

Hist/AS336

Research in

American History

Prof. Patrick Rael, Bowdoin College, Fall 2008

Meets: TTh11:30-1
Adams 202
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This course provides students an opportunity to complete a semester-long research project in American history. Here is your chance to take on the historian's task, from soup to nuts. You will design a topic, research primary historical sources, locate a historical problem relating to your topic from secondary historical sources, and develop a hypothesis which addresses your question. The end result will be a paper of at least twenty-five pages. You may choose any doable topic on the history of the Civil War era (loosely considered) or African American history before the twentieth century. You *must* base your research in a major collection of historical materials from Bowdoin's rich (and vastly underutilized) collections.

This course is a 300-level research course, intended especially for history majors. It fulfills the History Department's capstone requirement. The coursework involved will be of a high level, but the greatest challenge in the course will be the need for self-direction. Of all the courses you have taken at Bowdoin, this one will require you to control your own time.

BOOKS

Perrin, Robert. *Pocket Guide to the Chicago Manual of Style*. Boston: Heinle, 2006.
Rampolla, Mary Lynn. *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*. 5th ed. Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 2001.
Turabian, Kate. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 7th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

ASSIGNMENTS

Course assignments

Diagnostic essay	5
Road maps of readings	5
Academic honesty writing assignment	5
Savenger hunt	5
Source report wiki post	5

Workshops

Workshop: plagiarism and note-taking	5
Workshop: finding arguments (book reviews)	5
Workshop: making piles	5
Workshop: citation/bibliography form	5
Workshop: topic sentences	5
Workshop: incorporating evidence	5

Workshop: developing a thesis	5
Workshop: making piles (your papers)	5
The research paper	
Research notes summary	5
Annotated bibliography	5
Secondary problem analysis	5
"Making piles" assignment	5
Road map	5
First draft	20
Peer evaluation	10
Self evaluation	10
Final draft	20
Total	150

There are thus 150 total points to earn in the class. Your final grade will be calculated as a percentage of these.

COURSE CONTRACT

ATTENDANCE: No absences are “excused” -- you are responsible for all material covered during missed class days. Those who may miss class to attend extra-curricular events are requested to inform me, as a courtesy, of planned absences. If special considerations prevent you from fulfilling course obligations (such as illness), please provide me with documentation so we may consider an exception.

LATE OR MISSED ASSIGNMENTS: Unless stated otherwise, assignments are due at the beginning of class; assignments handed in later in the day (during or after class) will be considered one day late. I will accept late assignments with no penalty only for documented health or other emergencies. In general, assignments which receive letter grades will be marked down one-third of a grade (e.g., from B+ to B), for each day late. It is particularly important to stay on schedule when completing a big project such as this one. A final but crucial point: *All work must be completed in order to pass this course.*

A NOTE ON ACADEMIC HONESTY: Each author owns his or her own ideas, words, and research. You *must* give appropriate credit — generally in the form of quotations and proper footnotes — when using the work of another scholar. I expect you to be familiar both with Bowdoin's honor code, and with the guidelines for proper citation and attribution of sources provided for this course. If you have any questions, ask rather than take risks. *Plagiarism, whether intentional or not, is a serious violation of academic standards and Bowdoin's honor code.* I will enforce violations of the honor code by bringing immediate, uncontested action before the Judicial Board. Minimum penalties for plagiarism will be to fail the course. A special place in the underworld is reserved for those who think their college professor is technologically impaired; I can track down plagiarized Internet material faster than it can be copied and pasted into a paper.

SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS

Week	Tu/Th	Date	Class session	Assignment due
1	Th	9/4	Introductions	
2	Tu	9/9	The writing model Reading: Rael, "What Happened and Why?"	Diagnostic essay
2	Th	9/11	Road mapping readings Readings: Lapsansky; Fredrickson	Road maps for readings
3	Tu	9/16	Academic honesty and the the profession Reading: To be announced	Writing assignment posted to class forum
3	Th	9/18	Workshop: plagiarism and note-taking	Workshop assignment
4	Tu	9/23	Library research session	Scavenger hunt
4	Th	9/25	Source reports	Wiki post
5	Tu	9/30	Workshop: finding arguments (book reviews)	Workshop assignment
5	Th	10/2	Workshop: making piles	Workshop assignment
6	Tu	10/7	Workshop: citation/bibliography form	Workshop assignment
6	Th	10/9	Workshop: topic sentences	Workshop assignment
7	Tu	10/14	Fall vacation	
7	Th	10/16	Workshop: incorporating evidence	Workshop assignment Topic statement
8	Tu	10/21	Workshop: developing a thesis	Workshop assignment
8	Th	10/23	The writing model: structuring our papers	
9	Tu	10/28	Workshop: making piles (your papers)	"Piles" assignment/handouts
9	Th	10/30	Peer evaluation of student work	

Week	Tu/Th	Date	Class session	Assignment due	Group A	Group B	Group C
10	Tu	11/4	<p>During this time, we will not meet as a class. The class will split up into three groups: A, B, and C. Each will complete the same assignments, but the due dates will be staggered, so that I can give each project the attention it deserves.</p> <p>We will all meet on 12/9 for a final wrap-up session.</p> <p>I will hold office hours during class time. If you wish to consult with me about your project, please use those hours, or my regular office hours.</p>		Hand in annotated bibliography		
10	Th	11/6		Hand in secondary problem analysis			
11	Tu	11/11		Hand in "making piles" assignment	Hand in annotated bibliography		
11	Th	11/13		Hand in road map	Hand in secondary problem analysis		
12	Tu	11/18		Hand in first draft	Hand in "making piles" assignment	Hand in annotated bibliography	
12	Th	11/20		Hand in peer/self evaluations	Hand in road map	Hand in secondary problem analysis	
13	Tu	11/25		Meet to discuss 1st drafts	Hand in first draft	Hand in "making piles" assignment	
13	Th	11/28	Thanksgiving vacation				
14	Tu	12/2			Hand in peer/self evaluations	Hand in road map	
14	Th	12/4			Meet to discuss 1st drafts	Hand in first draft	
15	Tu	12/9	Meet for course evaluations Final paper instructions			Hand in peer/self evaluations	
15	Th	12/11				Meet to discuss 1st drafts	
	Th	12/18	Final draft due, 12:00 noon	Final draft			