

**HISTORY 4990, Fall 2014  
SENIOR THESIS SEMINAR**

**American History, 1600s - 1989  
Professor Paul Harvey. [Pharvey@uccs.edu](mailto:Pharvey@uccs.edu)  
Office hours: Tuesday 11 – 1:30**

The purpose of this course is to familiarize you with the process of historical research and to help you write the capstone project required of all history majors. You will be required to write an original thesis of approximately 25-30 pages, based mostly on relevant primary sources, on a topic that interests you in American history from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to 1989. Your final grade will be based both on the quality of the thesis itself (80%) and on class attendance and participation (20%). Note: Topics that post-date 1989 will not be accepted.

Each of you will have, in addition to the professor, a student referee who will critique your written work throughout the semester. You, in turn, will be a referee for one of your colleagues. The quality of your short assignments through the semester, as well as your work as a student referee, will be critical for determining your class participation grade. Given the focus of classtime on small group assignments, class attendance is MANDATORY.

**REQUIRED TEXT**

Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, 7<sup>th</sup> edition.  
“A Glossary of Usage and Terms,” from *Writing Well*, to be provided via pdf.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

- Aug. 26      Administrative Details, General Discussion of Topics and Approaches. Visit to Library. Writing Center Introduction. **Distribution of Library Survey Exercise.** LIBRARY SURVEY IS DUE BY LABOR DAY. Details to be discussed in class.
- Sept. 9      MEET IN LIBRARY  
1. DISCUSSION OF LIBRARY RESEARCH EXERCISES given out in class.  
2. Due: one-page analysis of paper, along with 1-2 pp. statement of your projected research topic, a list of questions you would like to answer about that topic, and a short bibliography including at least two primary sources.
- Sept. 16      Full class: Discussion of Rampolla, 1-49. Discussion of Senior Thesis Papers on Reserve from the *Colorado Springs Library Undergraduate Research Journal*. Further discussion of student topics.

**FOR TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 23**

**Find one or two PRIMARY DOCUMENTS that you will use in your research that you will bring to class. Prepare a short (3 – 4 pp. or so double-spaced) paper to turn in to me, HARD COPY, by classtime. No late papers accepted. In your paper, address the following questions about your document(s):**

- 1) **What is the main theme of the document?**
- 2) **What is the historical context of your document?**
- 3) **What is the main problem or question that arises from your document? (for example, who or what influenced its author(s)? Did other author(s) state similar ideas? To whom is the document directed? What was the author's purpose in writing this document?**
- 4) **What is the title of at least one primary document that would help you answer the questions above?**
- 5) **Name two secondary sources that will help you answer the question.**
- 6) **How will you use this document in your research? How will you use this document to lead you to more research sources?**

Sept 23            Full Class: Discussion of Primary Document Exercise as described above. Everyone come prepared to present your primary document to class. Bring a copy of one page of your document for the class, and be prepared to give a 5-minute presentation showing how you went about analyzing your particular document.

Sept. 30            Reading: Rampolla, 49-97. Discussion of research question/hypothesis/thesis statement exercise.

**DUE TODAY:** Each student will prepare a typed response, about 3-5 double-spaced pages, to the following questions: (1) What is your research question or your hypothesis? In other words, what question does your evidence answer or respond to? (2) What is your answer to the research questions? Restate the significance of your evidence and your analysis. This answer is your thesis statement. (3) State or restate the answer as a thesis statement. (4) What evidence do you have to support your thesis statement? (5) What is your most important or useful primary source for supporting your thesis? Explain. (6) What are your most important or useful secondary sources(s) for supporting your thesis? Explain. (7) What claims can you make? How do the sources support the claims? This is your argument.

Oct. 7              Research and Citation exercise. Skim Rampolla, 106-144. Discussion of annotated bibliographies.

**By today you should have your annotated bibliography, divided into primary and secondary sources. Student partners/referees will be assigned this week.**

Assignment: Bring to class today ONE example of how you will footnote (or endnote) one of your PRIMARY sources and one of your SECONDARY sources. Bring questions about citing difficult sources that you may have. In class, we will go over citation methods, and discuss endnote/bibliographic citations especially for difficult or more obscure sources.

