

HIS 3942/1LN2
History Practicum
From Headlines to Histories
Spring 2022

Course Meets: MWF 12:50-1:40 (period 6) in Keene Flint 101
Instructors: Dr. Louise Newman, lnewman@ufl.edu
Austin Nelsen, austinnelsen@ufl.edu
Office hours: Newman, Wed 2:45-3:30, Nelsen to be determined.

The History Practicum

“Practicum” means doing practical work, and the history department’s practicum introduces students to the basic practices of historical investigation and analysis. It is designed to help students develop fundamental skills in critical reading, analytical thinking, argumentative writing, and historical research, all of which are needed to succeed in the major and which will serve students well in their future endeavors, no matter what profession or occupation they pursue after graduation.

These skills include learning how to:

- effectively communicate ideas about history, both orally and in writing
- find and interpret various kinds of evidence that bear on a historical problem
- identify the thesis-argument(s) in the work of others; be able to explain how the author/historian is in conversation with other authors/historians
- frame a historical research problem for consideration and compose lucid analyzes of historical documents
- provide complete citations for sources and attributions, following the Chicago Manual of Style
- employ editing techniques to improve one’s own writing
- provide constructive feedback on others’ work (peer review)
- assess the historical significance, usefulness, and expertise of specific historiographic monographs
- create a website or electronic archives to present historical information to the general public

Description of the course topic

This course could also be titled, “The History Behind the Headlines,” as topics will be drawn from newspaper headlines from January and February 2022 and may include the big stories, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, U.S.’s relationships to China and Russia; the Black Lives Matter movement, Climate change and environmental disasters, midterm elections of 2022; Biden’s legislative agenda; Senate’s investigation of attack on the Capitol on January 6, 2021;

racial/gender concerns ranging from mass incarceration to sexual harassment—or any other topics that receive media attention in the early months of 2022. The course poses a series of basic questions for sustained reflection: How can past events help us understand present-day events? How do contemporary actors-- politicians, journalists, social activists and others-- use (or misuse) historical information? Should historians play a greater role in helping journalists and the public contextualize and understand current events?

Course objectives

- Become comfortable with the kinds of logic and inductive reasoning that historians rely upon in fashioning historical narratives (causes, contingencies, coincidences)
- Understand why dates, facts and details matter so much to historians and how they go about interpreting such information to make an argument about the significance of events
- Be able to identify and explain some of the different approaches and methodologies that historians use in trying to make sense of historical information
- Learn to work with visual and oral/aural sources-- photographs, films, oral histories, songs, and other forms of historical evidence
- Improve skills in critical reading and analytical thinking (how to identify and assess an author's thesis argument, how to effectively summarize others' work, how to participate in historiographic conversations)
- Develop the skills needed in argumentative academic writing (how to compose an original thesis-argument; how to structure formal academic essays—whether historiographical and/or grounded in primary sources; how to sequence sentences to compose cohesive (focused) paragraphs; how to introduce evidence from primary and secondary sources to support the thesis, etc.
- Practice some of the basic steps in researching and writing a paper on an historical topic, including identifying a suitable topic, formulating a historical research question about that topic, identifying and analyzing relevant primary sources to help answer the question, coming up with a hypothesis or working thesis-argument (an answer to the question) and “proving” the hypothesis by supporting it with relevant information and persuasive logic (“problem,” “solution,” “evidence”)
- Learn how to follow instructions and style sheets in order to present historical work in a professional manner, which includes learning how to introduce quotations into an essay and how to format footnotes and bibliographies correctly

Questions concerning historical argument and methodology encountered in this course

- What is the difference between history and historiography?
- How do journalists use historical information to make sense of current events?
- What are the essential characteristics of a good historical narrative? Do historical accounts need to be objective? neutral? fair? credible? truthful? How do we know if they are these things?

- Does historiography have to be presented in a particular form or genre (i.e. a written text, such as a book or article) in order for it to have validity or authority as a credible account of history?
 - Should we have the same expectations of and standards for historical narratives that are presented in visual forms (films, documentaries, photographs, cartoons, drawings, illustrations) or aural/oral forms (lectures, songs, speeches, stories, interviews, oral histories) as we do of written historiography (books, articles, blogs)?
 - Why are primary sources so essential to the writing of historical narratives? How do historians interpret such sources? What does a “careful” or “critical” reading of a primary source entail? What does it mean to contextualize a primary source or an event?
 - What is the advantage of using many different (kinds of) sources? Why do historians value narratives that address the same issue/problem from multiple perspectives? Why do historians value accounts that offer multiple causes to explain why change occurs?
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Required readings

The required readings for this course include books, articles published in anthologies and academic journals, and writing that appears on websites (articles, blogs, newsletters).

