

***Introduction to History or
What Historians Know and How They Know It***
Summer I 2004

HIS - 150 Tuesday, Thursday 5:30 - 8:00 p.m. Briggs 126

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Office Hours: Tuesday, Thursday 3-5 p.m. McNichols Campus Library - 3rd floor
 Also after class and by appointment - sometimes I'm out of the office, so call ahead.
Office Phone: (313)993-3265, leave a detailed message, I check it often.

Textbooks: *A Student's Guide to History*, 9th edition. Jules R. Benjamin.
 New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004. ISBN: 0-312-24765-6

Black Protest and the Great Migration: A Brief History with Documents. Eric Arneson.
New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2003. ISBN: 0-312-39129-3

The Burning: Massacre, Destruction, and the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921. Tim Madigan.
New York: Thomas Dunne Books/St. Martin's Griffin, 2003.
ISBN: 0-312-30247-9

Course Explanation

This course is different than most other history courses you might take here at UDM. Though there are specific goals and accomplishments for the course, the subject matter is left to the particular instructor. We could attempt to range across the full range of human history, picking and choosing where to stop and work, a kind of intellectual buffet. Remember, what we consider "history" today has evolved over time, and many of the techniques historians use come to us from previous centuries. The twentieth century experienced an explosion of theories, ideologies, new media, and the professionalization of the field complicating our understanding of the field. History permeates our lives, our political rhetoric, and the directions our institutions will take. Understanding how history is presented to us and the uses of it is more important than ever. Thus we will look at not only the construction of books, but also films, photographs, oral history, and public history(museums, battlefields, etc.).

Interpreting Historical Systems

To perform this task, you must utilize two methods of thinking that go together in order to create a sophisticated historical interpretation:

1. Specific data about a given event, person, technology, etc.: dates, people, events, design characteristics, etc.
2. Interpretations of data: what does the evidence mean?

Do not leave data or interpretations out of your explanation. Simply throwing out interpretations (about the meaning of some design or event) without thinking about the available evidence is just arm-chair theorizing. To simply list historical particulars without the hard labor of interpreting what they mean is to push the subject into "factoids" or a list of random names and dates. You will hear of my interpretations and you will read those of other historians, but these are meant as helps and not as substitutes for your own thinking.

Historical Thinking

Learning to think historically differs from learning mathematics or a language. A language is an already completed system that confronts you, the learner, as a whole. The "data" and "interpretations" are fixed in advance. To learn it you must submit yourself to that fixed system. The interpretations of historical evidence are not fixed. There are some intelligent interpretations already articulated by historians, but the work of interpretation is never finished. As a result, a better model for the kind of learning in this course is adult interaction with the evidence rather than submission to a fixed system. To that end, we will discuss these types of issues through what I like to call the "historians" toolbox which will discuss as the class proceeds.

Class Participation

Historical learning and interpretation are acquired abilities. Yours should improve the longer you continue to work with a particular body of evidence or historical question. For that reason, a high value will be placed on your participation in class discussions. When you think you have spotted a flaw in my - or some other historian's - interpretation, risk the argument. Whether you change your mind in the process or I change mine or we continue to disagree, we all learn by the attempt.

Reading Assignments

Starting with the second class session, every class will have a reading assignment attached to it. The readings *are not optional* - they are required. Each covers a different facet of the course and are key parts of the course. This is primarily a readings course, and since we dispense with a monstrous textbook, the readings should not prove excessive. If you find that you are unable to read every word, work on "skimming" the work while still extracting the key information. We will discuss how to deal with this technique.

Though implied, I must reiterate that you must keep up with the readings. Do not let yourself fall behind in the readings or the assignments as it makes your success in the course much harder to achieve.

Weekly Quizzes

Every Thursday, starting with week 2, we will have a six question quiz, with short answer questions. These quizzes take the place of a midterm and longer final and deal primarily with the class themes and readings. If you miss a quiz, you will receive a "50" for a grade and are required to write a two page summary [typed, double spaced] of the theme covered for the quiz and the reading assignment. Missed quizzes cannot be dropped. If you should miss a quiz it requires a two page summary of the week's theme and reading assignment [typed, double-spaced] turned in to me by the end of the semester.

Quizzes are graded as follows:

1 wrong = 89% [B] 2 wrong = 79% [C]
3 wrong = 69 % [D] 4 wrong = 59 % [F - but better than a 50% for missing it]

I always assign a letter grade so you know where you stand beyond the percentages.

