

# WRITING

## R E C E N T H I S T O R Y

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## WELCOME TO SENIOR SEMINAR

This class will lead students through the process of formulating an effective research question, developing a research strategy, understanding and interpreting primary sources, situating oneself within existing historical scholarship, and creating a polished research paper. Students will develop an electronic portfolio of their work in the History major and present themselves professionally as they prepare for their chosen post-graduate pursuits.



“The past is never dead.  
It’s not even past.”  
– William Faulkner,  
*Requiem for a Nun* (1950)

**Course Details (3 credits)**  
T/Th 10:00 - 11:15 am  
Room: Sullivan 238  
Fulfills your LASC capstone and History major capstone  
PreReqs: Successful completion of HI 411 + EN 102 or EN 250

**Instructor**  
Dr. Tona Hangen  
[thangen@worchester.edu](mailto:thangen@worchester.edu)  
Sullivan 327D x8688

**Office Hours: W & F**  
9-10:30 AM and by appt



Each professor’s capstone seminar is individual. My version of HI 460 for Fall 2014 considers what it means (both methodologically and theoretically) to write history of the recent past. How much time needs to pass before something is “history”? What kinds of sources, problems, challenges, and opportunities do historians have, right now for telling stories of events not-so-long-ago? 🐼

# RESOURCES



## e-Portfolio

If you took HI 411 Historian's Craft here at Worcester State, you should have begun a Wordpress e-portfolio (if not, I'll help you set one up). In this course you will use that platform to organize an ongoing research journal and to present a coherent, polished portfolio of your work in the major. Why? You will find it handy to have a permanent collection of your best work once you graduate, whether you choose to make it public or not.

## Electronic Research Tools

Historians increasingly use digital tools for research collection, management, communication and scholarship. This is especially true for historians concerned with the recent past, since a growing proportion of contemporary history's primary sources are either "born digital" or accessed online. Especially if you are planning to continue in a history-related field, like teaching, or if you are planning to go to graduate school, you will appreciate knowing how

to use tools like Zotero, Flow, or Dropbox, explore the world of historical scholarship using electronic resource capabilities, and connect with today's history-makers who are already using Twitter, Storify, Voicethread, LinkedIn, About.me, and many others. 21st-century historians cannot leave "computer stuff" to their colleagues in math, science and engineering: we need to be equally adept in using technical tools to enhance and share our work. 📖

## Required Books

William Kelleher Storey, *Writing History: A Guide for Students 4e* (Oxford UP, 2012) ISBN 0199830045

Claire Bond Potter and Renee C. Romano, eds., *Doing Recent History* (University of Georgia Press, 2012) ISBN-10: 0-8203-4302-1

Jeffrey Nealon & Susan Searls Giroux, *The Theory Toolbox 2<sup>nd</sup> ed* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2012) ISBN 10: 0742570504

George Packer, *The Unwinding: An Inner History of the New America* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2013) ISBN 10: 0374534608

Additional readings will be distributed as PDFs on Blackboard, linked to the course website, or will be available through our library's online resources

**Recommended :** Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History 7e* (Bedford, 2012) ISBN 0312610416 (you should own this from when you took HI 411, but if not – please obtain a copy!)

# REQUIREMENTS

## Course Requirements and Grading

A capstone course is designed to help you synthesize and integrate learning in the major and your college education; demonstrate mastery of historical thinking and the student learning outcomes of the history major; and facilitate your transition from WSU to your chosen post-graduate plans. It is meant to be the culminating learning experience of your history degree. We've designed it to be a senior-level research seminar focused on a deep, narrow topic in which you produce

- a semester-long inquiry resulting in a substantive original research paper adhering to the scholarly conventions of the discipline of history, and
- a polished portfolio of your work in the History major as an example of professional self-presentation.

**Successful completion of this class is a graduation requirement.**



Course Element	Points	Approx %
<b>Attendance &amp; Participation</b>	30	20%
<b>Research Skills</b>	25	16.5%
<b>Research Paper</b>	55	36.5%
<b>Professional Devt &amp; Self-Reflection</b>	40	27%
<b>Total Points Possible</b>	150	100%

## Class Participation and Discussion (20%)

will be critical to your learning in this course. Research and writing are usually solitary, even idiosyncratic, endeavors in the humanities. Probably most of your experience with research papers has been a hidden (and perhaps, shockingly close-to-deadline) process with a public product turned in (and too often then simply forgotten about) at the end of a semester. **This term will be different:** we will be very focused on making the iterative PROCESS of research and writing transparent and on reflecting on it both individually and collectively. Your research inquiry will benefit from deep engagement with our common texts and with the give-and-take of seminar discussion throughout the semester.