Students will need to activate their free subscription to the *New York Times* and sign up to receive **Heather Cox Richardson’s free newsletter, “Letters from an American”** available from Substack.com.

Required books that must be purchased (listed in the order in which they are assigned)

- **Rampolla, Mary.** *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, **any edition**. The tenth edition (2020) costs \$37.75 on Amazon Prime. You do not need to buy this expensive edition. There are used copies of earlier editions available for just a few dollars. However, you might want to consider purchasing, rather than renting, this book as it will prove useful to you as a history major throughout your career at UF.
- **Oshinsky, David M.** *Polio: An American Story*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005. A paperback copy of this book costs \$13.95 on Amazon Prime. Used copies are available for significantly less money and if you order one early in the semester, you will have it in plenty of time.
- **Clark, Anna.** *The Poisoned City: Flint’s Water and the American Urban Tragedy*. New York: Metropolitan Books & Henry Holt, 2018; Picador reprint edition, 2019. \$15.87 on Amazon Prime. Used copies are available for significantly less money and if you order one early in the semester, you will have it in plenty of time.

Articles and excerpts from books to be downloaded from Course Reserves (listed in the order in which they will be read).

IMPORTANT: You may need to have the UF's VPN client installed on your computer and be logged into the VPN client before you will be permitted to access course reserve materials from an off-campus location. For information on installing and using the VPN client, visit <https://it.ufl.edu/ict/documentation/network-infrastructure/vpn/>. For technical assistance, please call the UF Computing Help Desk, at 352-392-4357.

- **Jacobson**, Matthew Frye. *The Historian's Eye: Photography, History, and the American Present*. University of North Carolina Press, 2019. (UF has purchased an e-book that you can download from course reserves.)
- **Bailey**, Beth and Richard Immerman, "Introduction," in Beth Bailey and Richard H. Immerman, eds., *Understanding the U.S. Wars in Iraq & Afghanistan*. New York: New York University Press, 2015, 1-9, 16-17. (PDF available from course reserves.)
- **Reynolds**, Michael A. "The Wars' Entangled Roots: Regional Realities and Washington's Vision," in Beth Bailey and Richard H. Immerman, eds., *Understanding the U.S. Wars in Iraq & Afghanistan*. New York: New York University Press, 2015, 21-53. (PDF available from course reserves.)

More readings may be added to Course Reserves at a future date. **Most importantly, students will be working on research projects that will require that they identify, locate and read additional primary and secondary materials.**

"How to..." Handouts accessed from various University websites (Bowdoin, Purdue, University of Toronto, University of Calgary)

- "How to Read a Primary Source," <https://courses.bowdoin.edu/writing-guides/reading/how-to-read-a-primary-source/>
 - "Predatory Reading"
<https://www.bowdoin.edu/profiles/faculty/prael/pdf/predatory-reading.pdf>
 - "How to Write a Book Review," <https://hist.ucalgary.ca/atimm/writing-advice/howtos/bookrev>
 - "Advice on Book Reviews,": <https://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/types-of-writing/book-review/>
 - <https://hist.ucalgary.ca/atimm/writing-advice/useful-writing-links>
 - 'How to introduce a quote "Lead in":
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/using_research/quoting_paraphrasing_and_summarizing/signal_and_lead_in_phrases.html
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Graded assignments (1000 total points)

Graded assignments include a wide variety of assignments: from formatting footnotes and bibliographies to short writing exercises, to the researching of a historical topic, using primary sources. Unless otherwise indicated, all assignments must be typed and presented formally. Points will be deducted for not following instructions concerning the presentation and submission of an assignment.

- Written instructions for major assignments (those worth 100 points or more) will be distributed at least one week before the assignment is due.
- Assignments must be submitted online through the course website on Canvas, located at lss.at.ufl.edu.
- Students should keep electronic copies of all their work in case any problems arise in the submission, grading, or the recording of assignments.

