

HIST 371 Senior Seminar Fall 2012 T 1:10-3:45 Comenius Hall 304	Dr. Sandra Aguilar aguilar@s@moravian.edu Office: Comenius Hall 302 Office hours: T/Th: 10am-12pm and by appointment
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SENIOR SEMINAR



Course Description

Senior Seminar is 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.¹ 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.

¹I would like to thank my colleagues in the history department for their contributions to this syllabus. Dr. Sandy Bardsley first devised the framework for our 300-level courses: I have built on her course and subsequent versions offered by other members of the History Department. As a departmental effort, many words, phrases, and ideas of the syllabus have been shared freely.

Course Objectives

- 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 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 plenty of opportunity for feedback and rewriting between each stage.
- **Journal entries:** 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 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

No texts have been assigned for this course. I will provide you a handout entitled “Steps in the Research Process,” which you have to bring to all classes. 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. I have also left Rampolla's book on reserve at Reeves Library.

Prerequisites

This course draws very directly on Hist 270 & other history courses. I’m assuming that you are coming in with the following skills. If you do not have one or more of these skills, I expect you to take the initiative to acquire them as soon as possible – mention them in your meetings with me (maybe write down a checklist):

- **The ability to research topics by looking at what other historians have written.** In other words, the ability to find books & articles on a given topic. Where would you begin? Which databases would you use? I expect that you have used ILL to get books or articles not available here. I expect that you are discerning about what kinds of secondary sources are more reliable than others and that you are especially skeptical about what you find on the internet.
- **An appreciation of historiography.** I expect you to be aware of the fact that historians differ and that everyone will have a slightly different interpretation of the same event or process or historical phenomenon. Some will emphasize social class and conflict between classes as the most important thing in history & the thing that drives change (e.g., Marxist historians). Others may focus on politics or ideas or the lives of ordinary people or the experiences of women.
- **A good sense of how to use primary sources.** More concretely, this means that when you look at a primary source you’ll be thinking about things like “Who wrote this? Why? What is his/her perspective? How reliable is it? How does it differ from other accounts about the same thing?” I’m expecting that you know not to take everything (anything?) at face value.
- **Oral presentation skills** – 15-min presentations at end of course (I do not expect that you will yet have delivered papers this long, but I do expect that you are able to craft an oral presentation that is clear and engaging). We will talk more about this nearer the time.
- **Writing skills.** History and other courses to date should have gotten you accustomed to writing. I expect that you are accustomed to revising your writing rather than turning in first drafts and that you have a revision system in place – e.g., you routinely read drafts of your papers aloud to listen to see if they make good sense, you have other people lined up to read over drafts for you, you usually take papers to the Writing Center, etc.

If you think you may be deficient in any of these areas, take steps on your own to rectify the situation and talk about your actions with me at our meetings.

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.
- As a courtesy to the class, please be on time. Lateness will affect your grade.
- If you need to go to the restroom, please do so before or after the class. I will also give a short break at the middle of our class. Restrain from leaving the classroom unless it is extremely necessary.
- You should not carry on conversations in class, even if they happen to be related to the topic. Even if such conversations are relatively quiet and do not seem to disturb anyone nearby, they can be distracting and rude to the professor. So if you have something to say or ask, please share it with the rest of the class.
- Please turn off your cell phones during class. No texting will be tolerated.

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 1 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.

About style and sources

- Please use Times New Roman font size 12, one-inch margins, and double-space in between lines in all your assignments. The student's name, course number, and submission date should be typed in the upper left corner of the first page with single space in between lines. After this header, one blank line should appear before the assignment title, which should be followed by one blank line before beginning the assignment.
- Citations must be included in all papers including footnotes following the Chicago Style. See <http://moravian.libguides.com/content.php?pid=59393&sid=436067> or <http://dlib.hamilton.edu/sp/subjects/guide.php?subject=CitingSources#misc>
- 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.
- You should take advantage of Moravian College Writing, please call 610-861-1392 or contact them via email.
- Back up all your work (in your computer and an external drive) in order to avoid losing your files.

Students with disabilities

- Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Elaine Mara, assistant director of learning services for academic and disability support at 1307 Main Street, or by calling 610-861-1510. Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center.

