

**Methods of Historical Research (Hist. 4301)**

**Spring Semester, 2025  
Thursday 6:00 – 8:45 PM  
Classroom: HALL 204**

**Instructor: Dr. William Kiser  
Office: Central Academic Building, Room 313-F  
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**OFFICE HOURS:  
Thursday: 5:00PM-6:00PM  
Or By Appointment**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course will teach the research and writing skills that historians use in their profession. Students will formulate a topic of inquiry and thesis, and then conduct original research in primary and secondary sources to support that thesis in an extended-length written paper and oral presentation. Class lecture topics will include identifying and locating source materials, critical evaluation of source materials, proper citation of sources, and the composition of a written narrative using source materials as the evidentiary basis for a thesis-driven essay.

\*This course is being taught as “Writing Intentional.”

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

1. Develop critical thinking skills through classroom discussion, historical research, and extended-length writing assignments
2. Practice and improve analytical writing skills
3. Present research findings in written, visual, and oral formats
4. Develop an original thesis and support it with primary and secondary evidence

**COURSE READINGS:**

- Article-length readings may be posted on Blackboard.

## **PLEDGE OF INSTRUCTOR PARTICIPATION**

The instructor will “take” this class along with students. This means that I will write my own original research paper over the course of the semester and complete every assignment listed below, but I will do so one week before each student deadline. My completed assignments (prospectus, 4-page rough draft, 8-page rough draft, final paper, and research presentation) will each be distributed to students, and they will grade me and offer substantive feedback as part of their participation grade in the course. This will provide students with a model to follow for each assignment, and will also enable students to engage intellectually with the instructor in a peer-review format akin to that practiced among academics.

## **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

### **PAPER PROSPECTUS**

Students must submit, in hard-copy format, a short explanation of their paper topic, the historical significance of that topic, and a thesis statement. This should be one FULL double-spaced page.

### **PEER REVIEW WORKSHOP**

Students must submit a double-spaced rough draft of four (4) pages to the instructor via email. These papers will be made anonymous, printed, and distributed randomly in class for a “blind” peer review workshop.

### **RESEARCH PAPER ROUGH DRAFT**

Students must submit a rough draft of their research paper, totaling a minimum of eight (8) double-spaced pages. These rough drafts will be the basis of individual student meetings with the instructor. Mandatory individual meetings with the instructor will be scheduled to discuss these drafts; attendance at this meeting is part of the overall assignment grade.

### **RESEARCH PRESENTATION**

During the final two weeks of the semester, students will give a Power Point presentation in class. Presentations should be 10-12 minutes in length.

### **FINAL WRITING ASSIGNMENT**

Students will submit an original research paper (minimum 15 double-spaced narrative pages with footnotes, **plus** bibliography). The essay must be 12-point Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins. Title page and bibliography do not count towards the length requirement. Students may write about a topic of their own choosing, but they must have instructor approval. **Final drafts must be submitted through Turn-it-In on Blackboard; no late papers will be accepted for any reason.**

### **CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION**

Students must participate and engage in classroom discussion over the readings, as well as the lectures. Three or more unexcused absences may result in the loss of all participation points.

## **GRADING SCALE**

Prospectus—100 points  
Peer Review Workshop—100 points  
Rough Draft —200 points  
Final Paper—300 points  
Class Presentation—200 points  
Classroom Participation—100 points

### **TOTAL POINTS: 1000**

**A= 1000-900; B = 899-800; C =799-700; D = 699-600; F = 599 and below.**

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**Attendance:** Class attendance is mandatory and is part of your final grade. You will not be able to succeed in this course if you habitually miss class. Please be punctual – do not arrive late, and do not leave early. If you arrive more than 10 minutes late to class, you will be marked absent for that entire period.

**Extra Credit:** I do not offer extra credit.

**Blackboard:** This course has a Blackboard site, which is where your grades will be posted. I will also use Blackboard for course announcements throughout the semester.

**Late Paper Policy:** I do not accept late papers. All assignments must be turned in by the deadline. This policy is strictly enforced.

**Classroom Etiquette:** Please be respectful in the classroom. Do not leave early, turn your cell phone to silent mode, and do not hold personal conversations during lecture or discussion. Laptops may only be used to take notes.

**Communication:** Students may e-mail at any time regarding questions or concerns. I do my best to respond within one day. You may also schedule an appointment to meet in my office.

### **Support Services & Disclosures**

Academic Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities: The Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are federal anti-discrimination statutes that provide comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Title II of the ADAAA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act require that students with disabilities be guaranteed equal access to the learning environment through the provision of reasonable and appropriate accommodation of their disability. If you have a diagnosed disability that may require an accommodation, please contact Disability Support Services (DSS) for the coordination of services. The phone number for DSS is (210) 784-1335 and email is [dsupport@tamusa.edu](mailto:dsupport@tamusa.edu).

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.

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://bit.ly/WLDCCenter>.

Counseling/Mental Health Resources: As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and/or 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 Modular C, Room 166 (Rear entrance). **Crisis support is available 24/7 by calling the SCC at 210-784-1331 (after-hours select option ‘2’).** For more information and self-help resources, please visit [www.tamusa.edu/studentcounseling](http://www.tamusa.edu/studentcounseling)

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 the first week of class. Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend 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.

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.

Academic Misconduct: 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](#). 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.

The complete academic calendar is available online:

<https://www.tamusa.edu/academics/documents/ay-2025-calendar-09-19-2023.pdf>

## **WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

### **IMPORTANT DATES:**

**January 30: Prospectus due at 4:00 PM (email to professor)**

**March 6: 4-page Rough Draft due at 4:00 PM (email to professor)**

**March 6: Peer Review Workshop (in class)**

**April 17: 8-page Rough Draft due (email to professor)**

**May 8: Final Paper due at 4:00 PM (Blackboard)**

### **Week 1: January 23**

Course Introduction & Syllabus; Research Strategies; WLDCC Presentation

### **Week 2: January 30 - Prospectus Due Before Class via Email (Deadline: 4:00PM)**

Identifying & Obtaining Sources; Primary Source Analysis & Notetaking exercise

### **Week 3: February 6**

Evaluating Sources; Historians' Fallacies; Presentation on Library Resources; Tex-Share Cards

### **Week 4: February 13**

No Class: Research Day

### **Week 5: February 20**

Using Internet Sources

**Week 6: February 27**

Interpretive Methodologies; Citing Sources

**Week 7: March 6 - Four-page rough draft due by 4:00 PM (email to professor).**

Peer Review Workshop; Discussion on primary & secondary sources.

**Week 8: March 13 – Spring Break**

No Class

**Week 9: March 20**

Strategies for Writing a Historical Narrative

**Week 10: March 27**

Q & A: Discuss Research Papers; Schedule Individual Meetings for April

**Week 11: April 3**

No Class: Research Day

**Week 12: April 10**

No Class: Research Day

**Week 13: April 17 - 8-page Rough Drafts due via email by 4:00 PM**

No Class; Individual meetings with Instructor

**Week 14: April 24**

No Class; Individual Meetings with Instructor

**Week 15: May 1**

Class Presentations

**Week 16: May 8 - Turn in Final Research Papers by 4:00 PM (Blackboard)**

Class Presentations