Essays

Historians do not merely list "factoids" to each other, in the best works they attempt to provide analysis and narrative to often scattered and complex materials. To that end, this class will have a short, four page writing component that deals with constructing a paper proposal using the materials we have read in class.

Grading Breakdown

Quizzes	50%
Short Essay [1]	40%
<u>Participation</u>	<u>10%</u>
Total:	100%

My grading system relies on the traditional ten point system with points assigned to each assignment. For the most part, the percentages and letter grades will let you know where you stand in the class.

100-90 = A 89-80 = B 79-70 = C 69-60 = D 59 and below = F

To help you, I always include a letter grade and full comments when grading your work.

Attendance/Class Courtesy Policy

While I dislike having to dictate such matters, this is a recurrent problem.

Absences: If you miss a class session, you are required to submit all assignments [particularly so on quiz days] and to obtain lecture notes from your fellow classmates. While important situations will arise during the semester, extended absences require an explanation to either myself or the College of Liberal Arts and Education. Repeated absences without extenuating circumstances will result in your being referred to the Dean's office so they can determine an appropriate course of action. Failure to notify either the instructor or Dean's office will result in your not passing the class, required for graduation or otherwise.

Though this is a summer class, it is not a "make work" course, taking an extended vacation during the class is not okay, if you miss one week, you are really missing two weeks of work. (7 x 2=14)

Courtesy: I encourage an open discussion forum to include all student contributions. As the general rule, I follow common sense and accepted social norms to govern behavior in my classes.

University Policy on Plagiarism & Academic Dishonesty

Note: Faculty have been asked to include the following statement in the syllabus:

Among the most serious academic offenses is plagiarism, submitting the words or style of another author or source without acknowledgement or formal documentation. Plagiarism occurs when specific phrases or entire passages, whether a sentence, paragraph or longer excerpt, are incorporated into one's own writing without quotation marks or documentation. One also plagiarizes by paraphrasing the work of another, that is, retaining another writer's ideas and structure without documentation.

Students are advised to always set off another writer's exact words by quotation marks, with appropriate references. Students avoid plagiarism by concentrating on their own words and ideas and by fully crediting others' work and ideas when they find their way into the writing. Whenever in doubt, cite the source.

Students who purchase essays from other students or agencies or who copy from one another or from prohibited sources, commit the most serious type of academic dishonesty.

The consequences of plagiarism, or any act of academic dishonesty, may range from failure in a course to dismissal from the University.

University of Detroit Mercy Policy Statement

HIS - 150 Summer 2004 Schedule

Week 1 May 4 Introduction

Readings: No readings.

May 6 Facets of History - What it is, what it isn't, and how it matters to your life

Readings: Benjamin, Chap. 1 "The Subject of History and How to Use It" pp. 1-18.
Chap. 2 "How to Read a History Assignment" pp. 19-25.

Week 2 May 11 Internal Migration - The First Great Migration - Secondary works

Readings: Arnesen, Preface, pp.v-viii, 1-11, 45-66.

May 13 Reading Primary Documents - The Building Blocks of History

NO CLASS *Readings:* Arnesen, 11-18, 67-86.
Benjamin, Chapter 2 cont. "Taking Notes" pp.26-46.

Week 3 May 18 Interpreting Primary Documents

Readings: Arnesen, 18-29, 87-127.

May 20 Combining Primary and Secondary Documents - Writing in History

Readings: Benjamin, Chapter 3 "How to Write History Assignments" pp.58-77.

Week 4 May 25 Using Historical Materials When Reading Additional Materials

Readings: Madigan, Author's Note, Prologue, Chap. 1,2,3 pp. xiii-xix, 1-67.
Benjamin, Chapter 4 pp.78-120.

May 27 Discussing Varying Interpretations

Readings: Madigan, Chap. 4 pp. 68-85; Arnesen, 29-35, 128-179.

Week 5 June 1 Sorting out complex narratives

Readings: Madigan, Chap. 5,6,7,8,9,10 pp. 87-184.

Week 6 June 8 Writing an Analytical Essay

Readings: Madigan, Chap. 11,12,13 pp. 185-233.
Benjamin, Chap. 5 pp.121-178.

June 10 Writing, cont.

Readings: Madigan, Chap. 14 pp. 234-244; Arnesen, 35-37, 180-203.

Week 7 June 15 Surveying the work of an historian

Readings: Madigan, Chap. 15, 16 pp. 245-270.

June 17 What have we learned?

Readings: No readings - **Essay due.**