

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

Fall 2022

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Office: 494 Grinter Hall  
Office Hours: Mon 2:00-4:00  
In-person and online via Zoom

Course Schedule:  
MWF period 5  
0119 Keene-Flint Hall  
and online via Zoom

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### 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. Students will thus also learn how to study history using archaeology, historical linguistics, oral sources, fiction, visual culture, social space, and rumours.

### 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

Patrick Rael, *Reading, Writing, and Researching for History: A Guide for College Students*.

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

The Rael book is available online. The Achebe book is available at the UF Bookstore. Links to all other readings can be found on the Canvas course website.

## Evaluation

- |                                     |       |       |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| • Finding/citing newspaper articles | (5%)  | 9/2   |
| • Primary source analysis           | (10%) | 9/9   |
| • Research outline                  | (15%) | 10/14 |
| • Finding secondary sources         | (5%)  | 10/21 |
| • Annotated Bibliography            | (10%) | 10/31 |
| • Final Research Proposal           | (25%) | 12/7  |
| • Writing Journal and Participation | (30%) | ----  |

## Procedure

This is a HyFlex course, meaning that you may attend class in-person or online via Zoom. I will not be recording class sessions.

In general, Mondays and Wednesdays will be lectures and Fridays will be discussions based on the assigned readings/activities. I expect you to attend the lectures, complete the weekly readings/activities, and participate actively in discussions. Your participation grade is based on quality contributions to class discussions.

Students are also required to keep a writing journal of weekly research activities and reading responses. These will usually be about 200 words and will be due online via Canvas most Fridays at 10:00 AM, starting in Week 1.

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

## Course Schedule

### Week 1 Introduction to the Course

8/24 **Lecture:** Review Syllabus

8/26 **Discussion Reading:** William Cronon, "Presidential Address: 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>

## UNIT I: ARCHIVES & DOCUMENTS

### Week 2 Archives

8/29-8/31 **Lectures:** Archive Fever; Introduction to the World Newspaper Archive

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

9/2 **Discussion 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.

### Week 3 Primary Source Analysis

9/7 **Lecture:** Close reading and analyzing written sources; Examples from the World Newspaper Archive

9/9 **Activity:** Submit a short analysis of one of your newspaper articles and begin identifying a research topic; share research findings in small groups.

**Discussion Reading:** Patrick Rael, "How to Read a Primary Source."

## UNIT II: BEYOND DOCUMENTS

### Week 4 Visual Sources

9/12-9/14 **Lectures:** Colonial Photography; Painting History

**Activity:** Find a photograph from the Basel Mission Archives or a painting from Fabian's book and submit a short reflection; Share reflections in small groups.

9/16 **Discussion Reading:** Johannes Fabian, *Remembering the Present: Painting and Popular History in Congo*, 1-15; 247-269.

### Week 5 Oral Sources

9/19-9/21 **Lectures:** Oral traditions and oral histories; Rumours and gossip

**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.

9/23 **Discussion Reading:** Luise White, "Telling More: Lies, Secrets, and History," *History and Theory* 39 (2000): 11-22; share research findings in small groups.

**Week 6 Archaeology and Historical Linguistics**

9/26-9/28 **Lectures:** Great Zimbabwe; Linguistic innovations and Botatwe society

9/30 **Activity:** Write a short history of Botatwe society using archeological and linguistic evidence; Share your interpretations of Botatwe history.

**Week 7 African Film/Film in Africa**

10/3 **Lecture:** Film and Colonialism in Senegal

10/5 **Discussion:** Watch "Borom Sarret" by Ousmane Sembène

**Week 8 Social Space**

10/10-10/12 **Lectures:** Monuments and Territoriality in Congo and Kenya

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

10/14 **Discussion Reading:** Florence Bernault, "Colonial Bones: The 2006 Burial of Savorgnan de Brazza in the Congo," *African Affairs* 109, no. 436 (2010): 367-390.

**UNIT III: HISTORIOGRAPHY**

**Week 9 Secondary Sources and the Production of Knowledge**

10/17-10/19 **Lectures:** Schools of History; Behind the Scenes of Scholarly Publications

**Activity:** Find secondary sources using research databases and begin annotated bibliography.

10/21 **Discussion Reading:** Alex Lichtenstein, "The Perils of Peer Review," *The American Historical Review* 123, no. 2 (2018): xiv-xvii; Examples of reader reports; Patrick Rael, "How to Read a Secondary Source."

**Week 10      Secondary Sources: Debate and Interpretation**

10/24-10/26    **Lectures:** Olaudah Equiano and Gustavus Vassa; Research databases

10/28            **Discussion 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.

**UNIT IV: NARRATIVES****Week 11      Crafting Narratives**

10/31-11/2    **Lectures:** Crafting Historical Narratives

**Activity:** Writing introductions; arguments and context

11/4            **Discussion Reading:** Hayden White, "The Question of Narrative in Contemporary Historical Theory," *History and Theory* 23, no. 1 (1984): 1-33.

**Week 12      Fiction and Narratives I**

11/7-11/9    **Lectures:** Postcolonial Studies and Cultural History; Decolonization in Nigeria

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

**Week 13      Fiction and Narratives II**

11/14-11/16 **Lectures:** Narratives of Independence in Nigeria

**Activity:** Send out revised research outline for peer review

11/18            **Discussion 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.

**UNIT V: CREATING A RESEARCH PROPOSAL****Week 14     Revising and Rewriting**

11/21     **Lecture:** Revising proposals; Re-read William Cronon, "Storytelling," *The American Historical Review* 118, no. 1 (2013): 1-19. What story do you want to tell?

**Week 15     Abstracts**

11/28-11/30     **Lecture:** How to Write an Abstract; Editing

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

12/2     **Discussion:** Share research projects in small groups; begin assembling your final research proposal: Title, abstract, research questions, methods, and annotated bibliography of primary and secondary sources.

**Week 16     Course Wrap Up and Research Proposal**

12/5-12/7     Final Review; Research proposal due 12/7

## OTHER NOTES

### Learning in a Pandemic

The following practices are in place to maintain your learning environment, to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions, and to further our health and safety:

- Attendance: If you are sick, do not come to class. If you are able, attend class via Zoom. I will not penalize you if you have to miss class, but you must let me know. I will give you a reasonable amount of time to make up work. Frequent unexcused absences will result in a low participation grade.
- Masking: You are expected to wear approved face coverings at all times during class and within buildings even if you are vaccinated.

### Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the [Disability Resource Center](#) 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.

### Health and Wellness Resources

*U Matter, We Care*: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu), 352-392-1575, or visit [www.umatter.ufl.edu/](http://www.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 [www.counseling.ufl.edu/](http://www.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

Click [here](#) for more info on UF policies for assigning grade points.

**Course Evaluations**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is [available here](#). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or at [this link](#). Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students [here](#).