



Texas A&M University- San Antonio  
History 4301-800 (11922)  
Methods of Historical Research  
Fall 2025  
Tuesdays 5:30-8:15 pm  
Classroom Hall 203

Dr. Amy M. Porter  
Office phone: 210-784-2208  
Office: Room 313H in Central Academic Building  
Email: [amy.porter@tamusa.edu](mailto:amy.porter@tamusa.edu) (this is the best way to contact me)  
Office hours: Monday and Wednesday 12:30-1:30 pm, Tuesday 4:30-5:30 pm

Course Catalog Description:

Procedures and methods of historical research. Introduction to types of historical data, the analysis of sources, the use of computer techniques in historical research and the methods of historical writing.

Student Learner Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- 1) understand and evaluate the main types of historical primary and secondary source materials.
- 2) develop a topic idea into a thesis.
- 3) improve critical thinking skills through writing and speaking in the creation of an original work of historical research.
- 4) understand how to provide and incorporate peer and professor feedback into a revised paper.

MEANS OF ASSESSMENT:

Assignments	Outcomes to be Assessed	% of Final Grade
Self-Reflection, Attendance, Participation, Peer Feedback, Library Training, Research Notes, Etc.	All	10%
Topic, Research Question, and Thesis	1 and 2	5%
Bibliography and essay	1 and 2	5%
Research Paper Proposal	1 and 2	10%
Research Paper Draft	All	20%
Final Research Paper	All	40%
Research Paper Presentation	All	10%

Grade Scale: A (90%-up); B (80-89%); C (70-79%); D (60-69%); F (0-59%)

No Extra Credit will be offered. I do not add points onto final grades even if a student is close to another grade.

Graded work should be returned within 2 weeks if not sooner.

### Attendance:

Regular attendance is required. I take attendance at the beginning of class, so if you enter the class significantly late, you will be counted absent. If you leave class early, you will be counted absent as well. As much of the course work happens in class, missing three classes or more will result in a loss of one letter grade (-10 points) for this class. This includes individual meetings with the professor as indicated on the syllabus calendar. All students (whether present or absent) are responsible for all announcements made in class and all assignments given in class because it is sometimes necessary to make changes to the syllabus.

### Make-ups:

See the major course requirements descriptions later in this syllabus for explanations of late penalties. Makeups will be accepted in the case of documented (in writing) emergencies. All other penalties will be noted below.

### Academic Misconduct Policy

Students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, multiple submissions, misrepresentation of academic records, facilitating academic dishonesty, unfair advantage, violating known safety requirements and ethical misconduct. This includes holding other students to the same standards and reporting any incidents of alleged violation of the honesty policy to the instructor involved or, if necessary, to the appropriate academic department head. All students are responsible for being familiar with the Academic Misconduct Policy, which may be found in the Texas A&M University-San Antonio Student Handbook.

University policy prescribes serious consequences for acts of academic misconduct including, but not limited to, a grade of 'F' on the particular paper or assignment or a failing grade in the course. Also, a referral may be issued to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities where the sanctions can vary up to possible expulsion from the University. Considering the potential consequences of academic misconduct, it is obviously in students' best interests to avoid even the appearance of such behavior. If you are ever unclear whether a specific act might constitute academic misconduct, please contact your instructor for an assessment of the situation.

All student term papers and other written assignments are subject to analysis by anti-plagiarism software.

In my class, plagiarism or cheating on a test will result in a 0 for that assignment and reporting of the violation.

### Required Reading:

Jules R. Benjamin, *A Student's Guide to History* (Bedford/St.Martin's, 14<sup>th</sup> edition).  
Readings and multimedia materials (via Blackboard).  
Research materials related to your topic.

COURSE CALENDAR (Tentative)- Be prepared to discuss the reading for the class day on which it is listed.

