

INTRODUCTION TO HISTORICAL METHODS

HSTR 200.01—Fall 2015

F 12:10-1pm / LA 249

PROFESSOR KYLE G. VOLK

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Office Hours: M 12:10-1pm; F 11:10-12noon; and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This 1-credit introductory course introduces students to the professional study of history. It exposes students to tools and concepts fundamental to the historical discipline, including the revisionist nature of history, the differences between primary and secondary sources, citation and bibliography. We will survey some of the sources historians regularly use and will learn the basics of conducting research in Mansfield Library, online, and in the archives.

REQUIRED TEXTS: Course readings are available through the Mansfield Library's resources or through the course's MOODLE site. Please print, read, and bring weekly readings to class.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: Students successfully completing this course should gain an introductory understanding of how historians work—their questions, methods, sources, and perspectives. Students should also gain an understanding of the foundations of doing historical research.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Attendance, Participation, & Reading Quizzes (25%)
 - To ensure that students are keeping up with the reading, short and simple quizzes will be given at the beginning of classes in which there was assigned reading. Students can use any separate notes they have taken for these quizzes but cannot refer to the original text.
2. Assignment #1 – Joint Primary Source Description Paper (due 10/9) (15%)
3. Assignment #2 – Volk Reading Guide (due 10/23) (15%)
4. Assignment #3 – Online Newspaper Database Paper (due 11/6) (15%)
5. Assignment #4 – 4-5-page Archival Exploration Paper (due 12/11) (30%)

ACADEMIC HONESTY: Students must practice academic honesty. It should go without saying that the work you do in this course should be your own. Plagiarism, cheating, or any other instances of academic misconduct will result in a failing grade in this course. The academic dean will be notified and offenses could result in expulsion. Students should familiarize themselves with UM's Student Conduct Code. If you have questions, please ask before turning in an assignment.

DSS: Students with documented disabilities will receive reasonable modifications in this course. Your responsibilities are to request them from me with sufficient advance notice, and to be prepared to provide verification of disability and its impact from Disability Services for Students. Please speak with me after class or during my office hours to discuss the details. For more information, visit the Disability Services for Students website at www.umt.edu/disability.

~~~ SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES AND READINGS ~~~

9/4—Week 1—Introductions

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9/11—Week 2— Writing & Re-Writing History: The Living Past

- Read: Carl Becker, “Every Man His Own Historian,” *American Historical Review* 37 (Jan. 1932), 221-236. [Handout – bring to class]
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9/18—Week 3—Library Introduction w/Kimberly Swanson

(Meet in Mansfield Library’s Buckhous Room, MLIB 284, Level 2)

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9/25—Week 4—Citation, Footnotes, and Bibliography

- Read: Anthony Grafton, “The Death of the Footnote,” *The Wilson Quarterly* 21 (Winter 1997), 72-77. [Find this article using J-STOR – print out, read, and bring to class]
  - Read: Footnotes v. Bibliography [MOODLE]
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10/2—Week 5— Primary Sources (in print) at Mansfield Library: Group Meetings

**Assignment #1:** In teams of three, find and examine three non-digital primary sources in the Mansfield Library pertaining to nineteenth-century U.S. History. Each member of the group should find one source. Bring that source to class on October 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Group Meeting:** Class time will be used this week for your group to discuss the sources you’ve found and brought to class. Make sure that the members of your group have found primary sources from the nineteenth century. Brainstorm in preparation for the writing assignment.

**Writing Assignment:** Jointly construct a 6-paragraph source description (2 paragraphs for each source). In the first paragraph (for each source) please identify the type of source, the author, the year it was produced, and the likely audience(s) for the source. Describe the general content of the source. In the second paragraph, speculate about the source’s potential utility in a research paper on nineteenth-century U.S. history. Offer multiple possibilities and be historically imaginative. Cite your sources in footnotes (use proper footnote form). Revise and proofread each other’s work. Follow course formatting requirements (see below).

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10/9—Week 6—“Pizza and Profs” – **Turn in Assignment #1 at the start of class.**

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10/16—Week 7—Digging in Online Newspaper Databases w/Kimberly Swanson

(Meet in Mansfield Library's Student Learning Center, Level 2)

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10/23—Week 8—Argument and Evidence

- Read: Volk, *Moral Minorities*, Selections [available on MOODLE]

**Assignment #2:** Complete and turn in short Reading Guide [available on MOODLE]

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10/30—Week 9— NO CLASS—Independent Online Newspaper Database Research

**Assignment #3:** Use electronic newspaper databases to find and print out two newspaper articles that Volk did not use but might have used as part of his research on battles over alcohol prohibition and Sunday laws in the 1850s.

Write (and turn in, along with the articles, on 11/6) four paragraphs about the articles you found and how your sources support, undercut, or add complexity to the historical claims Volk makes in his book. Offer multiple possibilities and be historically imaginative. Cite your sources in footnotes (use proper footnote form).

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11/6—Week 10— Digging in the Archives: An Introduction w/Donna McCrea

Meet at Mansfield Library Archives (Level 4); **Turn in Assignment #3 at the start of class.**

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11/13—Week 11— NO CLASS—Independent Archival Research—Go to the Archives!

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11/20—Week 12— In-Class Discussion of Archival Findings

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11/27—Week 13—NO CLASS: Thanksgiving

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12/4—Week 14—Plagiarism and Historical Ethics

- Read: Readings on the Fareed Zakaria Scandal [MOODLE]
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12/11—Week 15—Conclusions; **Turn in Assignment #4 at the start of class.**

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## Standard Paper Writing Guidelines

(for use in all your history papers unless you are told otherwise)

1. Your papers should be double-spaced (Not single, 1.5, triple-spaced, or otherwise)
2. Write in a standard font: Times New Roman font at 12 point is strongly preferred.
3. Margins (Top, Bottom, Left, Right) must be 1-inch. Adjust your word processor if necessary.
4. Do not attach a separate cover page. Instead list your name and the course at the Top Right of the first page (and single-space this section). Skip one line and center your title.
5. Always have a title that clearly indicates the topic of the paper (and that someone unfamiliar with the assignment or topic could understand).
6. Do not skip or have extra lines between paragraphs. If your word processor does this automatically (which they often do), adjust it.
7. Insert page numbers in the top right-hand corner. The first page should not have a number.
8. Write about the past in past tense. [ex. “In his narrative, Frederick Douglass described life as a slave in Maryland.”]
9. Cite your work in footnotes. Use proper footnote form. Learn how to use your word processor’s footnote function.<sup>1</sup>
10. Address your essays to someone unfamiliar with the assignment and subject matter.
11. Write clearly, intelligently, and professionally. Avoid colloquialisms, slang, contractions, jargon, etc. Keep your tone serious and professional.
12. Begin paragraphs with strong topic sentences that both advance your paper’s main argument and introduce a new topic.
13. Avoid first-person constructions (I, me).
14. Revise, proofread, and edit your work.
15. Read your paper aloud and correct any sentences that were difficult to speak.

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<sup>1</sup> If using Microsoft WORD, insert footnotes by holding the CTRL-ALT-F keys -or- by using the References pull-down menu.