



Dr. Sandy Bardsley

Moravian College

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Office: Comenius 303

Phone: (610) 861-1398

Email: sandybardsley@moravian.edu

**Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays 11am-12 noon; Wednesdays 2:30-4pm
plus other times by appointment**

“Even though I have put more time into this class than I could have afforded, I am feeling satisfied about how it has turned out. I actually feel like a historian for once, and not a drone sitting in a classroom taking notes. This class has really helped me understand how research should be done, and the importance of the research people do.”

– Comment from a student in History 371, Fall 2004

Welcome to History 371: Senior Seminar!¹ This course is first and foremost a writing course, in which you will produce a high-quality article-length paper on a topic of your choice. Your paper will be based on original research from primary sources, but it will also engage the historiographical context of your topic. This course should give you the opportunity, in other words, to put into practice everything you’ve learned during the last few years about how to be an historian.

Our regular class reading load is not particularly heavy, but the amount of reading and writing associated with research is considerable! Be prepared to write, rewrite, and assist others with their writing. Because we meet only once a week, you will find that the amount of work required for each class session is more than you are accustomed to: you’ll need to figure out ways of spreading the workload across the week. I will be the major instructor for this course and the first person you should approach with questions or concerns. You will also be assigned an “expert consultant” with whom you’ll meet at least twice during the semester. These expert consultants are faculty whose own areas of expertise are closest to those of the topics you are working on. Our semester will

¹ I am grateful to my colleagues in the history department at Moravian College for their suggestions and input on this syllabus.

culminate with a “mini-conference” in which you will present a version of your paper not only to the class but also to members of the history department and other invited guests.

I am hoping that you’ll find this course not only challenging but also very rewarding. Students who have worked hard in seminars in the past have told me that such courses have been among the most worthwhile experiences of their college careers. I hope and expect that you will have the same experience.

Goals of the Course

By the end of this course, you should have enhanced your abilities to:

1. approach writing as a *process*, one which involves considerable ongoing reflection and revision.
2. locate and use primary sources.
3. respond to secondary sources and engage in historiographical debates.
4. appreciate the ways in which the conventions of writing change according to format and audience.
5. use the writing conventions appropriate to the discipline of history.
6. give and receive constructive criticism.
7. deliver effective oral presentations.

The Role of Writing in this Course

In this course, you will engage in three different types of writing, each with a particular set of conventions and each with a different audience:

1. **Research paper based on primary sources.** The final product must be at least 25 pages long, written for an audience of other historians. It must be of publishable quality – indeed, I hope that some of you will consider submitting the final versions of your papers to journals for publication. This paper must be written in formal academic prose, with complete footnotes and a bibliography. Please note that you will be writing this paper in stages throughout the semester, with lots of opportunities for feedback and rewriting between each stage.
2. **Journal entries.** Throughout the semester, you will be writing weekly journal entries to reflect on the process of researching and writing. The main audience for these entries will be yourself – they will serve as a place for you to untangle ideas, think through research strategies and data, and even vent about the frustrations you encounter. The secondary audience for the entries will be me – I will read over each entry to check that you are keeping up your journals and taking them seriously. In terms of format and style, journal entries may be less formal. They will be graded for content, regularity, and willingness to engage with ideas, rather than for stylistic concerns such as spelling and grammar. Even though errors in spelling and grammar will not detract from your grade, I hope

that you will proofread journal entries nonetheless: proofreading will help you clarify your ideas, and this will ultimately improve your paper.

3. **Feedback to others on their writing.** As part of the ongoing process of rewriting and rethinking, you will help others with their papers and they will do the same for you. Each time a major part of the paper is due, you will write up comments to help other members of your writing group (I will assign you to writing groups once the semester is underway). Your main audience will be that of your peers, although I will also collect a copy of your comments in order to help you with the important (if often overlooked) skill of offering useful feedback and constructive criticism.

Required Texts

All required readings for this course (including instructions on course assignments) can be found in the handout entitled “Steps in the Research Process” which I will distribute to you in class. Please bring this handout with you to class each week. I am also assuming that you have retained copies of *The Bedford Handbook* from your Writing 100 class and Mary Lynn Rampolla’s *Pocket Guide to Writing in History* from Hist 270 and other history courses. If you do not have these books, I suggest that you buy or borrow copies.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is not required in this course, but it is very highly recommended. Much of what we cover will build on previous classes, and those who are absent will find it hard to keep up with what is going on. In addition, they will find it impossible to get full marks for class participation. Attendance is particularly important since we meet only once a week.

