

UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND AMERICAN STUDIES
HIST 485: HISTORICAL RESEARCH
Fall 2011

I. COURSE GOALS

It is the intention of the faculty of the Department of History and American Studies that the senior thesis allow its students to employ all the skills they have acquired during the course of their studies at the University of Mary Washington, especially the ability to:

- Define a project of investigative study and write a project proposal, literature review, and research paper
- Conduct research in multiple sites
- Conduct self-directed study
- Read critically primary sources and modern authorities
- Make discipline-specific oral presentations to groups

In addition to fulfilling the senior thesis requirement for the History major, HIST 485 also counts for the Experiential Learning General Education Requirement. As such, the following are also goals for this course:

- Students will be able to apply what was learned in coursework to new scenarios outside standard university courses
- Students will be able to identify their personal values and learning goals and direct themselves by creating personalized learning experiences that may include alternative means of learning
- Students will be able to clarify and refine their understanding of their strengths and weaknesses in content of relevant disciplines and in skills such as time management, organization, professionalism, and so forth
- Students will be able to recognize their knowledge and lack of knowledge
- Students will be able to connect their undergraduate experiences and their post-graduation lives

II. COURSE FORMAT

Individual mentors, chosen by the student, direct each student paper, but the requirements for this course are the same for all students. The faculty of the Department has adopted a common syllabus for the course, including deadlines. Therefore, only the chairperson can grant a change in deadline for any of the assignments, and then only for the most extenuating of reasons.

Each mentor, however, establishes individual requirements for several aspects of the senior thesis process. *It is the responsibility of each student to consult with his or her mentor to determine his or her expectations for the following:*

- Frequency of meetings and their scheduling.
- How the first submission of each assignment is graded.
- Penalties for inadequate first versions of papers.
- Whether electronic versions of completed assignments are allowed.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students must attend an introductory meeting with the chair on Monday, August 29 at 5 p.m. in Monroe 346. Students must also attend departmental workshops on their presentations in the last couple weeks of the semester (date and time TBA).

Over the course of the semester, the department requires each student to complete three papers.

The first assignment is a two-to-three page *Proposal* (appended to which is a comprehensive bibliography for the topic) due on Friday, September 9. The edited proposal will be returned to the student by Tuesday, September 13 and the final *Proposal* is due on Friday, September 16.

The second paper is an eight-to-ten page *Literature Review* due on Monday, October 3. The edited review will be returned to students by the following Monday, October 10; the final revised *Review* will be due on Friday, October 14.

The final assignment is the *Historical Research Paper* itself. It must be *thirty-to-forty pages long plus notes and bibliography*. The finished research paper is due on Monday, November 14 (the title of the research paper and abstract are also to be sent electronically on this date to history@umw.edu) and will be returned in edited form to students on Monday, November 21. The revised *Research Paper* is due on Monday, December 5.

NOTE: [An additional electronic copy of the final revised paper must be sent to history@umw.edu by the day of the Symposium.]

N.B.: The Research Paper must comport to the department's Style Guidelines (discussed below) and must contain an Abstract, a 100-150 word summary of the research paper. The Abstract is to be the second page, after the title page, of the final paper.

Rewrites. To encourage and facilitate further development of your writing skills, the department requires a rewrite of each assignment. **The first version of each assignment must be complete and polished, i.e. the first submission is not a rough draft.** Faculty mentors will then provide guidance and suggestions toward improving that version. It is within an individual instructor's prerogative to refuse to review an incomplete or late first submission. Again, each mentor will determine how he or she will use the first submission in determining the final grade for each assignment.

Bibliographic Format. All written work must conform to the *Chicago Manual of Style*, the authoritative source for the form of bibliographic citation the department has adopted. This is the format required in HIST 299; no other format (e.g. MLA or APA) is acceptable. Students may consult Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*, or an equivalent abridgement of the *Chicago Manual of Style*. [Note the most recent versions of the *Chicago Manual of Style* (16th) and Turabian (7th) include updated information for electronic citations. Be sure to use the newest editions.]

Deadlines. The deadline for all assignments is 12:00 noon of the due date.

Only the chair of the department can grant deadline extensions for any paper and only then under the most extenuating of circumstances. If a paper is late, its grade will be reduced ten points for each twenty-four hour period, or portion thereof, beyond the stated deadline. **Unless an electronic version is previously agreed upon by faculty mentor and student, paper copies of the completed assignments are due at noon on the dates noted in the syllabus.**

Computer Crashes. Hard drive crashes and other computer woes will not be accepted as excuses for late submission. Students should, given the complexity of the research task they will pursue, be sure that they maintain adequate backup copies of all aspects of their work.

Grading. Each paper will have the following value toward determination of the final grade for the course:

Proposal	10%
Literature Review	25%
Historical Research Paper	65%

The grading scale for each assignment will be as follows:

A	Unusual Excellence	(93 or higher = A; 90-92 = A-)
B	Work Distinctly Above Average	(87-89 = B+; 83-86 = B; 80-82 = B-)
C	Work of Average Quality	(77-79 = C+; 73-76 = C; 70-72 = C-)
D	Work of Below Average Quality	(67-69 = D+; 60-66 = D)
F	Failure, No Credit	(0-59 = F)

History Symposium: All HIST 485 students are required to participate in the Department's semi-annual History Symposium. This important opportunity for students to share results of their research is held on the last day of the fall term, Friday, December 9. Student presentations at the History Symposium are organized into three-to-four paper panels moderated by a member of the history faculty and are expected to be succinct, polished 8-10-minute summaries. Participation in the Symposium is a requirement of HIST 485 and an important aspect of the program of Outcomes Assessment that the Department is required to conduct annually by the Commonwealth of Virginia.

IV. **COURSE WEB SITE**

The Department has developed a historical research web site that contains information pertinent to each of the required assignments. http://www.umw.edu/cas/history/history_department_resource/default.php

V. **HISTORY HONORS**

Students wishing to be considered for Honors in History at graduation must satisfy two rigorous requirements. They must, first, have a GPA in the major of not less than 3.5 and, second, must, on the recommendation of their HIST 485 faculty mentor, submit their Historical Research Paper to a faculty honors committee to be comprised of the student's mentor and at least two additional members of the history faculty. Students whose final paper is judged by this faculty panel to be truly exceptional in breadth and depth of research, analysis, and writing and who successfully "defend" their project before their faculty honors committee are awarded the distinction of graduating with honors in history.

VI. **STYLE GUIDE FOR FINAL PAPER**

- A. TEXT LENGTH: minimum – 30 pages; maximum – 40 pages (i.e., the paper exclusive of footnotes or endnotes, title page, abstract, bibliography, etc.)
- B. MARGINS: 1 ½" at left; 1" all other sides
- C. FONT: 12 pt. Times Roman
- D. DOCUMENTATION: footnotes or endnotes
- E. BIBLIOGRAPHY: may be subdivided, e.g., "primary" and "secondary"
- F. PAGE NUMBERING: consecutively through all materials, excluding title page and abstract
- G. TITLE PAGE: must include paper title and author's name, in caps and centered, course number, instructor, and date
- H. ABSTRACT: 100-150 word summary of final paper's argument/contents. Must be the second page, after the title page, of the final paper.