**Syllabus HIST 498: Senior Capstone**  Dr. Emily Wakild

Fall 2016 Email: emilywakild@boisestate.edu

M 9-11:45am Office: Library L181

Room: L194 (History Conference Room) Office Hours:M 12-2pm; T/Th10:30-12

Phone: 208.426.3529

This course is the Senior Capstone course devoted to the preparation of a research paper. Prerequisites include HIST 220 or HIST 222 and senior standing. In this class you will write a research paper of 20 or so pages. This is intended to be the culmination of your training in the methods and skills of the historical discipline. This paper must be based primarily on original research done in primary sources. It should also demonstrate a command on the historiography—or secondary literature—on your chosen topic. Finally, it should offer an interesting and compelling argument that makes a nontrivial claim about your topic.

This course is run as a *seminar*; there will be no lectures and the classes are all student-driven. I am your guide as you embark on this research paper; the bulk of the effort is yours. You will work in groups periodically both in and out of class but each paper is yours alone. I’ll assign you to a group of three based on concordance among your research topics (to the extent possible).

History research and writing are always iterative. They get better through revision. Towards this end, you may substantially redo any of your assignments up to the Final Paper for an improved grade any time before Thanksgiving after consultation with me about the assignment.

**Assignments**:

For a more complete elaboration of these components, see the handout on Blackboard “Composite Parts of a Research Paper.”

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| **Assignment** | **Due Date** | **Length** | **Grade Value** |
| Class Participation | All semester |  | 10% |
| Title, Paper Abstract and Short Bibliography | Sep. 19 | 1-2 pages | 10% |
| Primary Document Analysis (1-5 docs) | Sep. 26 | 4-6 pages | 10% |
| Literature Review (min. 5 books) | Oct. 10 | 4-6 pages | 10% |
| Thesis and Detailed Outline | Oct. 24 | 1 page min. | 10% |
| Draft and Draft Peer Review | Nov. 7, Nov. 14 | 20-25 pages; 2 pages | 10% |
| Oral Presentation of Research | Nov 28 or Dec 5 | 10-15 minutes | 10% |
| Final Paper | Dec. 4 | 20-30 pages | 30% |

\*\*Please note, even if your cumulative grade at the end of the class seems to earn you a passing grade, your final paper must earn a passing grade in order for you to pass the class. (Unlikely but possible.)

\*\*Every written assignment (all but the oral presentation), must be typed in 12 pt font, double-spaced, page numbers included, and printed (double sided if possible), and ready to turn in at the *beginning* of class on the date listed in the syllabus. Late assignments will be marked down each day (1/3 of a grade).

**Course Readings:**

All required readings will be provided online or on Blackboard.

**Recommended:**

Mary LynnRampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History* 6th Edition. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2007).

Robert C. Williams, *The Historian’s Toolbox: A Student’s Guide to the Theory and Craft of History,* 3rd. ed. (New York: Routledge, 2015).

[Available through Albertson’s Library as an ebook; we will read selections in class but it’s a handy book to own]

**Seminar Schedule:**

**Week 1:** (Aug 22) Introduction. On writing history.

Readings: Ginsburg, “Morelli, Freud, and Sherlock Holmes”**B**

Williams, *The Historian’s Toolbox,* “Doing History” **B**

**Week 2:** (Aug 29) Library Research Session—Dr. Cheryl Oestreicher

MEET in Library Computer Lab Room 203

**Week 3:** (Sep 5) Labor Day NO CLASS

Topics Due—email your topic to Professor Wakild by noon

**Week 4:** (Sep 12) Finding a Research Question. Exploring Possibilities. Taking Notes.

Methodological exercise (due in class):

Choose one of the following statistical resources, or another online statistical resource of your choice:

Historical Statistics of the United States (get through library– databases A to Z – this is a great resource for all kinds of topics)

USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, Idaho (or browse other states)

<https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Idaho/index.php>

General Land Office Records (USA) <http://www.glorecords.blm.gov/default.aspx>

National Crime Victimization Survey (<http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/NACJD/series/95> )