Academic Honesty Policy

I expect that you will complete all assignments in this course individually and independently, and I will refer any cases of suspected cheating or plagiarism to the Academic Affairs Office. I strongly encourage you to ensure that you are familiar with Moravian’s Academic Honesty Policy, found in the Student Handbook. As this policy explains, it is possible to commit plagiarism without intending to be dishonest, but serious consequences result regardless of intent.

Let me clarify two particular occasions when it is legitimate (and even desirable) to use the help of others. First, while I expect that you will write all assignments on your own, I *do* encourage you to discuss with each other the ideas and arguments contained in our course, both within class and outside of it. For example, you might run into a friend in the library and start talking about how your paper is going. Perhaps, for instance, you are puzzled about how to interpret a particular primary source. Your friend, after listening to you, might make an observation or suggestion. As you write your paper, it is legitimate to explain and respond to that comment, *as long as you do not claim the idea as your own*. You might, for example, write something like, “In talking about this reading with

[your friend's name], he/she suggested that this primary source might reflect [your friend's suggestion]. This makes good sense to me because . . ." In other words, signal clearly which things are someone else's opinion and which things are your own. You should also insert a footnote that acknowledges your debt to someone else's ideas or thoughts – see the example on page 1 of this syllabus in which I thank the other members of the history department for their input. By the end of the semester, you will almost certainly find that your work has been strengthened by suggestions from your classmates, and you should thank them accordingly. People often do this by adding a special footnote or endnote before their regular notes. Second, I encourage you to seek help with writing. It is perfectly legitimate to ask others to read over your paper and look for errors of spelling, grammar, and expression. You might also ask others to look over your written work and help you with paper organization and structure. I am happy to read drafts of papers, especially if you give me advance warning. I also encourage you to use the Writing Center. Again, it is good practice to insert a footnote in your paper in which you thank anyone who has read and commented on a draft.

One other thing to note about plagiarism: often people do not realize that it is possible to plagiarize from oneself. In other words, if someone was to turn in a paper that was identical or very similar in parts to a paper they had turned in for another class, this would constitute plagiarism. If you hope to work on a topic that you've already examined in another class, please talk carefully with me about it first. You may be able to expand part of a paper you've previously written, or take it in a different direction, but *this absolutely needs to be cleared with me before you begin.*

Inclusive Language Policy

Moravian College policy strongly encourages the use of inclusive, non-discriminatory language in all academic writing and communication. For instance, rather than writing about "mankind," write about "people" or "humankind." Rather than use the term "he" when referring to a person in the abstract (as opposed to a specific individual), replace it with "they" or "he/she." This mindfulness about language reflects Moravian's commitment to a tolerant and inclusive campus community. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have about inclusive language or to work with you to find ways to make your language more inclusive.

Evaluation

Journals (12 entries; 1% each)	12%
Table of secondary & primary sources	3%
Abstracts of primary sources	4%
Index cards (or computer equivalent)	15%
Writing throughout the semester (paper chunks 1-3, outlines, introduction & conclusion, complete draft)	20%
Participation (10% written feedback to others; 6% other participation)	16%
Final Paper	20%
Conference Presentation	10%

Please note: All late work is subject to a penalty of 10% per day

JOURNAL ENTRIES (12%) are due for almost every class as noted in the schedule below. Each entry must be typed and at least 1.5 pages long, double-spaced. For more detail on how to write these entries, see Patrick Rael, “Research Papers: Keeping a Research Journal” on pages 1-3 of “Steps in the Research Process.” Questions on the syllabus will also give you some ideas about how to structure your journal entries. You need not answer every one of these questions, but do try to hit on the main points. I will collect your journal entries each week. On weeks when you meet with me individually, please email your journal entry to me at least 24 hours in advance.

Your TABLE OF SECONDARY & PRIMARY SOURCES (3%) and your ABSTRACTS (4%) are due on September 18 and 25 respectively. Please see detailed instructions on these in the handout “Steps in the Research Process.”

You will compile INDEX CARDS (15%) throughout the semester as you research your paper. See instructions in “Steps in the Research Process” on how to set these out. If you have a good note-taking program on computer and would prefer to take your notes that way, you may. Do be sure that you can print them out, however, to show them to me at our individual meetings.

