

History 3300-003, "Introduction to Historical Research"

Fall 2015

Dr. Patryk Babiracki

MWF, 10-10:50

Room: UH 321

Office hours: Fridays, 1:30-3:30 and by appointment

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The syllabus may be subject to minor modifications

Course Description: This seminar is an introduction to historical methodology. It is structured around two chief components. First, and most broadly, we will think, read and talk about what historians do and why they do it. We will also explore *how* one can, might, should or should not write history. We will be interested in various historiographic approaches, and we will discuss issues such as: reasons for writing about the past, reliable methods for evaluating evidence, compelling forms of argumentation and structuring a narrative, as well as resources available to historians and students of history. Second, students will have the chance to engage in practical exercises meant to introduce them to the craft of history at the undergraduate level, including analysis of historical evidence, summarizing and reviewing academic articles, and conducting, writing and presenting one's own research.

Student Learning Outcomes: Students are expected to a) acquire practical skills that will allow them to conduct historical research and communicate their findings orally and in writing as appropriate to undergraduate level; b) be able to locate history-writing and thinking about the past in a historical perspective; c) come to appreciate a variety of historical methodologies; d) learn to think about their immediate environment critically, through historical lens.

Texts for Purchase:

Martha Howell and Walter Prevenier, *From Reliable Sources: An Introduction to Historical Methods* (Cornell UP, 2001); **ISBN-13:** 978-0801485602

Jan T. Gross, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland* (Penguin, 2002); **ISBN-13:** 978-0142002407

All other readings are available on Blackboard.

Grading:

-Nine weekly assignments (5% each; 45% total), due on Fridays of the weeks II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, XIII. Each of these assignment is an exercise in historical research, writing or thinking. For each, you will be required to turn in a one- to two-page essay. The quality of our Friday's discussion and your overall learning curve will depend on how thoroughly you will prepare these numbered assignments. So please apply yourselves!

-Research paper outline and annotated bibliography (10%), due week VIII (Friday, October 16). Writing a history paper is a process that requires forethought. Outline your ideas and arguments. Rearrange them, play with them, discard those elements that don't work and keep those that do. Ask yourself: why did some elements fit better than others? Don't avoid hard questions—confront them instead! Start early. Turn in a polished outline and a bibliography of sources you plan to use. Explain why these sources are relevant.

-Research paper first draft (15%), due week XII (Friday, November 13). Drafts are important. They are an integral part of the process of research and writing. They help you realize what you know and what you don't know. They help you see what's unclear about your reasoning. Writing begets thinking. Drafts enable you to show your work to others, who might help you improve your argumentation and your prose through constructive critique. The better your draft, the more mature your final piece of work will be.

-Research paper (15%), due Week XVI (Wednesday, Dec. 9). This is the fruit of your semester's labor. Be proud of it. Make it shine!

-Participation (15%). Sharing your ideas, insights and questions is key to this course. They help you grow and help others grow as thinkers, researchers and writers. I will also ask you to share your work with your colleagues.

Films. Sometimes I will use film clips to illustrate a point in class. You will not be responsible for this material, unless stated otherwise. However, they are available at the library (on reserve), and I encourage you to watch them to complement your readings. You may also refer to the films in your papers.

Attendance Policy: The University of Texas at Arlington, taking attendance is not required. Rather, each faculty member is free to develop his or her own methods of evaluating students' academic performance, which includes establishing course-specific policies on attendance. As the instructor of this class, **I have established following attendance policy:**

Each student is allowed three absences per semester, no questions asked. These absences will not affect the final grade. After that, each absence will incur a penalty of one-third of the final grade (e.g. an "A" will become an "A-"; and an "A-" will turn into a "B+" etc.). In other words, it is best to keep your "time off" for real emergencies and illness.

Disability Accommodations: UT Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including *The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*, *The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA)*, and *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act*. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of disability. Students are responsible for providing the instructor with official notification in the form of a letter certified by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD). Students experiencing a range of conditions (Physical, Learning, Chronic Health, Mental Health, and Sensory) that may cause diminished academic performance or other barriers to learning may seek services and/or accommodations by contacting:

The Office for Students with Disabilities, (OSD)www.uta.edu/disability or calling 817-272-3364.
Counseling and Psychological Services, (CAPS)www.uta.edu/caps/ or calling 817-272-3671.

Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

Title IX: *The University of Texas at Arlington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, genetic information, and/or veteran status in its educational programs or activities it operates. For more information, visit uta.edu/eos. For information regarding Title IX, visit www.uta.edu/titleIX.*

Academic Integrity: It is the philosophy of The University of Texas at Arlington that academic dishonesty is a completely unacceptable mode of conduct and will not be tolerated in any form. All persons involved in academic dishonesty will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. Discipline may include suspension or expulsion from the University.

“Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.” (Regents’ Rules and Regulations, Series 50101, Section 2.2)

Student Support Services Available: The University of Texas at Arlington supports a variety of student success programs to help you connect with the University and achieve academic success. These programs include learning assistance, developmental education, advising and mentoring, admission and transition, and federally funded programs. Students requiring assistance academically, personally, or socially should contact the Office of Student Success Programs at 817-272-6107 for more information and appropriate referrals.