**BY CLASSTIME OCTOBER 7<sup>TH</sup>: Turn in (by HARD COPY) outline of introduction, a project hypothesis or thesis statement, and a brief sketch/outline of the projected body of paper to me and student referee, along with the annotated bibliography as noted above.**

- Oct. 14 Discussion of Outlines and Responses by Referees
- Oct. 21 NO CLASS – INDIVIDUAL WRITING DAY. Get going on that rough draft!!
- Oct. 28 Due today at classtime: **BY TODAY: I will expect from each of you ten pages (or more – at least 10 pages) of a draft for me and for your student partner. I will give you comments during your individual meeting with me.** We will spend classtime discussing the drafts.
- Nov. 4 NO CLASS: Sign up for individual meetings with me.
- Nov. 11 **CLASSTIME**: Full rough drafts due – 20 pp. minimum. YES, 20 pages. Short class session for discussion of commenting on rough drafts, going over instructions from this syllabus on serving as an effective peer reviewer.
- Nov. 18 Peer Review Discussion of Rough Drafts

**PEER REVIEW/STUDENT REFEREE ASSIGNMENT:**

**Come with a typed 2-page response to your colleague’s paper, according to the instructions handed out in class. Come prepared to formally respond to your partner's paper. Prepare a hard copy for me and for your partner of your response. 15 minute discussion of each paper.**

Special Note: Providing a rough draft for peer review and comment is a mandatory part of this class. Failure to do so will result in grade penalty. I will comment on rough drafts using the form you see attached to this syllabus, but rough drafts are not graded. This is your time to present your basic ideas and solicit help and suggestions from myself and your student peer reviewers. Your grade will be based on the final product. Thus, regardless of how “rough” your rough draft is, I will require to you turn it in for comments and peer review.

- Nov. 25 NO CLASS. Individual Meetings – Discussion of getting to your final draft
- Dec. 2 FULL CLASS: Discussion of turning your rough draft into a final draft.
- Dec. 9 **FINAL PAPERS DUE TODAY NO LATER THAN 5:00 P.M.!!!! You must turn in one hard copy AND one digital copy (Word or PDF form) to me.**

**FINAL PAPERS FOR EVERYBODY DUE BY TUESDAY, DEC. 9, AT 5:00 P.M. IF YOU NEED AN EXTENSION, ASK FOR ONE IN ADVANCE AND EXPLAIN WHY AND I’LL GIVE YOU ONE. IN CASES OF EXTENSIONS, YOUR PAPER MUST REACH ME BY FRIDAY DEC. 12 AT THE ABSOLUTE LATEST.**

NOTE: At the end of the semester, each student will receive an official sr. thesis evaluation form. Your thesis will be read and commented upon by myself and by a second reader from the History Department Faculty.

### Special Notes for Class:

- Each student will be required to sign and turn in a form indicating their understanding of the meaning of, and consequences for, the serious academic offense of plagiarism. Plagiarism will result in an automatic grade of F for this class.
- *You are responsible for always backing up your work in more than one place so that, even in case of a computer crash, you will not lose your senior thesis.* I am not interested in hearing your tale of woe about your computer. Make backup files of everything, all the time. Use dropbox or some “cloud” service and then you’ll never lose anything.
- Your work as a student referee partner is critical to this class. I take this exercise very seriously, and failure to perform your duties may result in you failing the class. This is part of the 20% of your grade that involves class participation; do not underestimate that.
- Likewise, the process of writing, turning in, and receiving critical feedback on a rough draft is critical to this class. Failure to do so will result in a grade penalty.
- ***Citations for Footnotes/ Endnotes and Bibliography:*** In this course, we use the Chicago Manual of Style citation system. Several websites have information on the Chicago format, see: [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html) , or <http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/dept/history/lavender/footnote.html>. You may also get information at the Writing Center on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of Columbine Hall. You may also just follow the models provided to you in the end section of Rampolla.
- ***Paper Format:*** **ALL written work for the class must be typed, double-spaced, with 12-point font, 1-inch margins, and numbered pages (bottom center or bottom right-hand corner preferred).** Title pages are not necessary for short assignments. The rough and final drafts of your thesis should have a title page. NO folders, fancy plastic covers, or other additional “packaging” on papers, please. Just staple or clip the pages together in the top left hand corner.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR ROUGH DRAFTS

Here are your instructions for procedure in dealing with your (and your partner's) rough drafts.

- Turn in **one hard copy and one digital copy** of your rough draft to me, and one to your referee. Please make arrangements with your referee ahead of time to exchange papers in whatever way is most convenient for you. Then, please turn in another hard copy to me, which will be made available to everyone else in your group (alternatively, you may make arrangements with everyone in your group to distribute drafts to each other -- we'll work that out in class).
- After reading your partner's paper, prepare a short essay of 2–3 pages responding to (and making suggestions for) the paper. You could start, by example, by restating what you perceive to be the major arguments of the paper, and the degree to which you find those arguments persuasively stated and supported with primary source evidence. Please find below some major questions to ask yourself as you read this paper. **Give one copy of your response paper to me, and one to your partner.** You will turn in this assignment to me at the end of our discussion. I expect that everyone should take this assignment very seriously. Failure to do so will be reflected in a lower course grade.
- During class, either read your response paper to the class, or present it informally. We will then use your paper as a basis for discussion.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARING A CONSTRUCTIVE RESPONSE AND CRITIQUE

First—and this goes without saying—the intent here is to be constructive in criticism. Write your comments with that spirit in mind. Second, don't bother with correcting every little grammatical problem or stylistic issue that you may encounter (I have a grading assistant who will focus on marking up grammatical and stylistic problems).

