**HI 400: Senior Research Symposium**

**Fall Semester 2022**

**Dr. Mark S. Schantz**

**Location: Churchill Seminar Room**

**MW 12:30 p.m.- 1:50 p.m.**

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Office Hours: TBA, both in-person and Zoom available.

*By way of Introduction:* Welcome to HI 400! I love teaching this course, and especially the opportunity to work with and to support students on their own projects. While each of you will have a mentor in the History Department with whom to work, please call on me in any way to assist you with your project. I hold to a radically democratic pedagogy in which we all do our best to create a community that is supportive of our work in class and outside of class. This pedagogy also requires that each of us be responsible readers, careful critics, and respectful and regular contributors to class discussion. This course will work only if we do.

Researching, writing, and presenting academic work can be simultaneously rigorous and tedious, joyful and fraught, painful and pleasurable. Mood swings are to be expected! The acute feeling that you are floundering in your work is normal, not pathological. There’s nothing to do about these challenges other than to keep going, with a little help from your colleagues in this course.

**You should know that I am unequivocally dedicated to your success in this seminar.**

**Please let me know what I can do to help you to succeed.**

*Course Description*: This course serves as the required senior capstone course for students majoring in history. The aim of this course is for you to produce a research paper that exhibits a clear thesis, a command of the secondary sources on your subject and demonstrates your ability to use primary sources in support of your argument. If you are a student reading for Honors, your task will be to turn in a detailed outline of your project thus far and present it on the last day of class. That’s it. Everything we do in this course is designed to help you achieve those ends.

Here’s what we will be up to:

**First**, we will read and discuss together essays and book chapters that are exemplary of the historian’s craft. The point here is for us to read these essays with a critical eye—How do they state a thesis? How do they marshal evidence to support their thesis? What kinds of evidence do they use and how? What do the authors do to make a compelling case? Where do they demonstrate weaknesses that may be instructive to you? We draw these essays from different topics and time periods; but we should all be conversant enough with the literature of history to learn from these selections. These essays will also raise important issues regarding the writing of history and may help you sort out interpretive questions that you discover in your research. So, while this is not a traditional course in historiography it will pose important issues and questions that historians confront in the pursuit of their practice.

**Second**, this course requires you submit a sequence of assignments designed to keep your project on track. All written assignments should be submitted to me in paper copy and are due in class on the day indicated on the syllabus. You must also submit a copy of that assignment to your advisor on your project. Please consult with the advisor of your project on how they would like to receive each assignment—either electronically or in paper copy.

This sequence of assignments includes a current “state of your project” paper due on the first day class, a statement of your research question and why it matters, an historiographical overview of the research on your subject, a rough draft of your paper, and a final version of your essay. ALL students (including those reading for Honors) will present an oral presentation of their project at the end of the semester. See the daily schedule for the semester for due dates for each assignment.

**Third**, for each of the assignments above, we will hold peer critique sessions that we will call “Writer’s Workshops.” These will take place during regularly scheduled class time. With the exception of the assignment due on the first day of class, we will schedule a systematic peer critique of each assignment—with at least a couple of student readers offering comment on the student project they have been assigned. We will build the exact schedule for the peer critiques during the first week of class. The process of peer critique will be key in helping you to see your work as others see it and to have the courage to revise your work. Your work in the Writer’s Workshop sessions will be considered as part of your class participation grade for the course.

***Learning Outcomes***: Upon completion of this course, students will be able to

* Understand and define the components of high-quality historical writing.
* Analyze and assess historical essays.
* Synthesize their learning in the writing of and the presentation of a research paper or detailed outline.

