

**Syllabus: HIST-460-01 (CRN#2727)**  
**History and Theory**

Truman State University

Spring Semester 2012

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**Course description**

This seminar surveys themes and problems in Western historiography from antiquity to the present. The course is required for Departmental Honors in History but open to any History major.

Historiography, in a broad sense, includes the history of historical writing and a historical analysis of the theory, presuppositions, and implications of historical practice. This course will follow chronology, noting the emergence of the major historians and schools of thought. Historiography is a field of history where every source is by necessity both primary and secondary, so this course will explore both types. The purposes of the course are to familiarize students with the major scholars, texts, and debates in the historical profession and to help them develop a more sophisticated understanding of the accomplishments and limitations of historical practice. The governing idea of the seminar is that the only way to accomplish this understanding is through the study of history's own history. This perspective will make students better prepared for graduate school, for teaching history, even for refining a research paper in Senior Seminar.

**Course structure and paper assignments**

The course meets as a seminar that engages with the assigned texts, and each participant offers interpretations of (or poses questions about) each reading for the class. Students become active agents in shaping the discussion, responsible for engaging the other seminar participants in analysis, and for making the discussions useful for the writing assignments. There is broad choice for topics of the essays, particularly for the Second Paper.

**First Paper:** minimum 8 pages (maximum 10). The Kelley textbook consists of excerpts from historians, organized by chapters that designate broad periods (Greece, Middle Ages, etc.) and, within each chapter, by topics (e.g., national history, political history, universal history). The first essay assignment explores how these "topics" repeat or develop. Making use of sources from at least three broad periods, discuss a topic (or related set of topics), showing how and why historiography changes or develops over those periods. The paper is due February 21.

**Second Paper:** a 12-15-page historiographical analysis. This is the major paper for the course, one that builds on the skills acquired in 201, 202, and other coursework. Possibly (though not necessarily) inspired by previous courses, choose to **write on a major historian (or historical school)**, in consultation with the seminar leader and/or another member of the History faculty. The choice may reflect interest in certain areas of history (for example, Burkhardt on the Italian

Renaissance; Beard on early U.S.), but the main tasks of this paper are (1) to identify the explicit and implicit historical theory (or theories) with which the historical writings operate and (2) to advance an argument about how that theory/approach shapes the representation of the past that the texts have put forward. The texts that you work with, depending on your choice of historian/school and your approach to them, could be historical classics or standards, recent scholarship in historiography, a historical field comprising several interpretations, or even textbooks. The Bentley and Wilson books will be helpful guides, but the choice of source material is open, as long as you can subject it to the historiographical analysis just indicated. You should have identified the texts and be prepared to talk about your project by March 20. Present it to the seminar formally on April 3, and hand in the paper on April 12.

**Third Paper:** minimum 8 pages (maximum 10). Wilson discusses new, often controversial issues that are currently brewing in the historical profession. Choose one and discuss it. It might be something quite recent; it might be a classic problem that it still in play. The paper is due April 26.

### **Common readings**

Bentley, Michael. *Modern Historiography: An Introduction*. NY: Routledge, 1999.

Kelley, Donald R., ed. *Versions of History from Antiquity to the Enlightenment*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991.

Wilson, Norman J. *History in Crisis? Recent Directions in Historiography*, 2nd ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2005.

Paper assignments must follow University of Chicago Style, conveniently summarized in Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th ed.

### **Course Requirements**

Students are expected to attend all class meetings (having read the assignment for the day), to participate in class discussions, and to meet with the instructor occasionally, as needed.

Graded work includes three papers, whose values to the course grade are listed below. Late work will be accepted only by PRIOR agreement of the instructor.

Here is the grading plan:

First Paper (8 pages):	20%
Second Paper (12-15 pages):	35%
Third Paper (8 pages):	25%
Participation:	20%

All work will receive a percentage grade (90 to 100 is A, 80 to 89 is B, etc.). All assigned work must be completed (presented or handed in) in order to pass the course.

## SCHEDULE

- Jan. 10: Introductions, general discussion
- Jan. 12: Kelley, front matter, Ch. 1: Introduction, Ch. 2: Greece:  
Herodotus, Thucydides, Polybius, Plutarch
- Jan. 17: Kelley, Ch. 3: Rome: Livy, Cicero, Tacitus
- Jan. 19: Kelley, Ch. 4: The Judeo-Christian Tradition: Josephus, St. Augustine, Orosius
- Jan. 24: Kelley, Ch. 5: The Middle Ages: Gregory of Tours, Bede, Christine de Pizan
- Jan. 26: Kelley, Ch. 6: The Renaissance: Petrarch, Valla, Machiavelli, Hobbes
- Jan. 31: Kelley, Ch. 7: The Reformation: Luther, Sleidan, Calvin, Camden
- Feb. 02: Kelley, Ch. 8: The Science of History [Scientific Revolution]:  
Campanella, Bodin, Bacon, Bossuet, Pufendorf
- Feb. 07: No class; professor at conference in Jefferson City**
- Feb. 09: Kelley, Ch. 9: The Enlightenment; to end of book:  
Voltaire, Hume, Gibbon, Vico, Herder, Condorcet
- Feb. 14: Bentley, to end of Ch. 3
- Feb. 16: University Conference; no classes**
- Feb. 21: Bentley, Ch. 4-5; **FIRST PAPER DUE**
- Feb. 23: Bentley, Ch. 6-7
- Feb. 28: Bentley, Ch. 8-9
- Mar. 01: Bentley, Ch. 10-11
- Mar. 05-09: Spring break**
- Mar. 13: Bentley, Ch. 12 to end
- Mar. 15: Instructor at conference in Washington DC**
- Mar. 20: Discussion of ideas for Second Paper
- Mar. 22: Individual conferences (class-time or office hours)

- Mar. 27: Individual conferences
- Mar. 29: Individual conferences
- Apr. 03: **Presentation of Second Paper** (20 minutes each)
- Apr. 05: Wilson, to end of Ch. 3
- Apr. 10: Wilson, Ch. 4-5
- Apr. 12: Wilson, Ch. 6-7; **SECOND PAPER DUE**
- Apr. 17: Student Research Conference; no classes**
- Apr. 19: Wilson, Ch. 8-9 (to end).
- Apr. 24: **Presentation of Third Paper** (10 minutes each)
- Apr. 26: Course review; course evaluation; **THIRD PAPER DUE**
- May 01: Return materials, determine course grade, Tuesday, 11:30-1:20**