Email communication

- I will send you relevant information and contact you when necessary only through your Moravian email account. I also expect you to contact me through your college email rather than your personal email.

- Email Etiquette: Whenever you are addressing an email to someone other than a good friend, you need to follow basic email etiquette. Your emails should have a proper greeting (Hello Professor X or Dr. Y, etc.); Hi there or just Hi is not acceptable. Your message should follow the rules of standard written English (capitalization, spelling, and grammar), and a closing (“Thank you for your help,” or “Thank you for your time”). It is always polite to thank the person for reading the email and trying to assist you. Also, be sure to sign the email with your own first and last name. The subject line of your email should be clear and formal. Messages that do not follow this format will not be read.
- If you need to discuss something with me, please come to my office hours or set an appointment.

Grade Distribution

10% Participation and classroom work

- Attendance is not enough; you need to be proactive expressing your ideas and doubts and interacting with other classmates. Participation is essential to generate a rich and stimulating discussion and to maintain students involved and motivated.
- Classroom work refers to written analysis as well as group discussions and written feedback. 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. 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.
- 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 in-class writing assignments, and your preparation for meetings with your expert consultant and me.

Research Paper

Throughout the semester you will carry out an in-depth study based on the interpretation of primary and secondary sources. Students will submit several assignments and present their progress in front of the class. Each stage is essential and should be given the importance of an independent assignment. At the end students will present their final outcome in a one-day conference.

5% Table of secondary and primary sources

5% Abstract of primary sources

10% Journal Entries

Throughout the semester you will write 10 journal entries to reflect on the process of research and writing. Journal entries must be at least one page long, double-spaced.

Journals serve as a place for you to untangle ideas, think through research strategies, and even vent about the frustrations you encounter. I will read every journal entry to ensure that you are keeping up your journal entries and taking them seriously. Journals are due at the beginning of the class. Late journals will not be accepted.

10% Note cards

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 to show them to me at our individual meetings. The amount of cards will vary according to your bibliography, however, bear in mind that an in-depth research project such as the one you are carrying out should include at least 10 sources.

5% Research Project

A four-page long project including: title, introduction, outline describing each section of your paper, and a bibliography. The project should address which primary sources you are going to analyze, why you are using that source, which is your thesis, and how does that source help you to prove your thesis. Include a bibliography with at least seven books or articles in addition to your primary sources.

30% Writing throughout the semester

Background on topic and sources, chunks 1-3, introduction and conclusion, outline, and drafts. Your first draft is due on November 2, a mere 10 weeks from the beginning of class, so you need to work hard and manage your time efficiently.

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 most deadlines are on the Sunday prior to our Tuesday class.

5% Conference presentation

It should last 15 minutes and will take place the last day of classes. Your talk should outline 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 10am on December 4 and continue, after an hour lunch 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.

20% Final Paper

A 25 pages long paper including introduction, conclusions, bibliography, and explanation of changes. This explanation will address the content changes that you have done including page numbers. 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 as an electronic copy by December 11 at 1:30pm. Send attachment as a word document or PDF to aguilar@moravian.edu

Please do not hesitate to speak directly with me if you have any questions about any of the assignments and/or requirements for the class.

The accumulated points will be converted to letter grades using the following scale:
100-93% = A, 92-90% = A-, 89-87% = B+, 86-83% = B, 82-80% = B-, 79-77% = C+, 76-73% = C, 72-70% = C-, 69-67% = D+, 66-63% = D, 62-60% = D- Anything less than 60% is an F.

Five points will be deducted from each paper's grade if it is submitted after the deadline and this deduction will be repeated for each consecutive late day after the assigned due date.

SCHEDULE

Week I (Aug. 27 to Aug 31)

INTRODUCTION

- Primary sources and the questions they can answer
- Anatomy of an article
- Library search strategies

Week II (Sept. 3 to Sept. 7)

BEGINNING RESEARCH

Define writing groups

Due:

- **Write a reaction** to the course syllabus including at least two comments that can be in the form of doubts or suggestions.
- **Read *Steps in the Research Process*** (which was provided to you on the first class).
- **Journal 1:** Focus on defining your topic. 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.
- **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.

