

Honors Research and Writing in History (1 Credit)

HIS 4622

Fall 2020

HC 116

Friday 10-10:50

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Office Hours: T/Th 1-4

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Course Description

This is a hands-on course in the skills and tools necessary to accomplish effective scholarship in the field of history. We will cover topics such as thinking about historical texts and arguments from a critical perspective, how to investigate history questions with a detective's frame of mind, and how to write about history with both a generous spirit and a skeptical attitude. We will also work on developing practical skills such as formulating a thesis, writing with footnotes, creating an annotated bibliography, and writing book reviews and historiographical essays.

If you concentrate in history, you will be writing a history thesis. The central aim of this class is to prepare you to write the best possible thesis you will be able to write.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will understand the essential elements of researching, and reporting on their research, in history. These include effective library, online and archival research techniques, critical reading in history, as well as the format, organization, purpose, argumentation, editing and stylistics of the research paper. Students will be well-prepared by this class to write the 40-60 pages Wilkes Honors College thesis.

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this class, but it is intended exclusively for those majoring in history.

Requirements and Grades

In-class and homework assignments will be given equal weight, and 70 percent of your grade will be based on an average of the scores you receive for in-class assignments, and an additional 30 percent will be based on your participation in classroom discussion.

Grade Scale

90-100 (A)

80-90 (B)

70-80 (C)

60-70 (D)

60 or below (F)

Policies

This class is about showing up and participating. If you miss the class without a prior and meaningful excuse, you will not receive credit for that day's assignment.

Laptops should not be used to take notes in class, except under certain circumstances after consultation with the instructor.

Students are encouraged to come to office hours on a regular basis. You should not have the *expectation* of doing well in this course if you are not a regular attendee at office hours.

Classroom Etiquette Policy

In order to enhance and maintain a productive atmosphere for education, personal communication devices, such as cellular telephones and pagers, are to be disabled in class sessions.

Note on Honors Distinction

This Honors course differs substantially from a non-Honors course in that its primary aim is to ready students to write the honors thesis in history, a 40-60 page work of independent and original scholarship. As an indication of the high level of expectation for success in the thesis, students read *The Craft of Research*, a guide to research and writing in the social sciences directed primarily to graduate students.

Student Accessibility Services

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA), students who require reasonable accommodations due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and follow all SAS procedures. SAS has offices across three of FAU's campuses – Boca Raton, Davie and Jupiter – however disability services are available for students on all campuses. For more information, please visit the SAS website at www.fau.edu/sas/.

Academic Integrity Policy

Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards, because it interferes with the university mission to provide a high quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Academic dishonesty is also destructive of the university community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. Harsh penalties are associated with academic dishonesty. For more information, see [University Regulation 4.001](#). Please also see the Honors College's academic [Honor Code](#).

Incomplete Grades

Florida Atlantic University's policies regarding "incomplete" grades can be found in the [University Catalog](#).

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Center

Life as a university student can be challenging physically, mentally and emotionally. Students who find stress negatively affecting their ability to achieve academic or personal goals may wish to consider utilizing FAU's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Center. CAPS provides FAU students a range of services – individual counseling, support meetings, and psychiatric services, to name a few –

offered to help improve and maintain emotional well-being. For more information, go to <http://www.fau.edu/counseling/>

Textbooks

Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*

Wayne C. Booth, et al, *The Craft of Research*

Course Outline

August 24 Introduction

Reading: Pocket Guide, 1-8

Hand out: primary and secondary source assignment

August 31 Primary and Secondary Source Assignment

Reading: Pocket Guide, 8-21 and Craft, 65-74

In Class Presentations and Discussion

Hand out: bad online source assignment

September 7 Bad Online History

Reading: Pocket Guide 21-22 and Craft, 74-80

In-Class Presentations and Discussion

Hand out: critical reading assignment

September 14 Critical Reading

Reading: Pocket Guide, 24-38 and Craft, 88-103

September 21 Test-Taking, Writer's Block and Procrastination

Reading: Pocket Guide, 44-50

September 28 The Research Paper

Reading: Craft of Research, 29-64 and Pocket Guide, 82-89, 98-102

In class topic generation assignment

Hand out: book review assignment

October 5 The Book Review and Historiographical Essay

Reading: Pocket Guide, 38-41

October 12 **Library Tour**

Reading: Pocket Guide, 89-99 and 85-103

October 19 **Arguing Your Case I**

Reading: Pocket Guide, 51-61 and Craft, 107-121

October 26 **Arguing Your Case II**

Reading: Craft, 122-172

November 2 **Planning and Organizing a Project**

Reading: Craft, 177-109

November 9 **Writing is Revising**

Reading: Pocket Guide, 61-81

November 16 **Becoming a Footnote Zen Master**

Reading: Pocket Guide, 103-18 and Craft, 200-213

November 23 **Thanksgiving Holiday**

November 30 **The Honors College History Thesis**