***Important Notes*:**

* Final papers for this course will be twenty-five double spaced pages in length, excluding your bibliography, illustrations, maps, etc. Those students reading for Honors will submit a detailed outline of their essays (between ten- and fifteen-pages double-spaced pages in length) at the end of this semester and will also be required to present what they have accomplished during this semester. **That is, ALL students will present their work**. Those students reading for Honors will present their work on the last day of regular class for the semester (November 30); those students not reading for Honors will present their Senior Conference presentations on the day and time set aside for final examination for this course (December 7, 1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.) **All students are required to attend all presentations for this course**. And Honors students, don’t forget to sign up for HI 401 in the spring, when you will complete your essay.
* This course will be taught in a **seminar style.** While I will no doubt make introductory, interpretive, or challenging remarks, I will NOT lecture. This means that the burden for learning in this course is one that we all carry together. Our job, our duty even, is to be sure that we are ready to discuss the readings for each class assignment. This means making reading notes before class and coming to class ready to engage with the assignment in detailed and specific ways. You will need to be able to cite specific passages and page numbers to support your points, you will need to read references and footnotes, and, perhaps, do some research on the essay writers that we read before class. We have a wonderful opportunity to learn from each other. So, let’s make that happen every day. My expectation is that each of you will participate in class discussions every day we meet. The quality of what you say (not the volume of your verbiage) will be my guide in measuring your performance in class. Please let me know what I can do to encourage your work in class!
* I expect all your writing for this course to be crisp and clear. It should avoid stylistic infelicities and grammatical scandals. It should also be accurate in its use of footnotes and bibliographic citations in accordance with Kate L. Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers*, *Theses, and Dissertations*, 8th edition (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013). There is much more of use in Turabian’s volume than discovering the arcane and mystical arts of the proper citation of historical evidence. Indeed, all the material in Part One of Turabian is relevant to all your projects and contains nuggets of practical wisdom that may well warrant your consideration.
* A suggestion: It may well be helpful you to read, look out, analyze, etc., non-fiction articles in first-tier publications such as *The Atlantic, The New Yorker*, *Harper’s Weekly*, or some other journal of your choice. This is some of the finest, non-fiction essay writing in the world. It may provide you with clues, models, ideas, fancies, whims, devices, etc., for putting together a fine piece of prose. I make no specific recommendations here but urge you to be adventurous and look at some articles.
* The secret, and only secret, to writing well is possessing the courage to look at your work with a critical eye. Re-writing is the key to writing well. No one writes a perfect bit of prose on the first draft, or even the second, or maybe not the third. If you read the prefaces and/or introductions from fine books you will find authors thanking their editors and colleagues for reading many drafts of their work. Be fearless. Write well.

The words below are not mere administrative trivia attached to our course syllabus; they are part of the democratic work that we will be about in this course.

***The Honor Code & Academic Conduct***: You are expected to abide by the College’s rules of academic honesty. Please refer to the Student Handbook for Birmingham-Southern College’s Honor Code and its statement on plagiarism. When you turn in someone’s else’s work under your own name, and/or paraphrase, quote, or borrow ideas that are not your own without proper citation, you commit plagiarism—a serious academic offense with consequences ranging from failing the course to disciplinary action by the college. Students suspected of violating the Honor code will be referred immediately to the Honor Council.

***BSC Resources for Writers:*** Located in Humanities 102, the Writing Center offers in-person and virtual peer-to-peer tutoring and a quiet, supportive lab space to work on writing assignments. The Writing Center’s tutors are students from a wide variety of majors on campus and have the range to address student writing needs with discipline specificity. Supervised and assisted by Writing Center directors, our tutors provide one-on-one consultations for any student at any point in the writing process. During these consultations, tutors do not “edit” papers; instead, they assist students in addressing any potential writing issues, including content development, grammar usage, and citation formatting. Each tutorial is about 30 minutes long, free of charge, and available on a drop-in basis. There is no limit to how many tutorials a student may attend. Once logged in, a director will take your information and pair you with a tutor for your 30-minute tutorial.

The Writing Center is open Sunday-Thursday, 2pm-8pm. To ensure a full 30-minute tutorial time slot, students are encouraged to be mindful of assignment-heavy weeks, keep track of due dates, and visit the Writing Center at their earliest availability during open hours. Please contact Dr. Anna Williams or Laura Tolbert (writingcenter@bsc.edu) with any questions or requests for virtual appointments.

