

HIS 3942: HISTORY PRACTICUM METHODS, SOURCES, AND AFRICAN HISTORY

Fall 2020

Instructors:

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Course Schedule:

Thurs Period 9 (online)

Office Hours (online):

Tues 10:30-12:00 or by appt.

Course Overview

The History Practicum introduces students to the basic elements of the discipline: research; evaluating primary and secondary sources; methodological innovation; analytical thinking; and argumentative writing. As we move through these different elements, the course will also feature a series of workshops that highlight the methodologies and sources used by historians of Africa. Until the 1950s, African history was rarely taught at universities in North America. Since then, however, the field has grown dramatically, and the methods pioneered by Africanists have had a major influence on historical research in other parts of the world.

Learning Objectives

The Practicum helps students develop skills that are essential to success as a history major. By the end of the course, students will have used these skills to draft a detailed research proposal. In our information-rich world, however, many of these skills are also relevant outside the classroom. There are thus two main learning objectives. The first is to equip students with the ability to evaluate new ideas and perspectives with understanding and empathy. The second is to develop historical imagination—to learn how to imagine the world from the perspectives of people in circumstances much different than your own.

Required Course Texts

Mary Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History* (7th, 8th, or 9th edition).

Chinua Achebe, *A Man of the People* (New York, 1990).

The Rampolla and Achebe books are available at the UF Bookstore. Links to all other readings can be found on the Canvas course website.

Evaluation

• Finding/citing newspaper articles	(5%)	9/10
• Primary source analysis	(10%)	9/17
• Research outline	(15%)	10/15
• Finding secondary sources	(5%)	10/22
• Annotated Bibliography	(10%)	10/29
• Final Research Proposal	(25%)	12/8
• Writing Journal and Participation	(30%)	----

Procedure

Each week of the course will consist of recorded lectures, readings, and a discussion via Zoom on Thursdays from 4:05 PM – 4:55 PM (period 9). Students are expected to watch the lectures, complete the readings, and participate actively in discussions. (Discussions will start in Week 2.) Students are also required to keep a writing journal of weekly research activities and reading responses. These will usually be about 200-250 words and will be due online via Canvas every Thursday at 10:00 AM, starting in Week 1.

Learning in a Pandemic

For both students and faculty, this semester will bring more stress and anxiety than usual. I have worked hard to create an engaging online course, but there will be hiccups and I will almost certainly make mistakes. If you have questions about the course or assignments, do not hesitate to contact me via Canvas or by email. I will do my best to respond within one business day. You may also come to my online office hours.

In the coming weeks I will provide more detailed descriptions of your reading responses and research activities. They will be posted on the Canvas course website.

Course Schedule

Week 1 Introduction to the Course

9/1 **Lecture:** Review Syllabus

Reading: William Cronon, "Storytelling," *The American Historical Review* 118, no. 1 (2013): 1-19. You can also watch Cronon deliver the address at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RWf3wrxvACg>

What is history? Why is history important? What is the role of historians?

UNIT I: ARCHIVES & DOCUMENTS

Week 2

Archives

9/8

Lectures: Archive Fever; Introduction to the World Newspaper Archive

Reading: Antoinette Burton, *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History*, 1-9; Samuel Fury Childs Daly, "Archival Research in Africa," *African Affairs* 116, no. 463 (2017): 311–320; Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, Chapter 1, "Why Study History?"

9/10

Activity: Search the African newspapers database and choose five articles.

Discussion: What are archives? How do they define and exclude? What are the advantages and limitations of keyword-searchable databases?

Week 3

Primary Source Analysis

9/15

Lectures: Close-reading and analyzing written sources; Examples from the World Newspaper Archive

Reading: Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, Chapter 2, "Working with Sources."

9/17

Activity: Submit a short analysis of one of your newspaper articles and begin identifying a research topic.

Discussion: Share research findings in small groups.

UNIT II: BEYOND DOCUMENTS

Week 4

Oral Sources

9/22

Lectures: Oral traditions and oral histories; Rumours and gossip

Reading: Luise White, "Telling More: Lies, Secrets, and History," *History and Theory* 39 (2000): 11-22.

9/24

Activity: Interview multiple people about the same major life event (e.g. a birth, a death, a move, a graduation) and write a short reflection.

Discussion: Share research findings in small groups.

Week 5 Visual Sources

9/29 **Lectures:** Colonial Photography; Painting History

Reading: Johannes Fabian, *Remembering the Present: Painting and Popular History in Congo*, 1-15; 247-269.

10/1 **Activity:** Find a photograph from the Basel Mission Archives or a painting from Fabian's book and submit a short reflection.