Because we are approaching writing as a process, your WRITING THROUGHOUT THE SEMESTER (20%) is at least as important as the final product. Your grade for writing throughout the semester will be assessed according to the quality of the three five-page ‘chunks’ of writing that you turn in on October 13, October 27, and November 3, on the outlines you turn in on October 27, November 3, and November 10, on the introduction and conclusion due on November 10, and on the first complete draft due on November 26. ***Please note that most of these due dates are Fridays – I want you to get your writing to me and to members of your writing group three days in advance to give us time to read it carefully and prepare feedback. The one exception is the due date during Thanksgiving Break: your first complete drafts are due to us by Sunday November 26.***

PARTICIPATION (16%) is an extremely important component of this course. In order to help others write strong papers, you will need to give them the most helpful feedback possible. This means reading their papers carefully, thinking about their overall arguments and suggesting ways to improve or clarify these arguments, providing encouragement, and offering constructive critiques. Of your participation grade, 10% will be determined by the quality of your written feedback to writing group members. The other 6% will be determined by (a) how well you accept constructive criticism, (b) your class attendance, and (c) your preparation for meetings with me and your expert consultant.

The FINAL PAPER (20%) should be at least 25 pages long and formatted in accordance with the *Chicago Manual of Style* guidelines. See Rampolla or the *Bedford Handbook* for instructions on what these involve. It is due on Friday December 8.

Your CONFERENCE PRESENTATION (10%) will take place during the exam period scheduled for our class. It will consist of a 15-minute talk that outlines your thesis and the main conclusions that you reached in your work throughout the semester. *You are required to stay for the whole of the session* (we’ll probably take short breaks in the middle). Reference librarians, expert consultants, other faculty from the history

department, and any others who have been involved in the paper-writing process will be invited to this mini-conference. You are also welcome to invite family and friends.

Since several of these grade components will not be complete until near the end of the semester, I will give you an initial grade on November 6 for journals, writing throughout the semester, and participation. This should help you gauge how you are doing in the course. I'd also be happy to talk with you about your progress at any of our individual meetings.

Schedule

Please note: this schedule is subject to change. In the event that a change is made, I will inform you in class and – if the change is a major one – hand out a revised copy of the schedule.

SITRP = Steps in the Research Process (handout available from me).

August 28	Introduction
September 4	Labor Day: No Class
September 11	Beginning the Research Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read this syllabus, pp. 1-6 (it's important to know what you are getting into!). • Read notes by Patrick Rael entitled "Research Papers: Keeping a Research Journal" and "Research Papers: Paper Writing Steps," SITRP 1-4. • Order and start to read potential secondary sources on inter-library loan. • Write and turn in Journal Entry 1: Focus on finding a topic (further develop the freewrite from the previous class). Remember, journal entries should be a minimum of 1.5 pages, double-spaced.
September 18	Locating and Using Primary Sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compile and turn in table of primary and secondary sources (see "Table of Secondary & Primary Sources," SITRP 5). • Order potential primary sources on inter-library loan. • Write and turn in Journal Entry 2: Focus today on the historiography. How is your thinking about your topic changing as you see what other scholars have done (in the secondary sources that you are uncovering)? Are you disqualifying some topics because they have already been done too thoroughly? Are you identifying other topics that haven't really been covered?
September 25	Research Methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write and turn in abstracts of primary sources (see "Primary Source Abstracts," SITRP 6). • Write and turn in Journal Entry 3: How are your ideas developing now that you are engaging with the primary sources? What themes do you see in them? Which look like they will be the most helpful to you? Are your impressions of the historiography changing at all as you examine the sources that scholars have used? • Read notes by Patrick Rael entitled "Research Papers: Taking Notes," SITRP 7.
Week of October 2 (some appointments may be scheduled toward the end of the previous week)	Individual Meetings with Me and Expert Consultants (times to be arranged) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write Journal Entry 4: How are the latest primary sources you've examined shaping your thinking about your topic? Are you noticing anything that has surprised you? <i>**Please email this entry to me at least 24 hours prior to our meeting.**</i> • Continue to read secondary sources and make notes on primary sources! • Compile an agenda for our meeting, containing at least 3 questions or issues on which you would like help. Print this out and bring 3 copies to the meeting. Also bring your index cards to the meeting.
October 9	Fall Break – no class