**Title IX:** Birmingham-Southern College is committed to the creation and maintenance of a safe and healthy learning environment for students and the campus community. The College forbids any type of sexual or gender-based misconduct among its students, faculty, and staff. The College encourages all members of the academic community to report suspected sexual and gender-based misconduct to the appropriate authorities so that it can be investigated, remedied, and eliminated. BSC forbids retaliation against any person who has opposed, reported, or participated in an investigation concerning sexual or gender-based misconduct. See the BSC Title IX website ([www.bsc.edu/titleix](http://www.bsc.edu/titleix)) for more information, including a link to file an online report form and information about how and to whom to report in person. If you or a peer have experienced such misconduct, the Title IX webpage also includes information about the numerous resources available on campus and in the local community with whom the College encourages you to seek support. Confidential resources include counseling and health care providers, our Chaplain, and numerous faculty and staff members who are trained in assisting students by answering questions and helping them navigate their choices in seeking further support and the reporting process.

**Accessibility Statement:** Students with a disability that qualify under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and require accommodations should be registered with BSC’s Accessibility Office. If you are registered for academic accommodation, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss any accommodation that may be necessary. During this discussion you are not expected to disclose any details concerning your disability though you may do so at your discretion. If you have a disability but have not yet registered, please contact Dr. Sandra Foster, Assistant Director of Accessibility Services and Resources, at 205-226-7909 (x1909) or [smfoster@bsc.edu](mailto:smfoster@bsc.edu), or visit Norton 228. Keep in mind that no accommodation will be made unless and until the instructor receives official notification from the College.

***Cell phone moratorium***: The scientific and neurological evidence is now conclusive: the so-called “smart phone” is making you dumb. Cell phones and their attendant apps corrode your ability to form coherent and accurate memories, interrupt your concentration, and cripple your ability to have actual conversations with the people in front of you. This we must fight together. The standing rule for this class is that all cell phones must be turned off and stowed the minute you walk into our classroom. If you arrive early, try talking to your classmates, reviewing notes, or simply enjoying a moment of solitude. If I find you working on your phone when I arrive, I will ask to borrow your phone and place it in my “Cell Phone Time Out” box. Here it may repose comfortably while we have class, while conserving battery power. When class is over, I will be happy to return phones to their owners. I will assume that this will never happen, however, and that all of you will comply with this cell phone moratorium.

***Grading*:** Your grade in this course will be determined according to the following assignments and percentages.

* Twenty-five-page essays or ten to fifteen-page detailed outlines for those students reading for Honors. This grade will include feedback from faculty on the oral presentation that you deliver of your work. (45%)
* Oral Presentation of your written research project. (15%)
* Timely submission of all sequenced assignments to me and to your advisor. Because these are working documents, I will not grade these sequenced assignments—but to receive full credit for them, you must submit them on time. (15%)
* Class participation throughout the term and quality of your work in Writer’s Workshop sessions. (25%) Specific behaviors that demonstrate superb class participation include: attending all class meetings, being ready to dive into informed discussion, offering civil observations that keep the conversation going, listening carefully to others thus helping them to clarify their thinking, speaking with each other directly without channeling all comments through me (the professor), being specific in your comments, asking good questions that help deepen our understanding of the texts at hand. Please feel free to ask me at any time during semester about the quality of your class participation—I will be happy to give you my quick read of where you stand at any given time. My dream would be that if I were not able to attend class one day, that you would be able to work with each other to make class meaningful even in my absence.

***Class Schedule and Daily Reading Assignments***: Class sessions are schedule for Mondays and Wednesdays from 12:30 – 1:50 p.m. I expect all students to attend every session of this course, fully prepared to engage with the texts at hand. I also expect you to bring reading notes to class, which I may collect from time to time, to offer helpful feedback.

All essay assignments will either be sent to you via email in PDF format, or available on the Moodle site for this course or will be easily accessed through the databases at the BSC library. Please let me know if you have any difficulty obtaining any of the assignments. The schedule of readings and assignments may well be modified as the semester unfolds. Students are responsible for keeping themselves aware of any changes made to the course schedule of readings and assignments.

\*\*\*The only book required for purchase in this class is Kate Turabian’s *Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. It will be handy to have Turabian’s book close at hand.

***Some Preliminary and Important Concerns:***

August 24: Introduction to the course and student presentations of two-three double-spaced typed-pages “state of the project” papers. These will be ungraded but required papers and your assignment is to present the “state of your project” to the class. Think of this requirement as your admission ticket to the rest of the class.