E-culture policy: email is the best way to contact me. I will respond at my nearest convenience.
No laptops, mobile phones etc. are allowed in the classroom.

Expectations for Out-of-Class Study: Beyond the time required to attend each class meeting, students enrolled in this course should expect to spend at least an additional ### hours per week of their own time in course-related activities, including reading required materials, completing assignments, preparing for exams, etc.

Drop Policy: Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance.** Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and

Scholarships (<http://www.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

Student Feedback Survey: At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as “lecture,” “seminar,” or “laboratory” shall be directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student’s feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

Final Review Week: A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

Emergency Exit Procedures: Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit, which is located [TBA]. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist handicapped individuals.

Week I (Friday, August 28) Introduction to the course What is History?

Short handout available on BB

Week II (Aug 31-Sept. 4) The Stakes of History I:

Readings:

William Cronon, “The Riddle of the Apostle Islands” at:

http://www.williamcronon.net/writing/Cronon_Riddle_Apostle_Islands.htm

Paul Kramer, “A Useful Corner of the World: Guantánamo” at:

http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/a-useful-corner-of-the-world-guantnamo#slide_ss_0=1

Joseph Burrige, “Appeasement Analogies in British Parliamentary Debates Preceding the 2003

Invasion of Iraq” in Christian Karner and Bram Mertens, eds., *The Use and Abuse of Memory:*

Interpreting World War II in Contemporary European Politics (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2013), 43-58.

“The Kremlin uses its version of the past to forge a new ideology for the present,” *The Economist*, Nov. 8, 2007.

Assignment #1 for Friday: Prepare to discuss two cases of the use of history in contemporary public life (turn in one double-spaced page)

Week III (Sept. 7-11) Mon, Sept 7: Labor day, no classes!

Announcement and discussion of student research topic

Library Tour

Assignment #2 for Friday: prepare to discuss two distributed sample research papers. (turn in one double-spaced page)

Week IV (Sept. 14-18)

Resources for Historians; Writing a Research Paper

Readings:

Chaps I, and III, “The Source: The Basis of Our Knowledge about the Past,” and “Historical Interpretations: The Traditional Basics,” in Howell and Prevenier, 17-42, 69-

87. Also read Chap. II B., “Source Criticism: the Great Tradition”, 60-69.

Peter N. Miller, “How Objects Speak,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, August 11, 2014: <http://chronicle.com/article/How-Objects-Speak/148177/>

Assignment #3 for Friday: Prepare to discuss two historical artifacts. (turn in one double-spaced page)

Week V (Sept. 21-25)

History in historical perspective; Reading and Writing Book Reviews

Readings: Chapt. IV “New Interpretive Approaches” in Howell and Prevenier, 88-118.

Start reading Gross, *Neighbors*

Assignment #4 for Friday: Write a summary of the chapter in Gross’ book entitled “Who Murdered the Jews of Jedwabne”?

Week VI (Sept. 28-Oct. 2)

The Stakes of History II: The debate over the 1941 Polish murder of Jews in Jedwabne.

Readings: Gross, *Neighbors*.

Assignment #5 for Friday: write a **review** of the chapter in Gross’ book entitled “Who Murdered the Jews of Jedwabne”? (2 pp.)

Week VII (Sept. Oct. 5-9)

The Stakes of History II continued

Readings: Antony Polonsky and Joanna Michlic, eds., *Neighbors Respond*, 75-86 (Joanna Tokarska-Bakir), 93-102 (Antoni Macierewicz); 103-113 (Hanna Świda-Ziemia), 220-216 (Tomasz Strzembosz), 371-385 (Tomasz Szarota), 386-400 (Dariusz Stola), 408-413 (David Engel).

Assignment #6 for Friday: compare and contrast two responses to Gross’ book (2 pp.)

Week VIII (Oct. 12-16)

Stakes of History III: Film *The Wave* (2008), dir. Dennis Gansel

Friday: Annotated bibliography and paper outline due!

Assignment #7 for Friday: Write a response paper to *The Wave* (2 double-spaced pp.)

Week IX (Oct. 19-23)

Thinking about historical sources: interviews and images

Readings: TBA

Assignment #8 for Friday: interview your friend or a family member. Discuss your experience. Turn in a **two-page** summary of the experience. What was the most interesting about the assignment? What posed you the most problems? How did you address these problems? What did you find the most or least surprising?

Week X (Oct. 26-30)

Research and Writing Week; Individual meetings with students

Week XI (Nov. 2-6) Research and Writing Week.

Week XII (Nov. 9-13) Research and Writing Week.

First Draft of Research paper Due Friday!

Week XIII (Nov. 16-20)

Pop culture

Film: *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920), dir. Robert Wiene

Readings: Sigfried Kracauer, on *The Cabinet* in *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film* (Princeton UP, 2004)

Assignment #9 for Friday: What film would you choose to write a psychological history of the American film, and why? (1 p.)

Week XIV (Nov. 23-27)

Research and writing week

Week XV (Nov. 30- Dec. 4) No class on Friday, Nov. 27 due to Thanksgiving holidays!

Research and writing week.

Week XVI (Dec. 7-Dec. 9)

Final paper due Wednesday!

Dec. 3: final class / concluding discussion