

HI 411-02  
Fall 2013

# THE HISTORIAN'S CRAFT

**Class Meets:** MWF 9:30 am Sullivan 120

**Course Website:** <http://www.tonahangen.com/wsc/hi411/>

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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 your 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* 7e (Bedford, 2012) ISBN 0312610416

Robert C. Williams, *The Historian’s Toolbox: A Student’s Guide to the Theory and Craft of History* 3e (M. E. Sharpe, 2011) 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

**Highly Recommended:** Diana Hacker, *A Writer’s Reference*, latest edition (available at the bookstore)

\*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** using Wordpress which will serve as both weekly journal and ePortfolio. You don't have to make the site public but if you choose not to, at the least you will need to grant me access as a reader so that I can follow your journal entries. By the end of the semester, your portfolio needs to include: a series of eleven journal entries (see below), a portfolio containing, at minimum, the three edited/revised/complete history papers written for this course, and a personal statement about your portfolio.

In **weekly journal** assignments, you write informal (but still, polished, organized and proofread) reflections on 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 500 words long**, which is roughly equivalent to 2 pages. Journals should be submitted as a new post on your site by Monday 7am of each week.

**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. Your participation grade also includes the Teach-In day and participation on a panel during a mock academic conference during the "Practice of History" weeks. **(20% 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. 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 using Chicago-Style references with accurate bibliographic information for both print and online materials.

Paper #1	Primary Sources v. Secondary Sources	Due Oct 4	20% of course grade
Paper #2	The Practice of History	Due Nov 8	20% of course grade
Paper #3	Annotated Bibliography	Due by Dec 13	20% of course grade

## GRADING

Class Participation	20%
ePortfolio + Journal	20%
Paper 1 (10/4)	20%
Paper 2 (11/8)	20%
Paper 3 (on or before 12/13)	20%
	100%

## COMMUNICATION & TECHNOLOGY

Some 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 only a few essentials. Blackboard links out to a **public Wordpress site 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.

You will be using Wordpress yourself, too, and it has a bit of a learning curve. If you have never used it before, please take advantage of the extra help sessions that we'll have in September, or come during office hours for assistance EARLY on in the term.

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 and the online version of the syllabus will always be the most accurate sources of current information, so subscribe to or check the site 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.

My office is Sullivan 327-D and my regular office hours are posted on my door and on the course website under "Prof Info." I hold office hours on Tuesdays, Thursday and Fridays. Sign-up posted on my door, or just drop in during my scheduled times. If none of those times work for you, email me to set up an appointment.

## SYLLABUS (subject to change, check website for updates!)

#	Date	Topic	Reading	What's Due
<b>Unit I: "Don't Know Much About History"</b>				
1	Wed 9/4	Course Intro		
2	Fri 9/6	Are You Smarter Than...	Loewen Ch 1	
3	Mon 9/9	History Education's Stakes	Loewen, assigned chapter	J1
4	Wed 9/11	Portfolio Setup Day	None; room TBA	
5	Fri 9/13	Textbooks: Diagnosis	Loewen, selected chapters	
6	Mon 9/16	Textbooks: Solutions	Loewen 12-13	J1+2 in Portfolio
7	Wed 9/18	Thinking Historically	Wineburg	
8	Fri 9/20	Writing the History Paper	Williams 8	
9	Mon 9/23	Historical Writing: Sources, Choices, Audiences	Williams 9-10	J3 – ID Topic #1
10	Wed 9/25	Locating Historical Sources	Rampolla, 2 and 5	
11	Fri 9/27	Library Day		
12	Mon 9/30	Scholarly Argument	Williams 12 + your chosen article	J4: article "autopsy"
13	Wed 10/2	Historiography	Arnold 2-4	
14	Fri 10/4	Teach-In	Arnold 5-6	Paper #1
<b>Unit II: "Practice of History as Craft"</b>				
15	Mon 10/7	Lab #1 Intro – Gov Docs	Williams 9.2 + links	J5
16	Wed 10/9	Workshop		
17	Fri 10/11	Conference1		
<i>Mon 10/14 No school, Columbus Day</i>				
18	Wed 10/16	Lab #2 Intro – Private Papers	Stowe, "MS of Letters/Diaries"	
19	Fri 10/18	Workshop		
20	Mon 10/21	Lab #3 Intro – Sci Evidence	Williams 9.7 + PDF/links	J6
21	Wed 10/23	Workshop		
22	Fri 10/25	Conference2		
23	Mon 10/28	Lab #4 Intro - Sound	Douglas, "Radio Comedy"	J7
24	Wed 10/30	Workshop		
25	Fri 11/1	Conference3		
26	Mon 11/4	Lab #5 Intro - Maps	Williams 9.3, 19 + Stephens, "MS of Maps"	J8 – ID Topic #2
27	Wed 11/6	Workshop		
28	Fri 11/8	Conference4		Paper #2
<i>Mon 11/11 No school, Veterans Day</i>				
<b>Unit III: The Profession of History/ Professing History</b>				
29	Wed 11/13	Deciphering Historical Scholarship	Arnold 7, Scott "Gender" PDF	
30	Fri 11/15	Theory	Tosh PDF or TBA	
31	Mon 11/18	Speculation	Williams 13 to 13.4	J9 – ID Topic #3
32	Wed 11/20	Film	Williams 13.5 to 13.6 + Gunning "MS of Films"	
33	Fri 11/22	<i>No Class: Prof H out of town</i>		
34	Mon 11/25	Relevance of History	Williams 14-15	J10
<i>11/27 – 12/1 Thanksgiving Break</i>				
35	Mon 12/2	Public History	Williams 17	
36	Wed 12/4	Historical Memory	Loewen 10 + Elliott, "Our Memorials, Ourselves"	
37	Fri 12/6	Digital History	Williams 20-21	
38	Mon 12/9	Professional Ethics	Williams 10, Rampolla 3-4	J11 – course reflection
	Fri 12/13	Final Exam Slot		AB Due