Discussion: Share reflections in small groups.

Week 6 Archaeology and Historical Linguistics

10/6 **Lectures:** Great Zimbabwe; Linguistic innovations and Botatwe society

Reading: Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, Chapter 5, "Writing a Research Paper."

10/8 **Activity:** Write a short history of Botatwe society using archeological and linguistic evidence

Discussion: Share your interpretations of Botatwe history.

Week 7 Social Space

10/13 **Lectures:** Monuments and Territoriality in Congo and Kenya

Reading: Florence Bernault, "Colonial Bones: The 2006 Burial of Savorgnan de Brazza in the Congo," *African Affairs* 109, no. 436 (2010): 367-390.

10/15 **Activity:** Finalize outline of research topic with primary sources, research questions, and methods.

Discussion: What is social space/place? How can we use social space to write histories?

UNIT III: HISTORIOGRAPHY

Week 8 Secondary Sources: Debate and Interpretation

10/20 **Lectures:** Olaudah Equiano and Gustavus Vassa; Research databases

Reading: Vincent Caretta, "Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa? New Light on an Eighteenth-Century Question of Identity," *Slavery and Abolition* 20, no. 3 (1999): 96-105; Paul Lovejoy, "Autobiography and Memory: Gustavus Vassa, alias Olaudah Equiano, the African," *Slavery and Abolition* 27, no. 3 (2006): 317-347; Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, Chapter 3, "Approaching Typical Assignments in History."

10/22 **Activity:** Find 10 secondary sources using research databases and begin an annotated bibliography for your research topic.

Discussion: Debate over Equiano/Vassa

Week 9 Peer Review and the Production of Knowledge

10/27 **Lecture:** Schools of History; Behind the Scenes of Scholarly Publication

Reading: Alex Lichtenstein, "The Perils of Peer Review," *The American Historical Review* 123, no. 2 (2018): xiv-xvii; Examples of Reader's Reports.

10/29 **Activity:** Complete an annotated bibliography and send out research outline for peer review.

Discussion: How do we know what we know? How is knowledge produced? What kinds of knowledge are overlooked?

UNIT IV: NARRATIVES

Week 10 Crafting Narratives

11/3 **Lectures:** Crafting Historical Narratives

Reading: Hayden White, "The Question of Narrative in Contemporary Historical Theory," *History and Theory* 23, no. 1 (1984): 1-33; Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, Chapter 4, "Following the Conventions of Writing in History."

11/5 **Activity:** Complete peer review of research outlines

Discussion: What is the value of narrative in history? What factors shape the content and form of history-writing? How do our moral, political, and geographical positions shape the questions we ask and the topics we write about?

Week 11 Fiction and Narratives I

11/10 **Lectures:** Independence in Nigeria

Reading: Chinua Achebe, *A Man of the People*, 1-75

11/12 **Discussion:** Narratives of Decolonization in Achebe, *A Man of the People*.

Week 12 Fiction and Narratives II

11/17 **Lectures:** Social and Cultural History

Reading: Chinua Achebe, *A Man of the People*, 76-end; Achebe, "The Truth of Fiction" in Achebe, *Hopes and Impediments: Selected Essays* (New York: 1988): 138-153; Bernth Lindfors, "Achebe's African Parable," *Présence Africaine* 66 (1968): 130-136.

11/19 **Discussion:** Truth and fiction in Achebe, *A Man of the People*.

UNIT V: CREATING A RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Week 13 Abstracts

11/24 Submit revised research outline (title, topic, research questions, methods, and annotated bibliography of primary and secondary sources) by 11/24.

Find four abstracts and begin writing your own abstract for your final research proposal.

Week 14 Revisiting and Rewriting

12/1 As you work on your abstract, re-read William Cronon, "Storytelling," *The American Historical Review* 118, no. 1 (2013): 1-19.

12/3 Complete abstract by 12/3

Discussion: Share research projects in small groups; reflections on history; begin assembling your final research proposal: Title, abstract, research questions, methods, and annotated bibliography of primary and secondary sources.

Week 15 Course Wrap Up and Research Proposal

12/8 Research proposal due 12/8

OTHER NOTES

Attendance

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Health and Wellness Resources

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit <https://umatter.ufl.edu/> to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit <https://counseling.ufl.edu/> or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Grading Scale

A	93-100	B-	80-82	D+	67-69
A-	90-92	C+	77-79	D	63-66
B+	87-89	C	73-76	D-	60-62
B	83-86	C-	70-72	E	Below 60

For information regarding current UF policies for assigning grade points, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>