It is NOT your job to be a proofreader or copyeditor, or to be a “nitpicker.”

### **Instead, stay focused on the big issues:**

- Does the paper state a clear thesis? If not, is there a thesis that can be gotten from the body of the paper? If not, how might the paper be reoriented to make a clear argument?
- Does the paper make its case convincingly? Is there adequate evidence to support the points made? What points appear to be the strongest, and which the weakest?
- Does the paper stay focused on the argument and not wander off into irrelevancies? What paragraphs (if any) could be resituated to support the argument more effectively?
- Does the paper have a clear introduction and conclusion?
- Does the paper address the broader implications of its topic? Are there obvious questions that arise in reading the paper that the author seems to have ignored? Is there an obvious counter–argument or another way of reading the evidence that the author should address?

To summarize, if you address these two questions in your comment you will have done your job:

- 1) Is the thesis of the paper clearly stated?
- 2) Is the thesis convincingly argued throughout the work?

## **A CRITICAL PEER REVIEW PRIMER** **[Courtesy of Carole Woodall, Department of History]**

### THE CRITICAL PEER REVIEW

What is a critical peer review? The peer review is designed to help develop your skills as a critical reader and consequently as a writer. You will be reading, editing, and commenting on rough drafts of one of your colleagues.

#### Overall Comments

Step 1: Read through the paper you've received and break it down by points.

Step 2: Compile a list of those points in your own words, starting with the thesis, as you understand it and going all the way through to the end.

Step 3: Consider whether each point a) makes sense to you or not, and b) is fully expressed or not quite clear. Make suggestions to improve the paragraph.

Step 4: Do the same for the connections between points, and between each point and the thesis. (You can draw lines between points on your typed sheet.)

Step 5: Write up a paragraph of recommendations for the author, making sure to address the following questions:

a) Did the paper overall make sense to you? (Perfectly. Little fuzzy in the middle. All but paragraph three. I admit I found the whole thing a bit confusing.)

b) What do you think the thesis of this paper really is/ should be? (You did a great job sticking to your thesis. I think by the end, you proved this, not this. Maybe it would be a little clearer if you phrased it this way? I liked the conclusion better than the opening; you should state that right from the beginning, etc.)

c) Make at least three suggestions for improving points/paragraphs in the body, addressing those you found confusing in Step 3 & 4.

#### The first sentence and introductory section or paragraph

The best place to start is with the first sentence and paragraph. The first paragraph is typically a work in progress throughout the writing process necessitating revision upon revision, and honing of every single word. The first paragraph sets the tone for the entire paper and will for the most part determine whether or not a reader should continue reading.

#### Paragraphs

You should not assume that each paragraph in the draft has an inherent coherency. You need to focus on the following:

1. Isolate an idea that needs to be developed further.
2. Determine the function of the paragraph. Is the information in the paragraph primarily descriptive? Is there evidence that seems to support a claim, or idea? Is the paragraph all over the place? If it is the latter, then make comment.
3. Does each paragraph provide a logical flow from one to the next? Transitions are indeed important. If the paper is organized around subheadings, consider whether or not you, as the reader, understand the direction of the paper. Signposts allow for connections to be made between what has been stated or argued, and what is going to be argued next.

**Grade Evaluation:** Your final class grade will be based 80% on your final written thesis (including the first and second drafts) and 20% on your class participation—including attendance, work with your writing partner, discussion, and the timely fulfillment of ALL other course assignments.

**Grading Scale: A = 95% and above A- = 90-94%**

A's are reserved for outstanding work. The paper is well organized, with an original and persuasive thesis. The thesis is complex, argumentative, and clearly articulated. The thesis is supported with specific and accurate use of evidence, close reading, clear explanations, and compelling arguments. Paper engages both primary and secondary sources; analysis is sophisticated and persuasive. Vocabulary is both elegant and precise. Transitions between ideas and paragraphs are smooth and logical. "A" work is virtually free from mechanical errors including grammar, diction, and spelling.

**B+ = 87-89%**

**B = 83-86%**

**B- = 80-82%**

B's are given to good work. "B" work has no serious errors, but shows some need for complexity or sophistication of analysis. The thesis may be sound but predictable; it may be either original without being persuasive, or be persuasive without originality. The thesis may fail to demonstrate critical thinking. Transitions between ideas and paragraphs may not be entirely smooth. "B" work may have minor mechanical errors including grammar, diction, and spelling.