Eurostat (<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database> )

Association of Religion Data Archives (<http://www.thearda.com/>)

United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, Statistics Division

(<http://faostat3.fao.org/home/E>)

Mexican Migration Project (<http://mmp.opr.princeton.edu/databases/dataoverview-en.aspx> )

Demographic and Health Surveys (Africa, Asia, Latin America, Oceania)

(<http://dhsprogram.com/data/available-datasets.cfm> )

European Values Survey (<http://www.europeanvaluesstudy.eu>)

Look up tables on topics that interest you. Examine these tables and see what information you can learn from them. Make a list of possible historical questions that could be asked of these tables.

Repeat with another database. Try to align the statistical sources with topics that interest you.

Now, write 2-3 paragraphs on what you’ve found, trying to distill the key factual pieces into prose.

This exercise is primarily descriptive, supplemented by simple analysis; the idea is mainly to get you thinking about what statistical data can tell you and how you might use it in crafting a historical argument. Come ready to discuss this exercise in class.

Please Read through the following website as background and refer back to it in this process:

<http://www.williamcronon.net/researching/questions.htm>

**Week 5:** (Sep 19) Title, Abstract, and Bibliography Due

Scavenger Hunt Exercise: Bring at least three of the following Primary Sources related to your topic with you to class:

\*biographical information about a person important to your story

\*a richly meaningful photograph, painting, or drawing

\*an artifact or photograph of an artifact relevant to your topic

\*a source that describes a scene of action (riot, trial, speech, meeting, battle, etc.)

\*a source that describes the setting (maps, travelogues, architectural guides, your own visit)

\*a literary source that meaningfully resonates with or mentions your topic

\*a source your found in someone else’s footnotes or bibliography

**Week 6:** (Sep 26) Primary Source Analysis Due. Peer Review.

**Week 7:** (Oct 3) Journal Articles + Books + Reviews = Historiography

Bring with you to class a Journal Article, Book, and Book Review related to your topic.

Williams, *Historian’s Toolbox,* “Citing and Acknowledgement” **B**

**Week 8:** (Oct 10) Literature Review Due. And plagiarism.

Read through these websites and be prepared to define Plagiarism

<http://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k70847&pageid=icb.page342054>

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/plagiarism/>

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/>

Read Jonathan Lethem, “The Ecstasy of Influence” *Harper’s Weekly,* Feb 2007. **B**

Be prepared to make arguments for plagiarism as artistic expression.

**Week 9**: (Oct 17) The Writing Process

“Madman, Architect, Carpenter, Judge: Roles and the Writing Process”

<http://www.ut-ie.com/b/b_flowers.html>

Steve Pinker, “Why Academics Stink at Writing,” and “How to Fix it” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Booklet, 26 Sept. 2014. Pdf on **B** and available here: <https://www.grad.uiowa.edu/want-to-improve-your-writing>

**Week 10:** (Oct 24) Thesis and Detailed Outline Due

Read 3 articles from one or more of the following *undergraduate* history journals. Identify the thesis in each article and make note of it to discuss it in class.

-The Columbia Undergraduate Journal of History: <http://cujh.columbia.edu/>

-History Matters: An Undergraduate Journal of Historical Research, Appalachian State

<http://historymatters.appstate.edu/>

-Journal of Undergraduate International Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison

<http://juis.global.wisc.edu/>

-The Yale Historical Review, <http://historicalreview.yale.edu/>

**Week 11:** (Oct 31) Independent research and writing in consultation with professor

**Week 12:** (Nov 7) Full Draft of Paper Due; Exchange with group for Peer Review

**Week 13:** (Nov 14) Peer Reviews of Paper due

Read: Williams, *Historian’s Toolbox,* “Too Much Information” **B**

**Week 14:** (Nov 21) THANKSGIVING NO CLASSES

**Week 15:** (Nov 28) Student Presentations

**Week 16:** (Dec 5) Student Presentations

Final Exam Period Monday Dec 12: Final Paper Due by high noon.

