



HISTORY 371: SENIOR SEMINAR Fall 2011

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Office Hours:
Monday 2:30–4:00
Tuesday 2:30-4:00
Wednesday 2:00-3:00
and by appointment

Course Description

Welcome to History 371: Senior Seminar.¹ As the capstone of the history major, this course gives you the freedom and opportunity to explore a topic that interests you and to put into practice everything you have learned about how to be a historian. During the semester, you will write a high quality, article-length paper. Your paper will be based on original research from primary sources and will also engage the historiographical context of your topic.

Although research and writing may seem like a solitary endeavor, you will soon find it is a collaborative effort. During the research, writing, and rewriting process, you will be working and consulting closely with several people. First, I am the primary instructor for this course and the person you should contact with any questions or concerns. Second, you will be assigned an “outside advisor” with whom you will meet twice during the semester. Outside advisors are faculty whose own areas of expertise are closest to those of the topics you are working. Third, you will be assigned to a writing group of your colleagues with whom you will exchange work, ideas, and constructive criticism. And fourth, our semester will culminate in 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 invited guests.

Course Objectives

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

- Approach writing as a process, one that involves considerable ongoing reflection and revision.
- Locate and use primary sources.
- Respond to secondary sources and engage in historiographical debates.
- Use the writing conventions appropriate to the discipline of history.
- Write a scholarly paper for a scholarly audience.
- Give and receive constructive criticism.
- Deliver effective oral presentations.

Writing in this Course

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

Research paper based on primary sources: The final paper must be about 25 pages long and written in formal academic prose with footnotes and bibliography for an audience of other historians. At the end of the term you will present your papers to each other and, in addition, should the occasion arise, each of you should be able to present your work in a

¹I would like to thank my colleagues in the history department for their contributions to this syllabus. Dr. Sandy Bardsley first offered this course and I have built on her course and subsequent versions offered by Dr. Jamie Paxton and Dr. Heikki Lempa. As a departmental effort, many words, phrases, and ideas of the syllabus have been shared freely.

formal academic setting, such as an undergraduate conference or Moravian College's scholarship day. I hope that some of you will consider submitting the final version of your paper to journals for publication. Please note you will be writing this paper in stages throughout the semester with lots of opportunity for feedback and rewriting between each stage.

Journal entries/freewriting: Throughout the semester you will be recording frequent reflections on the process of research 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, and I will often collect and read these journals for content, regularity, and willingness to engage with the process and ideas. I will not, however, judge stylistic concerns such as spelling and grammar.

Feedback to others: As part of the process of writing, you will help others with their papers and they will do the same for you. During each stage of writing, you will write up comments to help other members of your writing group. I will assign you to a group once the semester is underway. The main audience will be 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. No other texts have been assigned for this course, but I assume that you have copies of *The Bedford Handbook* from Writing 100 and Mary Lynn Rampolla's *Pocket Guide to Writing History* from HIST 270. If you do not have these books, then borrow or purchase them.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory and three points will be subtracted from your final grade for the second and each subsequent class that you miss. In addition, you are responsible for all work missed in class. Much of what we cover will build on previous classes, and those who are absent will find it impossible to do well. Moreover, if you don't keep up you will make it more difficult for others to do their work.

Academic Honesty

According to the Moravian College Student Handbook, the following constitutes plagiarism: “as the use, deliberate or not, of any outside source without proper acknowledgment.” Plagiarism will normally result in a zero in the course. Please consult the Student Handbook for fuller details.

It is legitimate and even desirable to use the help of others on two particular occasions. First, while you must write all assignments on your own, it is useful 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 you explain that you are puzzled about how to interpret a particular primary source. Your friend might respond with an observation or suggestion. As you write your paper, it is legitimate to explain and respond to your friend's comment as long as you do not claim the idea as your own. You might include your friend's name

in your text: “In talking about this reading with [your friend’s name], he/she suggested that this source might reflect [your friend’s idea]. This makes sense to me because [your reasoning].” Or, you might acknowledge your friend’s contribution in a footnote. On page 2 of this syllabus there is an example of such a footnote. And by the end of the semester you will almost certainly find that your work has been strengthened by suggestions from your classmates, outside advisor, and/or librarians. You should thank them accordingly. People often do this by adding a special footnote or endnote before their regular ones.

The second occasion on which it is legitimate to use the help of others is in writing. It is perfectly appropriate 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 point about plagiarism is that it is possible to plagiarize from oneself. If you were to turn in a paper that was identical or very similar in parts to a paper that you 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 written previously, or take it in a different direction, but this absolutely needs to be cleared with me before you begin.

Inclusive Language

Moravian College strongly encourages the use of inclusive, non-discriminatory language in all academic writing and communication. For example: “man” or “mankind” becomes “humankind”; “he” referring to an abstract person becomes “they” or “he/she.” This mindfulness about language reflects Moravian’s commitment to a tolerant and inclusive campus community.