The final course grade is based on 1000 points, determined as follows:

Short Assignments will help students develop the following skills (700 pts)

- **Interpreting Visual Sources:** Take (or find) a photograph and analyze its historical significance
- **Interpreting Written Sources:** Analyze the meaning/value/usefulness of a written primary source
- **Identifying/Locating relevant primary and secondary sources** for an historical topic and citing them in a bibliography using appropriate and consistent formatting (Chicago Manual of Style is the preferred format for all history papers.)
- **Reading Strategies-- (close reading, predatory reading, efficient reading, reading from the “outside in”):** Restate thesis arguments from historical monographs of different lengths (articles and books)
- **Notetaking:** Writing summaries, posing questions
- **Structuring an Argument:** Assessing how an historian organizes an academic essay, setting forth a problem or question, answering the question or solving the problem by assembling and assessing evidence, and explaining the significance of the topic
- **Reading/Writing Skills-- Abstracts, Summaries:** Writing accurate and thorough summaries of articles and books
- **Reading/Writing Skills--Placing Secondary Sources in a larger context:** Analyze a historiographic conversation among historians
- **Writing Skills--Book review:** Write a critical book review suitable for publication in a scholarly journal or posting on an academic website (such as History News Network)
- **Writing Skills-- Quoting, Paraphrasing, Citing Sources:** Introducing a quotation into a text and citing the source, using one of the three accepted forms (parenthetical notes, footnotes, endnotes)
- **Writing Skills-- Composing a Perfect Paragraph**

- **Writing Skills—Organizing an Essay** so that it has an effective Introduction, detailed body of evidence, and a satisfying conclusion
- **Revising Writing and Peer Review**—Commenting in a helpful way on a fellow student’s writing

Longer Assignments (300 pts)

- Prospectus (Research Question, Primary Source Analysis, Timeline/Chronology, Preliminary Annotated Bibliography) (100 pts)
- Final Project (Title Page, Abstract, 5-page paper with footnotes, Bibliography) (200 pts)

Grading Scale

Please note that in this course, to receive a full A, you must earn at least 950 out of 1000 points. The instructor will not round up, so please do not ask her to do so.

Letter grades for the course will be assigned according to the following point scale:

Letter Grade	Total Points	GPA Equivalent
A	950-1000	4.0
A-	900-949	3.67
B+	875-899	3.33
B	850-874	3.0
B-	800-849	2.67
C+	775-799	2.33
C	750-774	2.0
C-	700-749	1.67
D+	675-699	1.33
D	650-674	1.0
D-	600-649	0.67
E	<600	0

Policies regarding attendance, participation and assignments

- This course has a significant “workshop” component, which requires students’ presence in every session.
- Students are expected to have completed all reading and writing assignments by the beginning of class on the date specified on the syllabus. Whenever possible, students should have hard copies of the readings (books, articles, photographs, book reviews, etc.) in front of them.
- In general, no late work will be accepted unless accompanied by documentation from the Dean of Students or a employee of Student Health Services of a serious illness. However, in the case of exceptional or unforeseen circumstances, students

needing an extension of a deadline may request one from the instructor, so long as the request occurs in advance of the deadline. **Students who simply miss or skip deadlines will not be allowed to make up work.**

- To ensure that students are learning the necessary skills, which build one upon the other, students must complete and submit assignments in the sequence in which they are assigned. If circumstances arise that may cause you to fall behind, please let the instructor know about those circumstances as soon as possible.
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General course policies

- Students requesting accommodation must register with the Dean of Students Office (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/>) and obtain proper documentation to be submitted to the instructor. **Instructors are not obligated to grant accommodations after the first week of the semester.**
 - Students can complete their evaluations in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals.
 - All students must adhere to the University of Florida's standards of academic honesty. UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge, which states: "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code." A copy of the student code of conduct/honor code may be found at <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>
The student code of conduct forbids plagiarism, which includes the following:
 - Turning in a paper that was written by someone else (i.e., papers written by another student, a research service, or downloaded off the Internet); or written by you for another course.
 - Copying work written by another author without using quotation marks and without acknowledging the source through a commonly accepted style of footnoting.
 - Paraphrasing text written by another author without referencing that author within the text and by using a commonly accepted style of footnoting.
 - Using someone else's idea or concept without acknowledging the original author and source in the text and by using a commonly accepted style of footnoting.
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Class meets face-to-face on MWF at 12:50-1:40pm (period 6) in Keene Flint 101.

Class will **NOT** be held on the following dates:

- Jan 7 (M): Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Feb 21 (M): President's Day
- Mar 7, 9, 11 (MWF): Spring Break
- April 15 (F) Passover/Good Friday

For the Schedule of Readings and Assignments – see course website on Canvas.