History 3300

Introduction to Historical Research

Spring 2017

Prof. David C. LaFevor Office Hour: T/TH 9:30-11am

UH 327 [dlafevor@uta.edu](mailto:dlafevor@uta.edu)

Class meetings: T/TH 2-3:20

This course serves as an in-depth introduction to the past and present of the historian’s craft. It is divided into two major components: 1. The study of importance and evolution of historiography 2. Crafting a research paper that should serve as your masterpiece (in the original sense of that word).

We will focus on how historians have made sense of the past and how standards of the discipline have evolved over time. We will ask and form answers to several interrelated questions, among them: What makes good and bad history writing? Which historical questions are worth investigation and the expenditure of mental energy and time? What is the relationship between sources and the formation of our questions? What is a valid hypothesis? What are basic logistics of conducting historical research and how does the historian get from an original question to a book or article?

There are two books for this course. We will all read and discuss Marc Bloch’s *The Historian’s Craft* and each student will choose, in consultation with me, a book in her/his particular field of interest. The student will then deconstruct that book over the course of the semester and create a research plan that recreates the process of writing that work of history. This prospectus should include and explanation of the central research question, a travel plan and budget, a list of archives, and the details of how the work will be carried-out.

The central product of this course is your research paper. We will work together to choose a topic, create a work plan and historiography, and go over drafts. Your final product will be a “conference-length” paper, from 12-15 pages. The majority of the semester will be spend outside of class working on your own schedule.

Meetings/Benchmarks:

Week One:

17 January: Course Introduction/Major Questions

19 January: Discuss first half of Bloch

Week Two:

24 January: Second half of Bloch

26 January: Finding a book/patient

Week Three:

January 31: Finding and Forming a topic

February 2: Finding and Forming a hypothesis

Week Four:

February 7: Creating a research plan/primary sources

February 9: Into the archives/library

Week Five:

February 14: Prospectus due

Feburary 16: Brainstorming prospectus in class

Week Six:

February 21: Work on research outside of class

February 23: Work on research outside of class

Week Seven:

February 28: Autopsy of your book due

March 2: Work on research outside of class

Week Eight:

March 7: Work on research outside of class

March 9: Work on research outside of class

Week Nine:

March 14: Spring Break

March 16: Spring Break

Week Ten:

March 21: Meet with me individually

March 23: Meet with me individually

Week Eleven:

March 28: First draft of paper due electronically (no meeting)

March 30: Work outside of class

Week Twelve:

April 4: Work outside of class

April 6: In class meeting: Conference Presentations

Week Thirteen:

April 11: The book process ( inclass meeting)

April 13: Work outside of class

Week Fourteen:

April 18: meet individually with me

April 20: meet individually with me

Week Fifteen:

April 25: Student Presentations

April 27: Student Presentations

Week Sixteen:

May 2: work outside of class

May 4: Research Paper Due

**Course Policies**

**Attendance:**

The instructor will take attendance at each session. It is imperative that the student attend all sessions as the information in lecture supplements and expands the readings.

**Late Arrival:**

Follow basic rules of politeness. If you arrive late, enter without disrupting the rest of the class. Repetitive late arrivals will be addressed by the instructor.

**Electronics:**

You are free to use laptops and tablets in class, as long as they are supplementing the subject matter of the course. Please refrain from checking email, watching YouTube, or other forms of distraction from lecture.

**Late Assignments**:

Assignments are due in hard copy on the day listed in the syllabus. The student will be docked a letter grade per day late. After four days the grade is automatically a zero for the assignment. Unless extraordinary circumstances occur, there are no makeups for reading quizzes or exams without prior approval by the instructor.

**Instructor’s Suggestions for Success in the Course:**

This is a general survey that draws information both from the text and from lectures. We will incorporate student discussion when possible, particularly on Fridays when we discuss current events in their historical context.

It is important that you stay abreast of all the readings. The reading for this course is relatively light in terms of length, but is also fairly dense and packed with meaning. Focus on ideas, trends, and important events as they explain causation and change over time.