Students with Disabilities

Students with physical, learning, or medical disabilities should speak to me and contact Laurie Roth, Director of the Learning Center, to arrange the appropriate accommodations. Please make these arrangements in the first weeks of the semester.

Syllabus modifications

The instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus with appropriate notification.

Grade Distribution

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

Late Policy

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. If the assignment comes in the next day, it will be penalized 20%, and so on. Computer and printing problems are not acceptable reasons for lateness. If you miss class (argh) you may submit your work before class in an e-mail attachment so as to confirm that you have met the deadline, but I also need a hard copy as soon as you are able to provide one.

You will compile INDEX CARDS throughout the semester as you research. In “Steps in the Research Process” there are instructions for how to do these. If you have a good note-taking program on your 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 (rather than as only a finished product), your WRITING THROUGHOUT THE SEMESTER is at least as important as the final paper. Your grade for writing throughout the semester will be assessed according to the quality of the drafts of the sections of your paper. Please note that the deadlines are on the Wednesdays prior to our Friday classes.

Your first COMPLETE DRAFT is due on November 11, a mere 11 weeks from the beginning of class. Although some polishing may occur thereafter, it should contain a clear thesis and all major sections of your paper and be well organized and written.

PARTICIPATION is an extremely important part 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, half will be determined by the quality of your written feedback to writing group members and the other half will depend on how well you accept and use constructive criticism, your class participation, your journal, your in-class writing assignments, and your preparation for meetings with your expert consultant and me.

We will learn how to improve the comments in our critiques. As a starting point, critiques should provide feedback on at least five aspects of the paper you are reading. Only one of those comments can concern writing basics such as grammar, mechanics, and word choice. The rest must deal with more substantive matters such as those discussed by Rael including thesis statements, topic coverage, organization, clarity, evidence, and transitions.

Your CONFERENCE PRESENTATION 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 the conference presentation session, which will begin at 12:00 pm on December 2 and continue, with a break, until we finish, probably before 4:30 pm. Outside advisors, faculty from the History Department, other interested faculty and staff, and any others who have been involved in the paper-writing process will be invited to attend. You are also welcome to invite family and friends.

The FINAL PAPER should be about 25 pages long, although some topics may require somewhat more or less space. Papers must be formatted using the *Chicago Manual of Style* guidelines, which are described in Rampolla and the *Bedford Handbook*. An abbreviated web source is at http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/RES5e_ch05_o.html.

The paper is due in hardcopy by December 9 at 1:30pm.

Class Schedule

Week of Aug. 29 to Sept. 2

Introduction

- *Read the syllabus together*
- *Primary sources and the questions they can answer*
- *Library search strategies*
- Read notes by Patrick Rael entitled “Research Papers: Keeping a Research Journal,” “Research papers: Paper Writing Steps,” and “Research Papers: Taking Notes.” <http://www.bowdoin.edu/writing-guides/>

Week of Sept. 5 to Sept. 9

Individual Meetings with Outside Advisors and Me (times to be arranged)

- *Two meetings: Please schedule a meeting with your Outside Advisor as soon as you can. Faculty will be busy with the beginning of classes. Once the meeting with your Outside Advisor is scheduled, schedule a meeting with me for after that meeting. For each meeting, please compile an agenda, containing at least 3 questions or issues on which you would like help.*
- *Locate, order, read and take notes on primary sources: What questions can you ask of your sources?*
- *Locate, order, read and take notes on secondary sources: Library, Interlibrary Loan, databases.*
- *Journal ideas: Things are likely to be a bit chaotic at this point. That’s normal. Keep working one step at a time. Ask for help. Write about what you are finding and what research challenges you face.*

Week of Sept 12 to Sept. 16

Research Methods; Introduction to Writing Workshops

- *Locate, order, read and take notes on sources.*
- *Due: Draft of bibliography.*
- *Due: 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 and to your writing group members by **4:00pm on Wednesday September 14**.*
- *Read notes by Patrick Rael entitled “Research Papers: Taking Notes,” and “Useful Feedback & Constructive Criticism.”*
- *In class discussion: Anatomy of an article.*
- *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).*
- *Journal ideas: How is your research going? What frustrations? Triumphs? How is your thinking evolving about your topic as you read primary sources and see what other scholars have done?*

Week of Sept. 19 to Sept. 23

Writing Workshop 1

- *Due:* Write chunk 1 (at least 5 pages, focusing on historiography) and email it to me and to your writing group members by **4:00pm on Wednesday September 17. Don't miss this.**
- *Due:* Write feedback to group members for in-class distribution to your writing group. Please bring a copy for me also. **Don't miss this.**
- *Bring to class:* At least one example of your primary source(s). In class you will discuss the context of the source, the questions and problems it raises, and, ideally, a question related to the text that you would like to class to work on with you.
- *Journal ideas:* How are your ideas developing now that you are engaged with the primary sources? What themes do you see in them? Which look like they will be most helpful to you? Are your impressions of the historiography changing at all as you examine the sources scholars have used?