**August 26:**

**Topic:** Introductions, Course Overview

**Read:** Course Syllabus (via Blackboard)

**September 2:**

**Topic:** History and the Work of Historians and Choosing & Narrowing your Research Topic; Discussion of Topics

**Read:** Benjamin, *A Student's Guide to History*, Chapters One and Seven

**September 9:**

**Topic:** Library Research and Special Collections (**Meet at Library**) and Historical Sources- Primary and Secondary

**Read:** Benjamin, *A Student's Guide to History*, Chapter Three

**Library Databases- Online Training-** use your proposed topic in searches in the training. **Complete the training by the end of class.**

**Research Topic, Research Question, and Thesis Due**

**September 16:**

**Topic:** Evaluating and Interpreting Sources; Online Archives (Bexar Archives, Portal to Texas History, etc.), research when sources are scarce; using AI in historical research

**Read:** Benjamin, *A Student's Guide to History*, Chapter Four; Read Example of Student Work on Blackboard

**September 23:**

**Topic:** The Writing Process/ Bibliographies, Turabian style

**Read:** Benjamin, *A Student's Guide to History*, Chapter Six; Citation examples in Benjamin book (gray shaded pages); Sample Bibliographies

Work on Bibliographies- bring draft to class meeting and Paper Proposals

**September 30:**

**Topic:** Guest Speaker, Paper Proposals

**October 7:**

**Bibliography and Sources Essay due**

Work on Proposals and exchange drafts in class

**October 14:**

**Topic:** Documenting Sources Review; Writing Tips: From Thesis to Conclusion; Oral History

**Read:** Benjamin, *A Student's Guide to History*, Chapters Eight, Nine, and Ten

**Research Paper Proposals due**

**October 21:**

Individual meetings with students

**October 28:**

Research/Writing Day

**November 4:**

Group discussion of progress/research issues/ Oral presentation instruction

**Read:** Benjamin, *A Student's Guide to History*, p. 34-36

***Research Notes are Due***

**November 11:**

Work on paper draft; Paper Workshop- bring draft to class session (peer feedback due at end of class to student and professor)

**November 18:**

Work on paper draft

***Research Paper Draft is Due***

**November 25:**

Work on Presentations

**December 2:**

Student Presentations

**Final Exam Time: (12-9 at 4:00-5:50 pm)**

Student Presentations (if needed)

***\*\*\* Final Research Paper and Self-Reflection are Due on December 10\*\*\****

**TOPIC, RESEARCH QUESTION, AND THESIS (5%):**

Early in the semester you will submit a topic, preliminary research question, and thesis. This is due on **September 9**, in class. This assignment will be accepted for up to five days after the due date but will include a ten-point deduction from the final paper grade.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCE ESSAY (5%):**

In support of your research topic, you will be required to create and turn-in a bibliography, Turabian style, dealing with the key source materials related to your research topic. Your bibliography will be required to have a minimum of twelve sources (six primary) along with your evaluation of these sources in support of your proposed research topic. You will choose three primary sources for evaluation in a source essay. This evaluation will include an analysis of biases as well as other criteria explained in Benjamin concerning sources evaluation. This is due on **October 7** in class. Failure to submit this on time with at least ***12 sources*** will result in a 10-point deduction in the final paper grade. This assignment will only be accepted within a five-day window of the due date.

#### RESEARCH PAPER PROPOSAL (10%):

One of the initial steps in developing your research topic involves the creation of a paper proposal that provides a discussion of your intended research topic, the available sources, and outline of the proposed paper with subheadings, and the significance of the topic to the historical field of inquiry. This is due on October 14, in class. This assignment will be accepted up to five days late. Failure to submit this on time will result in a 10-point deduction in your final paper grade.

#### RESEARCH NOTES :

You will submit research notes (November 4) in either hand-written or typed form. You must show evidence of sufficient research to write a 20-page paper. Failure to submit this on time will result in a 10-point deduction in the final paper grade.

#### RESEARCH PAPER DRAFT (20%):

You will submit a draft of your paper (November 18) for professor review prior to submitting the final paper. Failure to submit this on time will result in a 25-point deduction from your final paper grade. The draft will only be accepted up to seven days late. This draft will be submitted to **Turnitin** as well. You must use a file that Turnitin accepts. If you do not have access to Microsoft Word, I can tell you what other files work.

#### RESEARCH FINAL PAPER (40%):

Minimum length of 18-20-pages, typed, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins and 12-point typeface. Use Turabian-style footnote citations. This will be due on December 10, to **Turnitin** and in class and will not be accepted late. The research paper will not be accepted unless accompanied by the draft with the professor's comments and unless submitted to the Turnitin assignment on blackboard. You must use a file that Turnitin accepts. If you do not have access to Microsoft Word, I can tell you what other files work.