**UTA Required Information**

**UTA CORE CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES:**

The state of Texas requires specific objectives for general education "core" courses.  The state objectives for “general ed” courses require that students learn critical thinking and communication (written, oral, visual) skills; teamwork skills; quantitative reasoning; personal responsibility (ethics) and social responsibility (civics).  In this course, we are responsible for covering all objectives except quantitative reasoning and teamwork.

* **Critical Thinking Skills:** to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.*Must be addressed in all core curriculum courses.*
* **Communication Skills**: to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication.*Must be addressed in all core curriculum courses.*
* **Empirical and Quantitative Skills**: to include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions. *Must be addressed in all core courses that satisfy the following requirements:*
  + Mathematics
  + Life and Physical Sciences
  + Social and Behavioral Sciences
  + Component Area Option of Mathematics and Logic
* **Teamwork**: to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal. *Must be addressed in all core courses that satisfy the following requirements:* 
  + Life and Physical Sciences
  + Creative Arts
  + Communication
* **Personal Responsibility**: to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making. *Must be addressed in all core courses that satisfy the following requirements:*
  + Communication
  + Language, Philosophy and Culture
  + American History
  + Government/Political Science
* **Social Responsibility**: to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national and global communities. *Must be addressed in all core courses that satisfy the following requirements:* 
  + Language, Philosophy and Culture
  + Creative Arts
  + American History
  + Government/Political Science
  + Social and Behavioral Sciences

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**:

During this course, students will learn how to:

* identify key events, peoples, individuals, terms, periods, and chronology of the history of Mexico; distinguish between historical fact and historical interpretation; and connect historical events in chronological chain(s) of cause and effect
* develop critical thinking skills by discussing the living nature of history, using historical evidence to critique competing interpretations of the same historical events, explaining the nature of historical controversies
* synthesize diverse historical information and evidence related to broad themes of Mexican History and present this information in coherent, well-articulated, and well-substantiated analytical discussions and other written assignments
* develop the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision making by examining the motivations and actions of key figures in Mexican History
* develop an understanding of civic and social responsibility by examining interactions within and between regional, national, and global communities in Mexican History

**FACULTY EXPECTATIONS:** I expect that students will:

* not cheat, plagiarize, collude or commit other acts of academic dishonesty
* participate fully by attending class regularly and being prepared for discussions and other assignments.  Being prepared means doing your reading assignment or other class prep *before* the class session
* do college-level work in all written assignments.  You will receive specific and detailed instructions for all assessments within this course, follow them.  Proofread for grammar and prose (turning in sloppy work with many grammatical errors is not college level - if you have problems with writing on a college level, utilize the services of the Writing Center)
* turn in work on time
* show respect to your instructor and your fellow students in all interactions
* ask for help when needed

Students are expected to keep track of their performance throughout the semester and seek guidance from available sources (including the instructor) if their performance drops below satisfactory levels.

**EXPECTATIONS FOR OUT-OF-CLASS STUDY**: A general rule of thumb is this: for every credit hour earned, a student should spend 3 hours per week working outside of class. Hence, a 3-credit course might have a minimum expectation of 9 hours of reading, study, etc. Beyond the time required to attend each class meeting, students enrolled in this course should expect to spend at least an additional ***6-9*** 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://wweb.uta.edu/ses/fao>).

**AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT:** The University of Texas at 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)*. 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 that disability.

Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102. 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](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** All students enrolled in this course are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

*I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington’s tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.*

*I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.*

Instructors may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents’ Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university’s standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student’s suspension or expulsion from the University.

**STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES:** UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to [resources@uta.edu](mailto:resources@uta.edu), or view the information at [www.uta.edu/resources](http://www.uta.edu/resources).

**ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS:** UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

**STUDENT FEEDBACK SURVEY:** At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as lecture, seminar, or laboratory shall be directed to complete a 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.