



Dr. Sandy Bardsley

Moravian College

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**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 afford, 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 “Outside Advisor” with whom you’ll meet at least three times during the semester. These outside advisors are faculty whose own areas of expertise are closest to those of the topics you are working on. Our semester will culminate with a two-session “mini-conference” in which you will present a version of

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

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. **Free-writing and research journal entries.** Throughout the semester, you will be recording frequent reflections 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 often collect and read freewrites as a way to “take the pulse” of your research progress. In terms of format and style, these freewrites 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.
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 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 do well on 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

Index cards (or computer equivalent)	15%
Writing throughout the semester (background on topic and sources, paper chunks 1-3, introduction & conclusion)	25%
Complete draft	10%
Participation (10% written feedback to others; 10% in-class participation, written & oral)	20%
Conference presentation	10%
Final paper	20%

Please note: All late work is subject to a penalty of 10% per day. If you miss a deadline – even by 5 minutes – you will be penalized 10%; if the assignment comes in the next day, it will be penalized 20%, and so on.

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 (25%) 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 background on topics and sources (due September 12), the three five-page “chunks” of writing that you turn in on September 19, October 3, and October 24, the outlines you turn in on October 3, October 24, and the introduction, conclusion, and revised outline due on October 31.

****Please note that deadlines are on the Sundays prior to our Tuesday classes.****

Your first COMPLETE DRAFT (10%) is due on November 14. Although some polishing may occur thereafter, it should contain all major sections of your paper (including a clear thesis) and be well organized and written.

PARTICIPATION (20%) 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 10% will be determined by (a) how well you accept constructive criticism, (b) your class attendance and participation, (c) your in-class writing assignments, and (d) your preparation for meetings with me and your expert consultant.

Your CONFERENCE PRESENTATION (10%) will take place during the last two weeks of the course. 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 be present for the whole of both conference presentation sessions.* Outside advisors, faculty from the history department, and any others who have been involved in the paper-writing process will be invited, and you are also welcome to invite family and friends.

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 in hardcopy by 9am on December 17.

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 31	Introduction: Primary Sources, and the Questions they can Answer!
Week of September 7-10	Meetings with Me and with Outside Advisors (separately) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please schedule these meetings as soon as you can. Faculty will be busy with the beginning of classes. Schedule your meeting with your Outside Advisor for <i>prior to</i> your meeting with me. • For each meeting, please compile an agenda, containing at least 3 questions or issues on which you would like help. • 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.
September 14	Research Methods; Introduction to Writing Workshops <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write and turn in background on your topic and sources (3-5 double-spaced pages). This background material should explain who wrote your source(s), when and where they lived, what is known about their lives, their perspectives, and their motives for writing. Try to identify assumptions implicit in the source(s) and possible inferences one can draw. In addition, provide brief background of the place and period about which you will write (e.g., identify country and century, major issues of the time, etc.). Please email this paper to me & to your writing group members by <u>4pm on Sunday September 12.</u> • Read notes by Patrick Rael entitled “Research Papers: Taking Notes,” SITRP 5. • Read “Useful Feedback & Constructive Criticism,” SITRP 6-7. • Read the background material written by members of your writing group. You need not prepare written feedback this time (though it will be required for subsequent workshops).
September 21	Writing Workshop 1 <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 <u>4pm on Sunday September 19.</u> • Write feedback to group members for in-class distribution. Please bring copies for me also.
Week of September 27 to October 1	Individual Meetings with Me (times to be arranged) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • In addition, bring a list of the databases you have searched and the keywords you have searched for each. • Continue to read secondary sources and make notes on primary sources!

October 5	Writing Workshop 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read “Initial Paper Outline,” SITRP 8-9. Write chunk 2 (at least 5 pages, focusing on primary source analysis) and email it to me & to your writing group members by <u>4pm on Sunday October 3.</u> In addition, please send us your initial paper outline. Write feedback to group members for in-class distribution & bring a copy for me.
October 12	Fall Break – No Class
Week of October 18-22	Individual Meetings with Me and your Outside Advisor (times to be arranged) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 26	Writing Workshop 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write chunk 3 & revised paper outline and email it to me & your writing group members by <u>4pm on Sunday October 24.</u> Write feedback to group members for in-class distribution & bring a copy for me.
November 2	Writing Workshop 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read “Introduction & Conclusion,” SITRP 10. Write introduction, conclusion, & revised paper outline, and email it to me & your writing group members by <u>4pm on Sunday October 31.</u> Write feedback to group members for in-class distribution & bring a copy for me.
Week of November 8-12	Individual Meetings with Me <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 16	Writing Workshop V <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write your complete draft and email it to me & writing group members by <u>4pm on Sunday November 14.</u> Please print out a copy for your Outside Advisor and deliver it to him/her by the afternoon of Monday November 15. 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 to give these due consideration – this feedback will be very important to your group members.**</i> Read notes by Patrick Rael entitled “Research Papers: Revising the Draft,” SITRP 11.

Week of November 22-4 (because of the Thanksgiving break, some appointments will be scheduled toward the end of the previous week)	Individual Meetings with Me and Outside Advisors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
November 30	Mini-Conference, Part I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please note that all must attend, regardless of whether your paper is scheduled for this week or next!
December 7	Mini-Conference, Part II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 12-13.
December 17, 9am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final, fully-revised, impeccable paper due in hard copy to me and to your Outside Advisor.