August 29: Kate Turabian Redux. There’s more to Turabian than the Chicago Manual of Style footnote form! Let’s read and discuss, Turabian’s *Manual*, chapters 1-3. This day will be devoted to getting you a good start on your research.

The next two class sessions will be something of a primer on writing. If you don’t already own a copy of Strunk and White, The Elements of Style, you should absolutely go on Amazon or to your nearest independent bookstore and purchase one. This will be the best five dollars you’ve ever spent.

August 31: Excerpts from Stephen King’s *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft,* TBA

**LABOR DAY: SEPTEMBER 5**

September 7: Anne Lamott, “Shitty First Drafts” and excerpts from Verlyn Klinkenborg’s *Several* *Short Sentences About Writing*, TBA.

***Provocateurs***: *While reading these model essays and chapters, you need to be assiduously researching your papers and gathering materials and beginning to write! They are designed to provide you with some ideas about how to approach your own work.*

N.B. These reading selections are challenging and quite possibly disturbing. Give yourself ample time to read them and to make careful notes. PLEASE SEE THE MOODLE PAGE FOR THIS COURSE FOR ALL OF THE READING ASSIGNMENTS BELOW. SCHEDULE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

September 12: Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous People’s History of the United States* (2014), Introduction and chapters one and two and three.

September 14: Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous People’s History of the United States* (2014), chapters four and five and conclusion.

September 16: Andrew Levy, “The Anti-Jefferson: Why Robert Carter III Freed His Slaves (And Why We Couldn’t Care Less),” *The American Scholar* 70 (Spring 2001): 15-35.

September 19: W. E. B. Du Bois, “The Propaganda of History,” from *Black Reconstruction in America 1860-1880* (1935), 711-737.

September 21: Joan Kelly, “Did Women Have a Renaissance?” from *Women, History, and Theory* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 19-47.

September 26: Robert Darnton, “Workers Revolt: The Great Cat Massacre of the Rue Saint-Severin” from *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1985)

September 28: Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, “The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations Between Women in Nineteenth-Century America,” *Signs* (Autumn 1975): 1-29.

October 3: Linda K. Kerber, “The Paradox of Women’s Citizenship in the Early Republic: The Case of *Martin vs. Massachusetts* 1805,” *The American Historical Review* 97 (April 1992): 349-378.

October 5: Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (2010), preface and introduction and chapter one.

**FALL BREAK: OCTOBER 6--9**

October 10: Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (2010), chapter eight, conclusion, numbers and terms, and abstract sections.

October 12: Time to take a breath, talk, and to recoup. We’ll have time for in-class reflections.

***Digging Deeper into the Writing Process:***

October 17: Writer’s Workshop: Research Question and Why It Matters paper assignment due in class. Please write a concise one to two-page double-spaced typed paper that describes your research question and why it matters. Another way to think about this assignment: What will we know or understand from your paper better than we did before? This may change as your research develops. For now, though, take your best shot at answering. We will share and discuss these assignments in the seminar. Students will read their short papers to the class!

October 19: Writer’s Workshop Continued.

October 24: Writer’s Workshop Continued.

October 26: What is historiography? Read and be ready to discuss Turabian chapters 4 and 5.

October 31: Free Day! Please use this time to work and to meet with your faculty mentor.

November 2: Please turn in your Historiographical Essays in class. It will be very important for you to discuss in advance with your project advisor how they would like you to structure your historiographical analysis. Dr. Ott, for example, may ask you to think of your essays as dialogs between a half-dozen leading historians of your subject. Others may have different ideas in mind—including a full bibliography at this point in your work. Before you write your essay, please consult with your advisor and be clear on the ground rules.

November 7: Writer’s Workshop: Historiographical Essays will be read in class.

November 9: Writer’s Workshop: Historiographical Essays will be read in class.

November 14: Writer’s Workshop: Historiographical Essays will be read in class.

November 16: Oral Presentation Rubric Discussion

November 21: Free Day! Time to write and to meet with your faculty mentor.

**THANKSGIVING BREAK: NOVEMBER 23 – NOVEMBER 27.**

November 28: What would be helpful? I’m serious.

November 30: Last Day of Class—Drafts of Papers Due; a copy to me and to your faculty mentor.

**December 7: Senior Conference Presentations 1:00 p.m. Final Papers Due!**