October 16	<p>Writing Workshop I</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write chunk 1 (at least 5 pages, focusing on historiography) and email it to me & to your writing group members by 4pm on Friday October 13. • Read “Useful Feedback & Constructive Criticism,” SITRP 8-9. • Write feedback to group members for in-class distribution. • Write and turn in Journal Entry 5: What did you learn from your meeting with your expert consultant? How did it feel to start the writing process? Are you happy with what you have written? What thoughts do you have about where to go next? What new things are you noticing in the primary sources?
Week of October 23	<p>Individual Meetings with Me</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write Journal Entry 6: What were some of the most helpful suggestions you received from the Writing Workshop? What will be the topic of your second ‘chunk’ and why? <i>**Please email this entry to me at least 24 hours prior to our meeting.**</i> • Continue to make notes on your primary sources. • Compile an agenda for our meeting, containing at least 3 questions or issues on which you would like help. Print this out and bring 2 copies to the meeting. Also bring your index cards to the meeting.
October 30	<p>Writing Workshop II</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read notes entitled “Initial Paper Outline,” SITRP 10-11. • Write chunk 2 (at least 5 pages, based on primary source research) & initial paper outline and email it to me & your writing group members by 4pm on Friday October 27. • Write feedback to group members for in-class distribution. • Continue to research too! • Write and turn in Journal Entry 7: What new ideas are you coming up with as you encounter more sources? Are you mostly confirming patterns you have already seen, or are you finding new patterns and going off in new directions?
November 6	<p>Writing Workshop III</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write chunk 3 & revised paper outline and email it to me & your writing group members by 4pm on Friday November 3. • Write feedback to group members for in-class distribution. • Write and turn in Journal Entry 8: Are things beginning to come together for you? What major concerns do you still have? What research do you still have to do?
November 13	<p>Writing Workshop IV</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read “Introduction & Conclusion,” SITRP 12. • Write introduction, conclusion, & revised paper outline, and email it to me & your writing group members by 4pm on Friday November 10. • Write feedback to group members for in-class distribution. • Write and turn in Journal Entry 9: How are you feeling about things at this stage? What needs to be done before you can put the complete draft together?

Week of November 20	<p>Individual Meetings with Me</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write Journal Entry 10: What are the main concerns you have at this point? Which parts of your work so far are you most pleased with? <i>**Please email this entry to me at least 24 hours prior to our meeting.**</i> • Compile an agenda for our meeting, containing at least 3 questions or issues on which you would like help. Print this out and bring 2 copies to the meeting. Also bring your index cards to the meeting.
November 27	<p>Writing Workshop V</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write your complete draft and email it to me & writing group members by 4pm on Sunday November 26. Please print out a copy for your expert consultant and deliver it to him/her by the afternoon of Monday November 27. • Write feedback to group members for in-class distribution. <i>**Please note: you'll need to plan ahead to be sure that you have time on Sunday evening and Monday morning to give these due consideration – this feedback will be very important to your group members.**</i> • Write and turn in Journal Entry 11: What do you think are the main strengths and weakness of your paper at this stage? Where will you be focusing your efforts in the next 2 weeks? Where would you like help? • Read notes by Patrick Rael entitled “Research Papers: Revising the Draft,” SITRP 13.
Week of December 4 (some appointments may be scheduled toward the end of the previous week)	<p>Individual Meetings with Me and Expert Consultants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write Journal Entry 12: This is your last journal entry, so you might use it as a chance to reflect on the overall process to date. How have your ideas evolved throughout the semester? What parts of the paper do you still need to nail down before next week? <i>**Please email this entry to me at least 24 hours prior to our meeting.**</i> • Compile an agenda for our meeting, containing at least 3 questions or issues on which you would like help. Print this out and bring 3 copies to the meeting. • Line up at least 2 people to serve as proofreaders for the final paper. • Make an appointment ASAP if you plan to use the Writing Center tutors to look over your work – they book up quickly at this time of the year! • Read notes by Patrick Rael entitled “Research Papers: Writing Checklist,” SITRP 14-15.
December 11	<p>Preparing Conference Papers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write your final paper and email it to me by 4pm on Friday December 8. • Print and distribute copies of your final paper to your expert consultants and members of your writing group.
Exam Period	<p>Mini-Conference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a 15-minute conference presentation which summarizes your paper. We'll have talked in the previous class about what this should involve.