

Hist3141

History in the Archives

Prof. Patrick Rael, Bowdoin College, Spring 2018

Meeting time: WF 2:30-3:55
Meeting room: Hubbard 22
Office hours: MTh2-4, by apt.

Office: 211C Hubbard
Phone: x3775
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This capstone research seminar will challenge you to conduct original historical research relying on Bowdoin College's extensive holdings in the George J. Mitchell Department of Special Collections and Archives. Working closely with the Archives staff as well as the course instructor, we will learn the basics of archival research, culminating in research projects yielding a paper of approximately 25-30 pages in length. Topics may include a range of subjects related to nineteenth-century American history, the Civil War era broadly construed, slavery and race, and Bowdoin College itself.

Our connection to Archives will be Marieke Van Der Steenhoven, Special Collections Education and Outreach Librarian. Her email is mvanders@bowdoin.edu, and phone is 207-725-3385.

This course is a 3000-level research course that fulfills the History Department's capstone requirement. The coursework involved will be of a high level, but the greatest challenge in the course will be the need for self-direction. Of all the courses you have taken at Bowdoin, this one will require you to control your own time.

BOOKS

Turabian, Kate. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 8th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.

ASSIGNMENTS

These assignments are all worth 5 points each:

- Archives scavenger hunt
- Arguing history exercise
- Explore a digital resource
- Road map exercise
- Incorporating primaries exercise
- Citations exercise

The final paper assignment is broken down as follows:

- Book reviews exercise (5)
- Problem presentations (5)
- Annotated bibliography (5)
- Pre-draft road map (5)
- First draft (20)
- Peer eval (5)
- Self eval (5)
- Final draft (20)

COURSE CONTRACT

- Students are responsible for any missed class material due to absences, including especially assignments due. If you must be absent, rely on friends in class for notes.
- On papers, always number and staple all pages; I encourage you to email me a copy of your paper as a backup.
- Please do not leave the room during the class session.
- Please do not bring food to class.
- Please do not bring notepads and laptops to class. Mobile phones should be turned off and kept away.
- Print out any electronically assigned readings and bring them to class. I strongly urge you to highlight your reading, writing notes in the margins, etc.
- We will "knock" at the end of class, to acknowledge our mutual effort.

Hist3141 syllabus (Rael)

- All work must be completed in order to pass this course.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Each author owns his or her own ideas, words, and research. You must give appropriate credit — generally in the form of quotations and proper citations — when using the work of another scholar. Be familiar with Bowdoin's [honor code](#), Bowdoin's [general guidelines](#) for proper citation and attribution of sources (we use [Chicago/Turabian style](#) in History), and any guidelines provided specifically for this course (see Blackboard > Library/Research). [Plagiarism](#), whether intentional or not, is a serious violation of academic standards and Bowdoin's honor code.

SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS

1/24 No class

1/26 Introductions

The research paper model

1/31 Archives: Close reading and narrative building

Read: Martha Howell and Walter Prevenier, "The Source: The Basis of Our Knowledge of the Past," in *From Reliable Sources: An Introduction to Historical Methods* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 17-42.

Archival scavenger hunt assignment given

2/2 Arguing history: John Brown

Read: See packet of readings on Blackboard

Arguing history assignment given

2/7 Archives: Understanding Collections and How to Use Them

Guest speaker: Caroline Moseley

Archival scavenger hunt assignment due

2/9 The writing model

Read: Patrick Rael, "What Happened and Why? Helping Students Read and Write Like Historians," *History Teacher* 39, no. 1 (November 2005): 23-32. ([Jstor](#))

Arguing history assignment due

Road maps assignment given

2/14 Archives: Complicating the Archive

Guest speaker: Marika Cifor

Read: TBD

Explore a digital resource assignment given

2/16 Road mapping

Read:

Emma Jones Lapsansky, "'Since They Got Those Separate Churches': Afro-Americans and Racism in Jacksonian Philadelphia," *American Quarterly* 32, no. 1 (Spring 1980), 54-78. ([Jstor](#))

George M. Fredrickson, "Why the Confederacy Did Not Fight a Guerrilla War after the Fall of Richmond," 35th Annual Robert Fortenbaugh Gettysburg College, 1996. (Blackboard)

Roadmap assignment due

Incorporating primaries assignment given

*Hist3141 syllabus (Rael)*2/21 Archives: Digital Resources & Digital Humanities

Guest speaker: Meagan Doyle and Kat Stefko

[Explore a digital resource assignment due](#)

2/23 Incorporating primaries

Incorporating primaries assignment due

Citations assignment given

2/28 Archives: Using Archival Holdings in History Scholarship

Skype guests: David Thomson and Rachel Miller

Read: David Gold, "The Accidental Archivist: Embracing Chance and Confusion in Historical Scholarship," in *Beyond the Archives: Research as a Lived Process*, eds. Gesa E. Kirsch and Liz Rohan (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008), 13-19. <Blackboard>

3/2 Citation methods

[Citations assignment due](#)

Book reviews (frame the argument) assignment given

Presentation assignment given

3/7 Archives: Individual or small-group meetings3/9 Class

Making piles in-class workshop

3/28 Problem presentations

Each student will offer a 15-minute presentation on their work.

[Book reviews assignment due with your presentation](#)

3/30 Problem presentations

Each student will offer a 15-minute presentation on their work.

[Book reviews assignment due with your presentation](#)

4/4 Problem presentations

Each student will offer a 15-minute presentation on their work.

[Book reviews assignment due with your presentation](#)

4/6 Problem presentations

Each student will offer a 15-minute presentation on their work.

[Book reviews assignment due with your presentation](#)

4/11 Class

[Annotated bibliography due](#)

4/13 Class

[Pre-draft road map due](#)

4/18 No class4/20 No class

[First drafts due](#)

Hist3141 syllabus (Rael)

Peer evaluation and self evaluation assignment given

4/25 Small group meeting

4/27 Small group meeting

5/2 Small group meeting

5/4 Small group meeting

5/7 Final meeting

Peer and self-evaluations due

Final paper due