#### Self-Reflection, Attendance, Participation, Peer Feedback, Library Training, Etc. (5%):

You will provide written feedback to students in class for a portion of the paper draft and the presentation. These are due to the student and professor as noted on class dates in the syllabus. One reflection essay is required to complete the class. The reflection will be due at the time that the paper final draft is due- December 10. There will be some small assignments throughout the semester that include library training and short in-class writing assignments. You will also be graded on participation and attendance.

#### RESEARCH PAPER PRESENTATION (10%):

At the end of the course, you will be required to present a PowerPoint presentation to your classmates concerning your research topic, sources, findings, and the importance of your project for the field. The presentation must be 10 *minutes* long. These can only be rescheduled in the case of a documented emergency.

**\* These assignments are meant to build upon one another ("Stacked"). If a student fails to submit any of these assignments, he or she will not be allowed to continue on to the next step in the research process. If an assignment is turned in but deemed inadequate to continue by the professor, then the student has one week to revise the assignment and turn it in again for consideration to continue the research process.**

### Research Paper Checklist:

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Accepted:</b>	<b>Late Penalty</b>	<b>Grade</b>
	<b>Submitted</b>	<b>Yes or No</b>		
<b>Topic, Question, and Thesis</b>				
<b>Bibliography and Source Essay</b>				
<b>Proposal</b>				
<b>Research Notes</b>				
<b>Paper Draft</b>				
<b>Peer Feedback (Due in class when noted on syllabus)</b>				
<b>Final Paper</b>				
<b>Reflections</b>				

### IMPORTANT POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Academic Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to providing all students with reasonable access to learning opportunities and accommodations in accordance with The Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, Disability Support Services is located in the Central Academic Building, Suite 210.

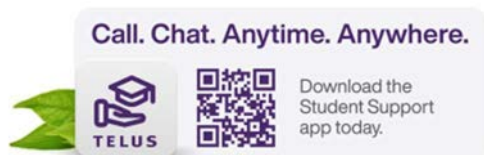
You can also contact us via phone at (210) 784-1335, visit us <https://www.tamusa.edu/DisabilitySupport-Services/index.html> or email us at [dss@tamusa.edu](mailto:dss@tamusa.edu). Disabilities may include, but are not limited to, attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability-related needs with Disability Support Services as soon as possible.

Academic Learning Center: The Academic Learning Center provides free course-based tutoring to all currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. Students wishing to work with a tutor can make appointments through the Brainfuse online tutoring platform. Brainfuse can be accessed in the Tools section of Blackboard. You can contact the Academic Learning Center by emailing [tutoring@tamusa.edu](mailto:tutoring@tamusa.edu), calling (210) 784-1307, or visiting the Central Academic Building, room 202.

Counseling/Mental Health Resources: As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and negatively impact your daily functioning. If you are experiencing emotional difficulties or mental health concerns, support is available to you through the Student Counseling Center (SCC). To schedule an appointment, call 210-784-1331 or visit Madla 120.

All mental health services provided by the SCC are free and confidential (as the law allows). The Student Counseling Center provides brief individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, case management, and prevention services. For more information on SCC services visit <http://tamusa.edu/studentcounseling>. Crisis support is available 24/7 by calling the SCC at 210-784-1331.

Additionally, the TELUS Student Support App provides a variety of mental health resources to including support for in the moment distress, an anonymous peer-to-peer support network, mental health screenings, podcasts, and articles to improve your mental wellbeing.



Emergency Preparedness: JagE Alert is Texas A&M University-San Antonio's mass notification. In the event of an emergency, such as inclement weather, students, staff and faculty, who are registered, will have the option to receive a text message, email with instructions and updates. To register or update your information visit:

<https://tamusa.bbcportal.com>

More information about Emergency Operations Plan and the Emergency Action Plan can be found here:

<https://www.tamusa.edu/about-us/emergency-management/>

Download the SafeZone App (<https://safezoneapp.com/>) for emergencies or call (210) 784-1911. NonEmergency (210) 784-1900.

Financial Aid and Verification of Attendance: According to the following federal regulation, 34 CFR 668.21: U.S. Department of Education (DoE) Title IV regulation, a student can only receive Title IV funds based on Title IV eligibility criteria which include class attendance. If Title IV funds are disbursed to ineligible students (including students who fail to begin attendance), the institution must return these funds to the U.S. DoE within 30 days of becoming aware that the student will not or has not begun attendance. Faculty will provide the Office of Financial Aid with an electronic notification if a student has not attended by the published Census Date (the first week of class). Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend prior to the published Census Date (the first week of class) will have their aid terminated and returned to the DoE. Please note that any student who stops attending at any time during the semester may also need to return a portion of their federal aid.

Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center: The Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center supports graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges as well as faculty and staff. Tutors work with students to develop reading skills, prepare oral presentations, and plan, draft, and revise their written assignments. Our language tutors support students enrolled in Spanish courses and students composing in Spanish for any assignment. Our digital studio tutors support students working on digital projects such as eportfolios, class presentations, or other digital multimedia projects. Students can schedule appointments through JagWire under the Student Services tab. Click on "Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center" to make your appointment. The Center offers face-to-face, synchronous online, and asynchronous digital appointments. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on our website at <https://www.tamusa.edu/academics>.

Meeting Basic Needs: Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to submit a CARE referral (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/StudentRights-and-Responsibilities/file-a-report.html>) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to direct you to available resources.

Office Hours: All faculty with teaching assignments should include regularly scheduled office hours on each syllabus in addition to "by appointment." Please review your appointment letter for the number of weekly office hours you are expected to set. Regularly scheduled office hours should also be posted outside your office door (where applicable).

Military Affairs: Veterans and active-duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to visit the Office of Military Affairs for any question involving federal or state VA Education Benefits. Visit the Patriots' Casa building, room 202, or to contact the Office of Military Affairs with any questions at [military.va@tamusa.edu](mailto:military.va@tamusa.edu) or (210)784-1397.

Religious Observances: Texas A&M University-San Antonio recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided with an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or course work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes for regular session classes.

The Six-Drop Rule: Students are subject to the requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 1231 passed by the Texas Legislature in 2007. SB 1231 limits students to a maximum of six (6) non-punitive course drops (i.e., courses a student chooses to drop) during their undergraduate careers. A non-punitive drop does not affect the student's GPA. However, course drops that exceed the maximum allowed by SB 1231 will be treated as "F" grades and will impact the student's GPA.

Statement of Harassment and Discrimination: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to the fundamental principles of academic freedom, equal opportunity, and human dignity. To fulfill its multiple missions as an

institution of higher learning, A&M-San Antonio encourages a climate that values and nurtures collegiality and the uniqueness of the individual on our campus and within our state, nation, and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees are to be based on applicable law and individual merit. Texas A&M University-San Antonio, in accordance with applicable federal and state law, prohibits discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or pregnancy/parenting status. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the University's Civil Rights Officer at 210-784-2061 or [titleix@tamusa.edu](mailto:titleix@tamusa.edu).

Texas A&M University-San Antonio faculty are committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students and for the university as a whole. If you have experienced any form of sex- or gender-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic or dating violence, or stalking based on sex, know that help and support are available. A&M-San Antonio's Title IX

Coordinator can support those impacted by such conduct in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The university strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the Title IX Coordinator. Please be aware that all A&M-San Antonio employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as counselors and trained victim advocates) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the university. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment, sexual violence, or other related sex-based misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the university's Title IX Coordinator ( [titleix@tamusa.edu](mailto:titleix@tamusa.edu), 210-784-2061, CAB 439K). If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting requirement, you can contact the Student Counseling Center at (210) 784-1331 or visit them in Madla 120.

Pregnant/Parenting Students: Texas A&M-San Antonio does not require a pregnant or parenting student, solely because of that status or issues related to that status, to (1) take a leave of absence or withdraw from their degree or certificate program; (2) limit the student's studies; (3) participate in an alternative program; (4) change the student's major, degree, or certificate program; or (5) refrain from joining or cease participating in any course, activity, or program at the University. The university will provide such reasonable modifications to pregnant students as would be provided to a student with temporary medical condition that are related to the health and safety of the student and the student's unborn child. These could include maintaining a safe distance from substances, areas, and activities known to be hazardous to pregnant individuals and their unborn child; excused absences because of illness or medical appointments; modified due dates for assignments; rescheduled tests/exams; taking a leave of absence; and being provided access to instructional materials and video recordings of lectures for excused absences, if these would be provided to any other student with an excused absence. Pregnant/parenting students are encouraged to contact the Title IX Coordinator with any questions or concerns related to their status ([titleix@tamusa.edu](mailto:titleix@tamusa.edu); 210-784-2061; CAB 439K). Texas A&M-San Antonio has also designated the Title IX Coordinator as the liaison officer for current or incoming students who are the parent or guardian of a child younger than 18 years of age. The Title IX Coordinator can provide students with information regarding support services and other resources.