Week III (Sept 10 to Sept. 14)

RESEARCH METHODS AND INTRODUCTION TO WRITING WORKSHOPS

Due:

- **Table** of primary and secondary sources.
- **Abstract** of primary source/s
- **Journal 2:** Focus on historiography. How is your thinking evolving about your topic changing as you see what other scholars have done in the secondary sources you are

uncovering? Are you disqualifying some topics because they have been done too thoroughly? Are you identifying topics that others have ignored?

- 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 Sunday September 9**.
- **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).
- Locate, order, read and take notes on sources.

Week IV (Sept. 17 to Sept. 21)

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 Sunday September 16**.
- **Write feedback** to group members for in-class distribution to your writing group. Please bring a copy for me also.
- **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 the class to work on with you.
- **Journal 3** 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 V (Sept. 24 to Sept. 28)

Individual Meetings with Me (times to be arranged)

Due:

- **Research project.** Email it to me and to your writing group members by **4:00pm on Sunday September 23**.
- 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.
- Continue to read and take notes on primary and secondary sources.
- If you have not met with your Outside Advisor, you must do it before the end of the week.
- **Journal 4:** How are the latest primary sources you have examined shaping your thinking about the topic? Are you noticing anything that has surprised you? What new insights are you developing?

Week VI (Oct. 1 to Oct. 5)

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 Sunday September 30.** .
- **Feedback** on research project and chunk 2 for group members for in-class distribution with copy for others in your group and copy for me.
- **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 5:** What did you learn from your meeting with your with Outside Advisor? 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.

Fall Break: October 8-9

Week VII (Oct. 10 to Oct. 12)

Individual Meetings with Me (times to be arranged)

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 6:** What were some of the most helpful suggestions you received from the writing workshop? What issues are arising in your research and writing?
- Continue to research and write.

Week VIII (Oct. 15 to Oct. 19)

WRITING WORKSHOP 3

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 Sunday October 14.**
- **Feedback** to group members for in-class distribution.
- Continue to research and write.
- **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.
- Bring **index cards** to class.
- **Journal 7:** 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 XIX (Oct. 22 to Oct. 26)

WRITING WORKSHOP 4

Due:

- Introduction and conclusion, revised outline and formatted works cited. E-mail these to me and your group members by **4:00pm on Sunday October 21**.
- **Feedback** to group members for in-class distribution.
- **Journal 8:** 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 X (Oct. 29 to Nov. 2)

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.
- **Journal 9:** How are you feeling about things at this stage? What needs to be done before you can put the complete draft together?
- Work on complete **draft** and email it to me and your group members by **4:00pm on Friday November 2**.

Week XI (Nov. 5 to Nov. 9)

WRITING WORKSHOP 5

Due

- **Feedback** on draft 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.
- Discussion of presentations.

Week XII (Nov. 12 to Nov. 16)

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

Due:

- **Revised draft.** Email to me by **12pm on Monday November 12**.
- Please **print out a copy of your draft** for your Outside Advisor and deliver it to him/her by 12pm on Monday November 12.
- Compile an **agenda** for our meeting in which we will discuss your revised draft. Your agenda should contain 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 10** 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 XII (Nov. 19 to Nov 20)

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

- Compile an **agenda** for our meeting in which we will discuss your revised draft. Your agenda should contain 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 10 to the meeting.

Week XIII (Nov 26 to Nov 30)

PREPARING CONFERENCE PAPERS AND FINAL PAPER

Week XIV (Nov 4)

MINI-CONFERENCE

- 15-minute presentation. This presentation will be given sometime between 10am and 4:30pm on Tuesday December 4. We will develop our schedule as we approach the date and we will invite others who are not in our class to join us.
- 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.

DEC. 11 FINAL EXAMINATION PERIOD

- Final, fully-revised, impeccable paper due as an electronic copy to me (Word document or PDF.) Please send it to aguilars@moravian.edu by December 11 at 1:30pm. You also need to provide a hard copy to your Outside Advisor by that day.

I reserve the right to modify this syllabus. In those instances, I will give timely notification in class.