

History 60

Introduction to Historical Writing

Bowdoin College, Fall 2004

Meets: MW 11:30-1:00
Prof. Patrick Rael
Office hours: T1-4, by apt.

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This introductory seminar course is for students who would like to work on their writing. We will spend the semester practicing skills necessary to read, research, and write successfully at the college level. While our focus will be on the discipline of history, the skills we hone will be of use in a wide range of courses in the humanities and social sciences. The work load will not be heavy, but it will entail short exercises due every week. Attendance at each class will be mandatory. We will conclude with a short research paper project on topics students choose. The course is open to students at all levels, with preference given to first- and second-year students. It cannot be taken for credit toward the history major.

BOOKS

- Jared M Diamond. *Guns, Germs and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*. W. W. Norton & Company, Incorporated. Trade Paper. 04/1999. ISBN: 0-393-31755-2. \$16.95
- Michael J Salevouris, Conal Furay. *The Methods and Skills of History: A Practical Guide*. Harlan Davidson Incorporated. Trade Paper. 01/2000. ISBN: 0-88295-982-4. \$21.95
- Mary Lynn Rampolla. *Pocket Guide to Writing History*. Bedford/Saint Martin's. Paper Text. 10/2000. ISBN: 0-312-24766-4. \$9.50
- Diana Hacker. *Rules for Writers*. Bedford/Saint Martin's. Trade Paper. 08/2003. ISBN: 0-312-40685-1. \$19.50
- Keith Hjortshoj. *The Transition to College Writing*. Bedford/Saint Martin's. Paper Text. 01/2001. ISBN: 0-312-14916-6. \$26.50
- Kate L Turabian. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*. University of Chicago Press. Trade Paper. 02/1996. ISBN: 0-226-81627-3. \$14.00
- Patrick Rael. *Reading, Writing, and Researching for History: A Guide for College Students*. Brunswick, ME: Bowdoin College. Also available online at <<http://academic.bowdoin.edu/WritingGuides/>>.

ASSIGNMENTS

Diagnostic essay	5
Film review	10
Annotated bibliography	10
Read map	10
First draft	15
Peer evaluation	5
Final draft	15
Attendance and participation	10
Weekly assignments	20

COURSE CONTRACT:

History 60 syllabus (Rael)

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. A final but crucial point: *All work must be completed in order to pass this course.*

A NOTE ON COMPUTER USE:

(1) Backup your work! I am not very amenable to excuses for late or missed assignments due to computer crashes. I would also like you to keep backup copies of submitted assignments -- either in electronic form or hard copy — for the duration of the semester.

(2) As a general rule of thumb, then, please do not use the Internet for this course except in conjunction with course assignments which direct you to do so, or in consultation with me.

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.

SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

Sept. 6	Introductions
Sept. 8	<i>Guns, Germs, and Steel</i> , Prologue and ch. 1.
Sept. 13	Looking at writing Diagnostic essay due
Sept. 15	Library session: ComFit
Sept. 20	<i>Guns, Germs, and Steel</i> , ch. 4. <i>The Transition to College Writing</i> , ch. 5
Sept. 22	<i>Mastering the Skills of History</i> : ch. 2-3.
Sept. 27	<i>Guns, Germs, and Steel</i> , chs. 5-6.
Sept. 29	<i>Mastering the Skills of History</i> : ch. 4-5.
Oct. 4	<i>Guns, Germs, and Steel</i> , chs. 7, 10.
Oct. 6	<i>Mastering the Skills of History</i> : chs. 7.
Oct. 11	No class – fall vacation
Oct. 13	In-class film
Oct. 18	<i>Guns, Germs, and Steel</i> , chs. 11-12.

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Oct. 20	Film review due
Oct. 25	<i>Guns, Germs, and Steel</i> , chs 13-14.
Oct. 27	<i>Mastering the Skills of History</i> : ch. 11.
Nov. 1	<i>The Transition to College Writing</i> , chs. 2-3.
Nov. 3	<i>Mastering the Skills of History</i> : ch. 6.
Nov. 8	Library research session <i>The Transition to College Writing</i> , ch. 6
Nov. 10	Bibliography and citation <i>Mastering the Skills of History</i> : ch. 9.
Nov. 15	<i>Guns, Germs, and Steel</i> , chs 13-14. Annotated bibliography due
Nov. 17	The writing model <i>Mastering the Skills of History</i> : ch. 12.
Nov. 22	First draft: structure, thesis Road map due
Nov. 24	No class – Thanksgiving
Nov. 29	First draft: formatting, voice, common mistakes <i>The Transition to College Writing</i> , ch. 7
Dec. 1	Applying the writing model First draft due
Dec. 6	Group meetings to discuss drafts Peer evaluation due
Dec. 8	Group meetings to discuss drafts
	Final draft due