

HI 411  
Fall 2011

TR 11:30 – 12:15, Room S-318  
<http://www.tonahangen.com/wsc/hi411/>

# The Historian's Craft



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Designed for the history major or minor (but open to anyone), “The Historian’s Craft” provides hands-on exploration of American history as both a professional field and a scholarly discipline. This course will provide students an overview of historiography and methods in history, and offers opportunities to build research, writing and interpretive skills through intensive work with sources, texts, and other historical evidence.

By the end of this course, you will understand how historians work and how history is made and constructed. You will also feel confident in approaching your own historical investigations because you will possess the practical skills and methodological tools. Over the course of the semester, you will build and polish a portfolio of your work, a solid foundation for more advanced and independent future work in the history major/minor and beyond.

## Reading List

James H. Arnold, *History: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2000), ISBN 9780192853523

Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History* 6e (Bedford, 2010) ISBN 0312535031

Robert C. Williams, *The Historian’s Toolbox: A Student’s Guide to the Theory and Craft of History* (M. E. Sharpe, 2007) ISBN 780765620279

James W. Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong*, Revised ed. (New Press, 2007) ISBN 9781595583260

Website: Making Sense of Evidence, <http://historymatters.gmu/browse/makesense>

Any additional readings will be posted as PDFs or linked to the course Blackboard

\*I **strongly** encourage you to PURCHASE, rather than rent, all of these books – this course is designed to help you build not only a skills “toolkit” but also a personal library of books and resources you can use throughout other history courses and in your professional life.

## Assignments and Course Requirements

For this course, you will set up **an online site** which will serve as both weekly journal and ePortfolio. You don’t have to make the site public but you will need to grant me access as a reader so that I can check it each week. (5% of course grade) You can use either Google Sites or Wordpress to do this.

By the end of the semester, your site needs to include: a series of weekly journal entries (see below), a portfolio of at least three edited/revised/complete history papers, and a personal statement about your portfolio. (5% course grade)

In **weekly journal** assignments, you write informal (but still, polished) responses to the week’s readings, class discussions, workshops, and your own research efforts. Most journal assignments will have specific writing prompts, while others will be open-ended. Each entry should be at least 450 words long, which is roughly equivalent to 1.5 pages. Journals should be submitted as a new post on your site by Tuesday 6am of each week. (15% of course grade)

**Class participation and discussion** will be critical to your learning in this course. I take attendance in each class. You should be on time and ready for discussion each day. History is not a spectator sport; you must speak up in class. I expect class discussion will be lively, respectful, substantive, and that you will have done that day’s assigned reading before class. Much of the work during the “Practice of History” weeks will be in the form of in-class workshops, and those cannot be made up, since they depend on being present in class. (15% of course grade)

You will write **three papers**, one at the end of each unit. For each unit you should choose a research topic of interest to you, sometimes from a list of options. You can use the same topic for all three units or you can pick a new one each time. The first two papers should be 4-6 pages long (1000-1500 words) and use correct and full citations in Chicago Style, which is the conventional style for the discipline of history. Your Rampolla book, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, has an extensive citation guide, and you hopefully also have your own copy of Diana Hacker, *A Writer’s Reference* which provides additional guidance on using Chicago Style. The third paper will be an annotated bibliography; this is described and modeled in Rampolla, pp. 24-26.

Full guidelines for each paper will be given out later. As a general rule, though – sources and citations are tremendously important. You need to leave a clear “vapor trail” of your research through your footnotes. Sources for your each paper should be completely documented if you accessed them as paper print sources. For electronic or non-print sources – find a way to show them to me... we’ll demo these options in class, but possibilities include: attach printouts, upload as files to your ePortfolio, organize in a public Zotero folder, or hyperlink from a page on your site (double check your links, make sure you have stable URLs!).

Paper #1	Primary Sources v. Secondary Sources	Due Oct 6	20% of course grade
Paper #2	The Practice of History	Due Nov 10	20% of course grade
Paper #3	The History Profession, Annotated Bibliography	Due by Dec 10	20% of course grade

**Collaboration across the university:** This semester you will participate in a unique learning experience. This history methods course is paired with a genetics methods course, BI 203, taught by Dr. Daron Barnard. Both our courses are designed for majors and specialists, and to that end, both invite their students to drill down in their chosen field and learn the discipline’s core concepts and methodologies. Yet increasingly our world, and more than likely your future professional life, requires interdisciplinary thinking and problem-solving. To help you develop the ability to see what history contributes to real-world problems, we have developed some common readings and learning

experiences across both classes. We will meet together as a combined group twice during the semester to discuss and strengthen areas of cooperation between the humanities and the sciences, and between history and biology in particular.

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## Grading

Class Participation	15%
ePortfolio	10%
Weekly Journal (12 entries)	15%
Paper 1 (10/6)	20%
Paper 2 (11/10)	20%
Paper 3 (on or before 12/13)	20%
	100%

## Communication & Technology

Course information is provided in the Blackboard shell, but you'll notice that it is somewhat pared down – we don't need many of its features, so I have only kept the essentials: course roster & email capability, Digital Dropbox, and a few others. Blackboard links out to a **public website for the course**, <http://tonahangen.com/wsc/hi411>. Please bookmark this site and/or subscribe to its RSS feed (we will talk about how to do that in class). I use a public website because it's accessible from any computer, so if Blackboard or the campus computer system is down, our work goes on.