Neat Historical Research and Writing Resources:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/5/>

<http://www.quickanddirtytips.com/education/grammar>

http://www.bartleby.com/141/

<http://www.williamcronon.net/researching/index.htm>

<http://www.ala.org/rusa/sections/history/resources/pubs/usingprimarysources>

<http://primarysources.yale.edu/>

Policies and General Information:

Participation and Attendance:

Dynamic, engaged participation and attendance are required at every class. Participation includes active listening, asking questions about reading and lecture material, responding to the ideas of your classmates, taking notes, offering ideas and comments, completing reading assignments, engaging in intellectual debates, and considering alternative points of view. You must participate to succeed in this class. More than two (2) absences a semester will result in an automatic deduction from your participation grade for each subsequent absence. If you miss class for any reason you are unable to participate.

Office Hours and Email:

I welcome visits to my office during the listed office hours to discuss course material. If you are unable to make it to my office during those hours, I am available a limited number of other hours by appointment. I much prefer in-person inquiries to email communication. I will not respond to emails that discuss absences, missed work, or grades. Appropriate uses of email include appointment scheduling and assignment clarification.

Late Papers, Drafts, and Grade Disputes:

Late papers will be penalized one third of a letter grade per day late starting immediately after the time they are due. Plan ahead and prepare to avoid unnecessary hassles and penalties. I am willing to look over paper drafts if I receive your draft (by email or hardcopy) at least 48 hours before the assignment is due. I also welcome discussions about comments on graded papers, particularly if you have a mind towards improvement. Such conversations will often help you improve on future assignments. In the very rare cases where a student wishes to dispute the grade he or she earned, I require a written statement of at least one page outlining the specific reasons that call for a reconsideration of the grade you earned.

Electronic Devices:

Computers are a valuable tool and source of information, but in my experience they detract from respectful, engaged conversation. You may use them when it is appropriate or you will be asked to pack them away. Although many technologies enable us to do things with greater efficiency, when used inappropriately they lessen the quality of intellectual exchange. I expect our in-class time to be reserved for careful listening and conversation about the topics at hand. The use of cell phones or similar gadgets for any purpose is frowned upon and will greatly reduce your participation grade.

Special Needs:

If you have a need that may require an accommodation while taking this course, please meet with me as soon as possible (during the first two weeks of the semester). To request academic accommodations for a disability, contact the Educational Access Center by phone (208) 426-1583, or email, eacinfo@boisestate.edu. Students with disabilities needing accommodations to fully participate in this class should contact the Educational Access Center (EAC). All accommodations must be approved through the EAC prior to being implemented.  To learn more about the accommodation process, visit the EAC’s website at <https://eac.boisestate.edu/new-eac-students/>

Academic Honesty:

Plagiarism, or representing another person’s ideas as your own, will not be tolerated regardless of circumstances. The basic rule is do NOT take ideas without attribution! It will result in a failing course grade and possible disciplinary action. For questions about plagiarism and suggestions on how to avoid it, visit the library’s guide at <http://library.boisestate.edu/plagiarism/start.htm>

Foundations Program: HIST 498: SENIOR RESEARCH SEMINAR

Boise State’s Foundations Program provides undergraduates with a broad-based education that spans the entire university experience. HIST498: Senior Research Seminar satisfied three credits of the Foundation Program’s Finishing Foundations requirement. It supports University Learning Outcomes 1-4:

ULO 1: Write Effectively

ULO 2: Oral Communication

ULO 3: Critical Inquiry

ULO 4: Innovation and Teamwork

History 498 is the “capstone” seminar for history majors. In this class, the student’s main tasks will be to write a paper in which s/he examines a historical topic as historians do, using primary sources and the work of historians who have come before them as their guide. Students will also present and discuss the results of their research and critique the work of others in the class.

Upon successful completion of this class, students will be able to:

1. Write and speak effectively about a historical topic.

2. Present a historical argument supported by evidence from primary and secondary sources.

3. Demonstrate knowledge and effective use of the conventions of historical writing and argument.

4. Develop and present an original historical argument based on independent interpretation of sources.

5. Evaluate and critique other historians' arguments and conclusions.