

Dr. J. Adler
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Spring, 2021

Office hours: Mon. 10:30-
11:30; Wed. 7:30-9:30;
and by appointment

HIS 5939: SECOND-YEAR RESEARCH SEMINAR

Text:

Wendy Laura Belcher, *Writing Your Journal Article in 12 Weeks* (2nd edition)
Helen Sword, *The Writer's Diet*

Course Requirements:

This seminar is designed to provide a workshop on the basic mechanics of research and writing for the history profession. By the end of the semester, each student will produce a 10,000-word essay, ideally of publishable quality, based on research in primary sources. The paper can also serve as the preliminary investigation into a dissertation topic or as a potential dissertation chapter. Weekly meetings of HIS 5939 will explore research and writing strategies and will provide workshops involving peer assessments of each student's research topic, abstract, preliminary draft, and final research paper. To pass this course, each student must complete and submit an abstract, a preliminary draft of his/her paper, and a final paper—all submitted on time. HIS 5939 is designed to be an interactive class, and the exchange and commenting on work mimics the way in which scholars interact with one another. Therefore, it is crucial for written assignments to be submitted on time and for everyone to work together and offer consistent, constructive comments and critiques of one another's work. Participation in weekly discussions, and particularly comments on classmates' papers, will count for 40 percent of the grade in HIS 5939. An additional 30 percent of the course grade will be based on the abstract of your research paper and the other short assignments, which are outlined on this syllabus and will be explained in greater detail in our initial class meeting. The final 30 percent of the grade will be based on the quality of the research paper—including the quality of the writing—that you produce for the course. Except in cases of medical or family emergencies, students are expected to attend and participate, via Zoom, in all weekly class meetings. The Zoom code for Monday class meetings is 931 179 2283 (<https://ufl.zoom.us/j/9311792283>), and the Zoom code for office hours on Mondays is 937 5991 8396 and for Wednesdays is 926 9403 6860. HIS 5939 will employ UF's grading scale (A=4.0; A-=3.67; B+=3.33; B=3.0; B-=2.67; C+=2.33; C=2.0; C-=1.67; D+=1.33; D=1.0; D-=0.67; E=0.0). Anyone requiring special accommodations must register with the Dean of Students Office and discuss his or her particular needs with me during the first three weeks of the semester. Students must conform to the university's conduct policy regarding cheating and the use of copyrighted materials, which can be reviewed at www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/. Finally, students are expected to provide professional feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on giving this feedback is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and the course-evaluation results will be available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Lecture/Zoom Schedule and Reading Assignments

1. Jan. 11 Course Goals, Assignments, and Expectations
No assignment
2. Jan. 18 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
No class meeting; no assignment
3. Jan 25 The Art (and Craft) of Writing
Reading assignment: Sword, *The Writer's Diet*; Brad Gregory, "Managing the Terror," *Perspectives on History* 47 (January 2009); Belle Rose Ragins; "Reflections on the Craft of Clear Writing," *Academy of Management Review* 37 (October 2012): 493-501; Tom Boellstorff, "How to Get an Article Accepted at *American Anthropologist* (Or Anywhere)," *American Anthropologist* 110 (September 2008): 281-83; Laura Moss, "An Editor's Advice: How to Increase Your Chances of Publication in an Academic Journal," *Canadian Literature* 236 (March 2018): 6-13; Joshua Specht, "'How To': Academic Writing," *ANZASA Online* (December 17, 2008)
4. Feb. 1 Best-Article Competition
Reading assignment: Belcher, *Writing Your Journal Article*, weeks 0, 1, 2, 6
In-class assignment: ten-minute reports on the best article in your field
5. Feb. 8 Peer Reviewing and Standards of Academic Assessment
Reading assignment: Edward Friedman, "Why Submissions are Rejected"; Barbara Young Welke, "The Art of Manuscript Review: 10 Guidelines From Peggy Pascoe, a Master of the Art," *Perspectives on History* 49 (September 2011): 38-41; "Review Questionnaires," book publisher, *Girlhood Studies*, and *Criminology*.
6. Feb. 15 Abstract Preparation
Reading assignment: Belcher, *Writing Your Journal Article*, week 3; no class meeting
7. Feb. 22 Abstracts (and Presentations)
No reading assignment; in-class assignment: ten-minute presentations of abstracts and overviews of projects
8. Mar. 1 Revised Abstracts, Mock Editorial-Board Assessments, and Progress Reports
Assignment: in-class mock editorial-board assessment of revised abstracts
9. Mar. 8 The "Hook" and Introduction Presentations
Reading assignment: Belcher, *Writing Your Journal Article*, weeks 8-11; Timothy G. Pollock and Joyce E. Bono, "Being Scheherazade: The Importance of Storytelling in Academic Writing," *Academy of Management Journal* 56 (June 2013): 629-34
Assignment: circulate introductions and participate in group assessment of them