**C+ = 77-79%**

**C = 73 – 76%**

C+ and C's are given to satisfactory work. Though the student demonstrates an adequate grasp of the material, the thesis may be weak, and/or the student fails to support the thesis. The thesis may not be argumentative or is overly simplistic. Points may be made, but not clearly or convincingly. Arguments may be offered, but are not supported and/or are clearly flawed. Engagement with and analysis of primary and secondary sources is either insufficient or unsophisticated. Transitions between ideas and paragraphs may be awkward or illogical. Significant errors in grammar, language usage, and spelling.

**C- = 60-72%**

C- is given to unsatisfactory work. Paper fails to meet the minimum standards requisite for a capstone course and paper in History. "C-" work may lack a thesis, and/or is not based on accurate information. It may not contain logical arguments, or the argument may be excessively simplistic. The student may not demonstrate an adequate understanding of the evidence or the topic. Thought does not flow smoothly or logically. Significant errors in grammar and language usage confound comprehension and are below the minimum standards requisite for an upper division student. Any student earning a C- will be strongly encouraged to repeat the course. (SEE course catalog for History Major Requirements)

**F = 0-59%**

Work may be not turned in, it may plagiarize, or it may not be within the scope of the course. Grammar, spelling, and language usage may be below the minimum standards for a capstone thesis in History.

**Academic Integrity (<http://www.uccs.edu/~dos/studentconduct/academicdishonesty.html>) We will discuss plagiarism thoroughly in class, and you will be required to sign a form indicating you understand the meaning of plagiarism, and its consequences.**

**Senior Thesis Evaluation Summary Form (revised 2014)**

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Second Reader's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Senior Thesis  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Date Submitted** \_\_\_\_\_

Core Competencies, B.A. in History

Senior Thesis (Hist 4990) is the capstone course in the B.A. in History from UCCS. This course requires students to engage fully in the process of historical inquiry, research methods, critical thinking, analysis of primary and secondary sources, and clear, argumentative writing. During Senior Thesis, students demonstrate how they have learned the core competencies of the History B.A. program. Students completing a BA in History will be able to:

1. Articulate arguments, critical analysis, and complexity of reasoning in writing and oral discussion.
2. Use, integrate, and discuss primary source evidence effectively in writing and oral discussion, based on an understanding of the methods of historical research and analysis.
3. Use, integrate, and discuss secondary sources and historiography effectively in writing and oral discussion, based on an understanding of the methods of historical research and analysis.
4. Use, integrate, and discuss methodological, conceptual and theoretical approaches effectively in writing and oral discussion.
5. Demonstrate clarity of thought and critical thinking in the organization, form, framing, and development of arguments.
6. Use proper writing mechanics, appropriate authoritative voice, and active verbs/sentence structures.

## PART ONE: Assessment of Core Competencies demonstrated Senior Thesis Project

(Overall competencies assessment score is combined average of the six categories on a 100 points scale for each.)

<b>Competencies Assessed</b>	<b>Clearly Unacceptable</b> = 0–59	<b>Below Standards</b> = 60–69	<b>Meets Standards</b> = 70–79	<b>Clearly Exceeds Standards</b> = 80–89	<b>Outstanding Work</b> = 90–100
<b>Argument and Critical Analysis:</b> Ability to articulate arguments, critical analysis, and complexity of reasoning in writing					
<b>Primary Source Analysis:</b> Ability to use, integrate, and discuss primary source evidence effectively in writing based on an understanding of the methods of historical research and analysis.					
<b>Secondary Source Analysis:</b> Ability to use, integrate, and discuss secondary sources and historiography effectively in writing based on an understanding of the appropriate methods of historical research and analysis.					
<b>Logic and Methodology:</b> Ability to use, integrate, and discuss methodological, conceptual and theoretical approaches effectively in writing					
<b>Organization, Clarity of Thought, and Writing:</b> Ability to demonstrate clarity of thought and critical thinking in the organization, form, framing, and development of arguments.					
<b>Disciplinary Conventions of Research and Writing:</b> Ability to demonstrate proper writing mechanics, appropriate authoritative voice, and active verbs/sentence structures as well as format and citation practices expected in the discipline.					

<b>Overall average of competencies demonstrated in Senior Thesis Project:</b>	
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<b>Part 1: Grade on senior thesis project (See comments on Part 1 below)</b>	
<b>Part 2: Grade for class participation, peer work, oral presentation, timely completion of work, and other course requirements</b>	<b>Comments on Part 2:</b>
<b><u>Final Course Grade in History 4990:</u></b>	

**Advisor's Comments:**

**Second Reader's Comments:**

**Signatures: Advisor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Second Reader:** \_\_\_\_\_