In addition, I have created a **public Google calendar** for the course which lists the meeting dates and due dates for our assignments. If you use Google calendar to organize yourself (and I recommend that you do, since you already have the capability built

into your campus Gmail account), you can add the course calendar to your own by clicking on the [+ Google Calendar] icon in its lower right corner, while logged into your Gmail account.

You will get one copy of this printed syllabus, but it is subject to change (like the US Constitution, it's something of a "living document"). The website, the electronic PDF version of the syllabus posted on the website, and the course Google calendar will always be the most accurate sources of current information, so check prior to each class for readings, discussion questions, and any changes to the syllabus.

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, and no texting in class. If you choose to bring a laptop to class, I expect that you're using it **only** for taking notes or accessing the course's relevant material during discussion – not to surf the internet, check your email, or update your Facebook status.

I check email frequently during working hours, and that is the preferred way to contact me (thangen@worchester.edu). I am unlikely to reply to any email sent after 6 pm until the next morning, and I don't always check my campus email on the weekends, so be patient if you don't hear back right away.

## Syllabus

#	Date	Topic/ Reading	What's Due
<b>Unit I: "Don't Know Much About History"</b>			
1	T 9/6	Course Introduction	
2	R 9/9	How (and why) to create an ePortfolio <i>Reading:</i> Williams pp. 1-19 and Arnold, Ch 1	Location: tba
3	T 9/13	Textbooks and the Stakes for History Education <i>Reading:</i> Loewen Ch 1 + 1 other (TBD in class)	Create your portfolio Site J1 – identify Topic #1
4	R 9/15	<i>Reading:</i> Loewen Ch 12-13, and a chapter from 7-11 (TBD in class)	
5	T 9/20	Textbooks: Diagnosis and Solutions <i>Reading:</i> Loewen – a chapter from 2-6 (TBD in class)	J2
6	R 9/22	Historical Writing: Conventions, Practices, Habits <i>Reading:</i> Williams Ch 8 and Dartmouth Writing Program, "Writing the History Paper" (online)	
7	T 9/27	<i>Reading:</i> Rampolla – skim entire, Williams 11	J3 Bring Rampolla to class for discussion
8	R 9/29	Historical Writing: Sources, Choices, Audiences <i>Reading:</i> Williams Ch 9-10 and Endersby, <i>A Guinea Pig's History of Biology</i> (PDF excerpt)	
9	T 10/4	History's Big Questions <i>Reading:</i> Arnold, Ch 2-4	<i>No J this week</i>
<b>Unit II: The Practice of History as Craft</b>			
10	R 10/6	Portfolio Day: Meet in (room TBA)	Paper #1 Location: tba
11	T 10/11	Scientific Evidence <i>Reading:</i> Online links + <i>Nature</i> article, see website for details	J4 – identify Topic #2
12	R 10/13	Meet with BI 203 to discuss DNA evidence and the stakes for both history and biology	Location: ST-102
13	T 10/18	Private Papers <i>Reading:</i> Steven Stowe, "Making Sense of Letters and Diaries," <i>History Matters</i> (online)	J5
14	R 10/20	In-class workshop	
15	T 10/25	Government Documents <i>Reading:</i> University of New Haven, "Finding Government Documents," (online) <a href="http://www.newhaven.edu/library/Guides/Research/ GovernmentDocuments/">http://www.newhaven.edu/library/Guides/Research/ GovernmentDocuments/</a> Additional Website: <a href="http://gpoaccess.gov">http://gpoaccess.gov</a>	J6
16	R 10/27	In-class workshop using <a href="http://www.streetlaw.org">http://www.streetlaw.org</a>	

#	Date	Topic/ Reading	What's Due
17	T 11/1	Listening to the Past <i>Reading:</i> Susan Douglas, "Radio Comedy and Linguistic Slapstick," in <i>Listening In: Radio and the American Imagination</i> , pp. 100-124 (PDF)	J7
18	R 11/3	In-class workshop	
19	T 11/8	Images <i>Reading:</i> David Stephens, "Making Sense of Maps" <i>History Matters</i> (online)	<i>No J this week</i>
20	R 11/10	In-class workshop	Paper #2
<b>Unit III: The History Profession/ Professing History</b>			
21	T 11/15	Historiography <i>Reading:</i> Williams Ch 12, Arnold Ch 5-6	J8 – identify Topic #3
22	R 11/17	Deciphering Historical Scholarship <i>Reading:</i> Arnold Ch 7 and Joan Wolloch Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis" (PDF)	
23	T 11/22	Film <i>Reading:</i> Williams Ch 13 and Tom Gunning, "Making Sense of Films," <i>History Matters</i> (online)	J9
<b>Thurs 11/24 No Class, Thanksgiving Break</b>			
24	T 11/29	Public History <i>Reading:</i> Williams Ch 17	
25	R 12/1	Meet with BI 203, Public History session	J10
26	T 12/6	Historical Memory, Professional Ethics <i>Reading:</i> Loewen Ch 10 and Elliott, "Our Memorials, Ourselves" (PDF)	
27	R 12/8	History on the 'Net <i>Reading:</i> Williams Ch 19	J11 – course reflection
	T 12/13	12:30pm Final Exam Slot	Paper #3 Annotated Bibliography