- 10. Mar. 15 Research, Writing, and Individual Meetings
Assignment: meet with instructor to discuss progress (no class meeting)
- 11. Mar. 22 Writing and Essay Preparation
No class meeting; no assignment
- 12. Mar. 29 Preliminary Draft Presentations Panel I
Reading assignment: *Journal of Social History* readers' reports and response
Assignment: reader's reports and in-class peer reviews, comments, and critiques
- 13. Apr. 5 Preliminary Draft Presentations Panel II
Assignment: reader's reports and in-class peer reviews, comments, and critiques
- 14. Apr. 12 Essay Preparation
No class meeting; no assignment
- 15. Apr. 19 Final Submission
Papers due at the start of class (in final, polished form)

Assignments:

Week 4: Best-article competition: Each student will select a leading journal in his/her field (or subfield), scan the articles published in the last five years, and identify the most effective essay. In class, each student will make a ten-minutes presentation summarizing the article, noting its significance, and, most important, explaining why he/she chose this particular essay as the best work. What made the writing, argument, and presentation of evidence especially compelling? In addition, each student will identify his/her three writing "pet peeves" after reading the journal. Specifically, what writing problems, habits, quirks, errors, and affectations undermined the impact of the published scholarship—and annoyed you?

Week 7: Each student will prepare a 200-word abstract summarizing his/her research and identifying the larger, wider significance of the project. The abstract should also note the sources that have been consulted. By 5:00 p.m. on **February 19**, you must circulate your abstract to me and to the other students in the class—via email. In class on **February 22**, each student will make a ten-minute presentation explaining his/her project and highlighting its importance—that is, answering the dreaded "so what" question. Collectively, we will discuss each project, noting its strengths and identifying areas that might be bolstered.

Week 8: By 5 p.m. on **February 26**, each student will circulate a revised abstract to me and to the other students in HIS 5939. The revised abstract should engage the issues raised in our February 22 discussion. Moreover, by 5:00 pm on March 5, each student will send me an email identifying the two most effective revised abstracts. You should imagine yourself to be a member of the editorial board of a major journal, and your task is to identify the two abstracts that seem most likely to launch essays that will be compelling and effective enough for inclusion in the special issue that our publication is preparing. At the start of our March 8 class meeting, I

will reveal the two “winning” abstracts, as selected by our mock editorial board, and our discussion will explore the elements that made these particular abstracts most successful.

Week 9: By 5 p.m. on **March 5**, each student will circulate a draft of his/her introduction (three-four pages) to me and to the other students in the class. In our **March 8** class meeting, each student will make a five-minute presentation outlining his/her introduction, and we will, in turn, collectively discuss each one, focusing on the strengths and the areas that might be enhanced. Your introduction must frame the argument, identify the core sources, engage the reader, explain the importance of the research (revisiting the “so what” question), and highlight the paper’s larger contributions to the field.

Weeks 12-13: I will pair each student with an anonymous reviewer. By the 5:00 p.m. on the Friday preceding the presentation of your paper (we will explore half of the papers on **March 29** and the other half on **April 5**), each student must submit a preliminary draft of his/her paper to me. I will forward a copy to the anonymous reviewer. By 5:00 p.m. on the Sunday preceding the presentation, the anonymous reviewer will submit a two-three page reader’s report to me. I will forward the anonymous report to the author. In our class meetings on **March 29** and **April 5**, each student will make a fifteen-minute presentation, summarizing his/her research, explaining his/her argument and findings, and identifying his/her contributions to the field. We will then devote thirty minutes to a collective discussion of the strengths of each paper and to the ways in which it might be improved in the final version.

Week 15: By 5:00 p.m. on **April 19**, each student will submit a final, polished (complete citations, etc.) version of his/her research paper for HIS 5939 to me.

Email Addresses:

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