Week of Sept. 26 to Sept. 30

Individual Meetings with Me (times to be arranged)

- Continue to read and take notes on primary and secondary sources.
- *Due:* 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* and *journal* to the meeting.
- *Due:* In addition, bring a *list of the databases* you have searched and the *keywords* you have searched for each.
- *Journal idea:* What new insights are you developing?

Week of Oct. 3 to Oct. 7

Writing Workshop 2

- *Due:* Write chunk 2 (at least 5 pages, focusing on historiography) and e-mail it to me and to your writing group members by **4:00pm on Wednesday October 5. Don't miss this.**
- *Read:* Rael's "Initial Paper Outline."
- *Due:* Your initial paper outline. Please e-mail this to me and your writing group members along with chunk 2.
- *Due:* Feedback for group members for in-class distribution with copy for others in your group and copy for me. **Don't miss this.**
- *Bring to class:* At least one example of a problem related to your secondary sources. In class you will discuss the context of the sources (e.g., Who are the authors? When did they write? What were their points of view?), explain the questions and problems they raise related to your thesis, and, ideally, ask a question related to your sources that you would like to class to work on with you.
- *Journal ideas:* What have you learned? What thoughts do you have about where to go next?

(Fall Break: October 10-11)

Week of Oct. 12 to Oct. 14

Individual Meetings with Outside Advisors and Me (times to be arranged)

- Continue to research and write.
- *Due:* 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* and *journal* to the meeting.
- *Journal ideas:* What were some of the most helpful suggestions you received from the first writing workshop? What is the topic of your second chunk and why? What issues are arising in your research and writing?

Week of Oct. 17 to Oct. 21

Writing Workshop 3

- Continue to research and write.
- *Due:* Write chunk 3 (at least 5 pages, based on primary sources with secondary sources as background). E-mail it to me and your group members by **4:00pm on Wednesday Oct. 19.**
- *Due:* Revised outline. E-mail to me and your group members by **4:00pm on Wednesday Oct. 19.**
- *Due:* Feedback to group members for in-class distribution.
- *Bring to class:* At least one example of your primary source(s). In class you will discuss the context of the source(s), the questions and problems it raises, and, ideally, a question related to the text that you would like to class to work on with you.
- *Journal ideas:* What new ideas are you coming up with as you encounter new sources? Are you mostly confirming patterns you have already seen, or are you finding new patterns and going off in new directions? How are you combining the ideas from your various sources?

Week of Oct. 24 to Oct. 28

Writing Workshop 4

- Read Rael's "Introduction & Conclusion."
- *Due:* Introduction, conclusion, revised outline, and formatted works cited. E-mail these to me and your group members by **4:00pm on Wednesday Oct. 26.**
- *Due:* Feedback to group members for in-class distribution.
- *Journal ideas:* Are things beginning to come together? What major concerns do you still have? What needs to be done before you can put the complete draft together?

Week of Oct. 31 to Nov. 4

Individual Meetings with Me

- *Due:* 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* and *journal* to the meeting.
- Work on complete draft.

Week of Nov. 7 to Nov. 11

Writing Workshop 5

- Discussion of presentations.
- *Due:* Complete draft. E-mail to me and your group members by **4:00pm on Wednesday Nov. 9.**
- *Due:* Please print out a copy for your Outside Advisor and deliver it to him/her by the **morning of Thursday Nov. 10.**
- *Due:* Feedback to group members for in-class distribution. *Please note: You'll need to plan ahead to be sure that you have time to give these due consideration. This feedback will be very important to your group members.*
- *Read:* Rael's "Research Papers: Revising the Draft."
- *Journal ideas:* What do you think are the main strengths and weaknesses of your paper? Which parts of your work are you most pleased with? Where will you be focusing your efforts in the next two weeks? Where would you like help?

Week of Nov. 14 to Nov. 18

Individual Meetings with Outside Advisors and Me (times to be arranged)

It will be a challenge to arrange these meetings because I must be in Washington, D.C, on Thursday, and Friday.

- *Due:* 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* and *journal* to the meeting.
- *Due:* Second draft. E-mail to me and your group members by **10am on Friday Nov 18.**
- *Journal ideas:* Same topics as the previous week?

Week of Nov. 21 to Nov. 25

Thanksgiving Break

Week of Nov. 28 to Dec. 2

Mini-Conference

- *Due:* *15-minute presentation. This presentation will be given sometime in the afternoon of Friday, December 2. We will develop our schedule as we approach the date and we will invite others who are not in our class to join us.*
- *Journal ideas:* You might use this last journal entry to reflect on the overall process to date. How have your ideas evolved over the semester? What aspects of the paper do you still need to nail down before next week?
- 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."

Dec. 9 Final Examination Period

- Final, fully-revised, impeccable paper due in hard copy to me and to your Outside Advisor.