotero library. Your entry must include: all necessary bibliographic information; a “Review” tag; a link to the review; and a note that evaluates the review.

History and the Question of Who: Gender History

Assignment: Read and annotate Cornelia H. Dayton and Lisa Levenstein’s “The Big Tent of U.S. Women's and Gender History: A State of the Field” in *The Journal of American History* [shared Zotero library].

Primary Source Workshop (Meet in Computer Lab)

In-class activity: Use the [Discovering American Women’s History Online](#) website [shared Zotero library] to select one primary source relevant to the field of Gender History. Add your selected source to the designated folder of our shared Zotero library. Make sure your entry includes: all necessary bibliographic information; a “Gender History” and “Primary Source” tag; a link to your source; and a note that reviews the source in light of this week’s assigned reading and the guidelines outlined in the PDF “Evaluating Primary Sources” [shared Zotero library].

History and the Question of What: Environmental History

Assignment: Read and annotate Donald Hughes, “Defining Environmental History” in, *What is Environmental History?* [shared Zotero library].

In-class activity: Find, read and annotate one journal article from *Environmental History*, *Environment and History*, or *Global Environment: A Journal of History and Natural and Social Sciences*.

Secondary Source Workshop (Meet in Computer Lab)

In-class activity: Add your selected journal article to the designated folder of our shared Zotero library. Make sure your entry includes: all necessary bibliographic information; an “Environmental History” tag; a link to the article; and a note that reviews the article in light of this week’s assigned reading and the guidelines outlined in the PDF “Evaluating Secondary Sources” [shared Zotero library].

Module II: Developing a Research Paper

Introduction to Research

Assignment: Choose a topic for your research paper and familiarize yourself with [Michael Engle’s guide to annotated bibliographies](#) [shared Zotero library].

Finding Sources at the Library (Meet in Library)

Assignment: Collect primary and secondary sources for your research paper, and create an entry for each source (bibliographic reference + evaluative note) in your personal Zotero library.

Finding and Evaluating Digital Sources (Meet in Computer Lab)

Assignment: Collect primary and secondary sources for your research paper, and create an entry for each source (bibliographic reference + evaluative note) in your personal Zotero library.

Annotated Bibliography Workshop (Meet in Computer Lab)

Assignment: Complete your annotated bibliography, which must contain a minimum of 5 secondary and 2 primary sources.

Research Question Workshop

Assignment: Turn in a paper copy of your annotated bibliography.

Writing a Prospectus, Day I and II (Meet in Computer Lab)

Read: “Guidelines for Writing a Prospectus” and “Prospectus Template” [shared Zotero library].

Writing a Research Paper

Assignment: Turn in prospectus.

Work on Research Paper, Day I and II (Meet in Computer Lab)

Peer Editing Workshop, Day I and II

Assignment: Submit a draft of your research paper to your group's designated folder of our shared Zotero library.

Module III: Communicating Your Research to a Public Audience

Introduction to [HistComm](#)

Assignment: Turn in research paper.

Examples of [HistComm](#)

Assignment: Create an entry in our shared Zotero library for a website or digital production that effectively communicates historical knowledge to a public audience. Make sure your entry includes: all necessary bibliographic information; a "HistComm" tag; a link to your selection; and a note that reviews the example in light of our last class discussion. Be prepared to present and discuss your example in class.

Web Writing Workshop, Day I and II (Meet in Computer Lab)

In-class activity: Prepare an article based on your research (800 words max) for a public audience.

Digital Storytelling Workshop, Day I and II (Meet in Computer Lab)

In-class activity: Use at least one of [Knight Lab's](#) digital storytelling tools to help you communicate your research to a public audience.

Presentations, Day I and II*

Assignment: Publish your article to our [Medium Publication](#) (800 words max with at least one digital storytelling presentation embedded) and prepare a 5-minute presentation based on your article for the class.

* I encourage you to think about your article as a professional document that you can showcase on your Resume or C.V. to demonstrate your research and communication skills. You can either publish your article openly on our shared course publication or as an unlisted post (directions [here](#)) so that it is only visible when you share the URL.