Young Jaguars: can support parenting students with daycare who meet this criteria: Must be enrolled in classes at TAMUSA in the current semester. Must be Pell eligible or a single parent. They serve children ages 3 to 12-years-old. Children must be enrolled in Pre-K-3 through 6th grade. [youngjaguars@tamusa.edu](mailto:youngjaguars@tamusa.edu) (210) 784-2636

Students' Rights and Responsibilities: The following statement of students' rights and responsibilities is intended to reflect the philosophical base upon which University Student Rules are built. This philosophy acknowledges the existence of both rights and responsibilities, which is inherent to an individual not only as a student at Texas A&M University-San Antonio but also as a citizen of this country.

#### Students' Rights

1. A student shall have the right to participate in a free exchange of ideas, and there shall be no University rule or administrative rule that in any way abridges the rights of freedom of speech, expression, petition and peaceful assembly as set forth in the U.S. Constitution.
2. Each student shall have the right to participate in all areas and activities of the University, free from any form of discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and pregnancy/parenting or veteran status in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.
3. A student has the right to personal privacy except as otherwise provided by law, and this will be observed by students and University authorities alike.



4. Each student subject to disciplinary action arising from violations of university students' rules shall be assured a fundamentally fair process.

#### Students' Responsibilities

1. A student has the responsibility to respect the rights and property of others, including other students, the faculty, and administration.
2. A student has the responsibility to be fully acquainted with the published University Student Rules found in the Student Handbook, Student Code of Conduct, on our website, and University Catalog, and to comply with them, as well as with federal, state, and local laws.
3. A student has the responsibility to recognize that student actions reflect upon the individuals involved and upon the entire University community.
4. A student has the responsibility to recognize the University's obligation to provide a safe environment for learning.
5. A student has the responsibility to check their university email for any updates or official university notifications.

We expect that students will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful, and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation, or disability. Conduct that infringes on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

Students are expected to exhibit a high level of honesty and integrity in their pursuit of higher education. Students engaging in an act that violates the standards of academic integrity will find themselves facing academic and/or disciplinary sanctions. Academic misconduct is any act, or attempt, which gives an unfair advantage to the student. Additionally, any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion may be considered as academic misconduct. For more information on academic misconduct policies and procedures please review the Student Code of Conduct (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/student-rights-and-responsibilities/documents/Student-Handbook-2022-23.pdf>) or visit the resources available in the OSRR website (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/student-rights-and-responsibilities/academicintegrity.html>).

AI Policy:



## Option 2 – Use of Generative AI Permitted Under Some Circumstances or With Explicit Permission

There are situations and contexts within this course where you may be asked to use artificial intelligence (AI) tools to explore how they can be used. Outside of those circumstances, you should not use AI tools to generate content (text, video, audio, images) that will end up in any student work (assignments, activities, discussion responses, etc.) that is part of your evaluation in this course. Any student work submitted using AI tools should clearly indicate with attribution what work is the student's work and what part is generated by the AI. In such cases, no more than 25% of the student work should be generated by AI. If any part of this is confusing or uncertain, students should reach out to their instructor for clarification before submitting work for grading. Use of AI-generated content without the instructor's permission and/or proper attribution in this course qualifies as academic dishonesty and violates Texas A&M-San Antonio's standards of academic integrity.

NOTE: Guidance for how to cite AI-generators, like ChatGPT, can be found here <https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chat>

### Important Dates: Fall 2025 Regular 16-Week Session

August 25	First day of class
September 1	Labor Day Holiday – No classes
September 10	Census Date
November 14	Last day to drop with an automatic "W"
November 25	Last day to withdraw from the University
November 26	Study Day – No classes
November 27-29	Thanksgiving Holiday – No classes

December 4	Last day of classes
December 5	Study Day – No classes
December 6-12	Final exams
December 16	Commencement

The complete academic calendar is available online:

<https://www.tamusa.edu/academics/academiccalendar/index.html>