**Breakdown:** (15 points class attendance) + (15 points participation) = 30 points

## Research Skills (16.5%)

are essential to this course. Everyone will be coming in with different experiences and levels of comfort with research. Therefore, you'll self-assess your skills at the start of the semester with a pretest and repeat the assessment

at the end of the term to measure improvement, and you'll document your growth in this area through your research journal.

**Breakdown:** (7 journal entries @ 15 points total) + (pre/post test with improvement shown @ 10) = 25 points



**The Research Paper (36.5%)** is the main product and work of this semester for you. We'll stage that process in a highly structured way with lots of intermediate work including proposal, drafts and revision. This may be different from the way you've worked on large research projects in the past, but this structure is designed to maximize your chances of success with the research and writing process – which is, let's face it, very challenging intellectual work which needs a lot of time and support. It cannot be rushed and it cannot be postponed until the last few weeks of the term. See the course website for detailed guidelines for each stage of the process.

**Breakdown:** (Skeleton Draft @ 10) + (Final Draft @ 15) + (Revised Draft @ 25)  
+ (coming to conferences, being receptive to feedback/teachability @ 5 points) = 55 points

PS: I know you're curious... just what is a Skeleton Draft? The "skeleton draft" **due on October 23** is the "bones" of your future essay, with some parts of it developed a little more completely than others. Like a fully articulated skeleton, all parts need to be present, however, to get full credit (10 points):

- ♣ Working title
- ♣ Solid, well-crafted introduction OR conclusion
- ♣ Historiography section
- ♣ Outline with at least one section fleshed out
- ♣ At least some footnotes, so I can see that you are comfortable with this
- ♣ Bibliography, correctly formatted, with as many sources as you have so far

**Professional Development (27%)** is an integral part of any capstone course, no matter what your post-graduate plans. History is a degree that leads to a dazzlingly wide range of fields and careers, and we want you to leave Worcester State with the ability to articulate your strengths and interests, having crafted a practical toolkit of artifacts (portfolio, writing samples, CV, and personal statement) that can be adapted for your own needs as you prepare for graduation and beyond.

**Breakdown:** (CV 10 points) + (Portfolio 30 points) = 40 points

**The Portfolio**, which must be fully assembled by **December 16**, will be scored for the presence / absence and overall quality of these required elements

Shell built on time by Oct 9	3
At least one example of prior work included	3
Your revised, polished, reader-ready research paper	3
Another writing example from this course (e.g. journal entries)	3
Curriculum vitae (CV)	3
Personal Learning Statement / Portfolio Intro	5
CSC Proposal and Paper Abstract	5
+up to 5 points for distinction, professionalism, excellence	30



# THE FINE PRINT



## LEAP Value Rubrics

*We will incorporate several of the "Value Rubrics" developed by the Liberal Education for America's Promise project (an initiative in which our campus participates through MA's Vision Project) as the benchmark standards for your capstone work in this course, especially: Inquiry and Analysis, Critical Thinking, Written Communication, and Information Literacy.*

You can find them online at:

<http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/>

## Important Course Policies

- **TECHNOLOGY**

**ETIQUETTE:** My in-class technology policy: we will be busy in every class session, and we don't need any technological distractions. Silence your cell phones before you enter the classroom. BUT...

ALWAYS bring laptop or other connected device to EVERY class; refrain from surfing and social media use, and stay on task.

- **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

I will review with you the proper citation method for papers in this course

(Chicago Style is preferred in history). Please familiarize yourself with the university's policy on Academic Honesty in the Student Handbook; plagiarized writing will result in failing the course. I take such violations very seriously.

- **DISABILITY NEEDS:** If you have a documented disability (learning or otherwise), and you need a reasonable accommodation made for you in this course, please consult with me immediately at the outset of the course so we can design a solution that will help you be successful in the class.

## STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

LASC Capstone Outcome	How We Fulfill it in This Course
Communicate effectively orally & in writing	Students will demonstrate effective written communication through an intensive semester-long research project design and the successful completion of a substantive original research paper. Students will also effectively communicate their professional goals and skills by creating an academic portfolio and writing a CV. Students will use effective oral communication because the course is a small seminar heavily reliant upon class discussion, presentation, and peer review.
Apply skills in critical thinking	The course is organized around a semester-long original research project. Students will apply critical thinking skills in the selection, location, evaluation, and presentation of historical sources; in originating a persuasive, evidence-based thesis, and in crafting a high-quality paper that demonstrates strong historical thinking.
Understand how scholars in various disciplines approach problems and construct knowledge	Students will identify, distinguish among, and use different schools of historiographical thought. Students will model how historians create knowledge and will develop that model on the scale of a semester-long research project. Students will also correctly use the writing, citation, and other disciplinary conventions of scholarly writing in the field of history. Since historians work primarily through the analysis of sources and the creation of historical texts, these elements of the course will provide students opportunities to practice the "habits of mind" of successful historians.
Make connections across courses and disciplines	Students will synthesize knowledge and skills from across their coursework. Students are invited to develop meaningful connections from courses taken not only in their major but throughout their previous years at college; in addition, we recognize and even encourage that the research project is likely to be connected to scholarly interests and intellectual problems that predate the seminar itself.

## SYLLABUS

Subject to change, please check the website

#	Date	Topic	Reading	What's Due
<b>Unit 1: Very Recent History, A Crash Course</b>				
1	Th 9/4	Course Intro	Schlesinger, "On Writing Contemporary History"	
2	T 9/9	Narrating the Recent Past	*bring a textbook to class that goes past 1980*	Research Self-Assessment
3	Th 9/11	Technology Day	McLemee, "Is it History Yet?"	J1: Textbook Critique
4	T 9/16	The Recent Past	Potter/Romano (DRH) pp. 1-44	
5	Th 9/18	Sources & Groups	Packer, <i>Unwinding</i> , Prologue	J2: Here and Now
6	T 9/23	The Unwinding	Packer, <i>Unwinding</i> , assigned sections	
7	Th 9/25	Documents from Now, Part I	DRH = Brown/Kaiser "Opening Archives"	J3: Document Analysis
8	T 9/30	Documents from Now, Part II	DRH = Drakes, "Who Owns Your Archive?"	
9	Th 10/2	Where Do You Start?	Prepare to discuss your topic AND source base	J4: Your Topic
<b>Unit 2: Research Strategy</b>				
10	T 10/7	Library Day #1	Bring your topic AND questions for ref. staff	LOCATION TBA
11	Th 10/9	Getting Started	Storey, <i>Writing History</i> , Ch. 1-2	Portfolio Shell
12	T 10/14	Library Day #2	Storey, <i>Writing History</i> , Ch. 3	LOCATION TBA
13	Th 10/16	Technology and History	DRH, assigned section	J5: Sources
14	T 10/21	Writing Workshop	Storey, Ch. 4 - Bring 1 SECONDARY source	
15	Th 10/23	Peer Review - How & Why	Bring 2 copies of PRINTED Skeleton Draft	Skeleton Draft
<b>Unit 3: Narrative Techniques for Historians</b>				
16	T 10/28	Perils and Pitfalls	Storey Ch 5-6 + Thompson, "Perilously Recent"	CV Version 1.0
17	Th 10/30	What's My Theory	Nealon/Giroux, pp. 1-34 + section of your choice	J6: Groups
<b>Week of 10/27 = Writing Conferences, meet one-on-one with Prof. Hangen</b>				
18	T 11/4	Guessing the Future	Kubrick on 2001 from 1968 (links on course site)	
19	Th 11/6	Recent Past on Film	no reading; TBA film in class	FINAL DRAFT
<b>Unit 4: Scholarly Argument, Storytelling, and Polish</b>				
20	Th 11/13	Crafting Narratives	DRH, Part 5	
21	T 11/18	Writing Workshop	Storey, <i>Writing History</i> , Ch. 7-8	CV Version 2.0
<b>Week of 11/12 = Revision Conferences, meet one-on-one with Prof. Hangen</b>				
22	Th 11/20	Revising Workshop	Storey, <i>Writing History</i> , Ch. 9	
23	T 11/25	Abstracting Workshop	See links on course website	J7: Writing
24	T 12/2	Recent Past on Film	no reading; TBA film in class	REVISED DRAFT
25	Th 12/4	The History That Wasn't	Bachrach, "Counterfactual Constructions"	
26	T 12/9	Our Inner History of the New...	Bring something to share/discuss with your group	CSC Abstract, Post-Test
	T 12/16	Designated Final Exam slot	<b>no class - we are not meeting in person</b>	Complete Portfolio