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12/5/14

Master Syllabus
Course: HST seminars (HST 401, 402, 403)
Cluster Requirement: 5A

University Studies Course Rationale:

The History Seminar (HST 401-405) is the “capstone” course for HST majors and minors – they must complete it, in order to graduate. LAR majors with a history concentration often take the seminar as well, though they aren’t required to do so. HST 201, Critical Skills for the History Major, is a prerequisite for taking a seminar for HST majors and minors. HST 201 is how our students fulfill their Intermediate Writing requirement. The skills of information literacy and research that are introduced and reinforced in 201 are fully operationalized (and demonstrated) here.

Seminars are organized a particular historical theme or topic. We generally offer 2-3 each semester, and try to vary them so students have an opportunity to take their seminar on a topic of their choosing. Seminars are capped at 15 students, and meet once a week for 2.5 hours.

The core of the seminar is the researching, writing, and oral presentation of a 15 to 25-page paper of original research. The course guides students through each step – choosing a topic, finding and properly citing primary and secondary sources, developing an argument, outlining, and writing multiple drafts. Students will formally propose their paper topic and thesis early in the semester, noting how their project draws on and reflects their overall Liberal Arts education – not just history. **University Studies Learning Objectives 1, 2, 3.**

The first two months or so of the seminar are generally used for an in-depth exploration of key historical and historiographical themes related to the course subject. This is accomplished through critical reading and analysis of primary and secondary sources, and the writing of short argumentative essays. While these assignments ask students to synthesize the knowledge and skills they’ve developed through years of study in HST, it is in the research and writing of their seminar papers where this synthesis truly takes place. **University Studies Learning Objective 1, 4.**

Pedagogically, of course, the class will vary by professor. But all HST seminars stress classroom discussion of primary and secondary source texts, and careful work with the professor (and peers) on outlining, writing and revising the final paper.

At the end of the semester, all seminar students are required to do an oral presentation of their research findings. Including a question-and-answer period, this presentation is generally between 20 and 30 minutes in length. **University Studies Learning Objective 4.**

Catalog description:

HST 401/402/403: Seminars will be offered variously in such fields as United States history, European history, English history, Russian history, Latin American history, African history, World history Asian history, history of ideas and the history of women. The writing of a substantial paper will be required. Content will vary with instructor.

N.B.: 401 is the course number given to all seminars in American History. 402 is for European History. 403 is for world history. All HST majors and minors are required to take a seminar – it is our capstone course.

Course Overview:

The History Seminar is the “capstone” course for your career as a History undergraduate. It is your opportunity to apply what you have learned about historical research, analysis, and writing by producing a substantial, original research paper adhering to traditional historical methods.

Since this is a seminar primarily for history majors and minors, the readings will be serious, and sometimes lengthy. It will also provide a hands-on introduction to research in primary sources, and acquaint you with the basic elements of historical research and writing. You will be introduced to various approaches to your research topic, as well as methods for selecting and interpreting both primary and secondary sources.

The last month or so of classes will focus on the research, organization, writing and presentation of a major primary source-based history paper. The amount of reading will taper off, since you will be expected to be doing reading related to your research. **Please note that you are expected to be researching from the start of the semester, or at least as soon as you have decided on your topic.**

We will work our way through the various steps that go into the writing of a history research paper, and you will have ample opportunity for revisions and feedback from your professor, and from your peers.

You must also be willing and prepared to discuss your paper, your research, and your doubts and problems at any time and in any class period.

It is critically important that you meet deadlines for both reading and writing. There are a number of small assignments in this class that will build up to the big one, and each counts towards your grade. More to the point, however, the quality of your final draft rests on diligent and timely work from the first day onward.

Learning Outcomes:

Course-Specific Learning Outcomes (CSLO):

The following are derived from the History Department’s official “Goals for Student Learning.”

1. Content

- Students will demonstrate a broad and deep familiarity with the basic chronology and major themes of the subject of the capstone seminar

2. Collection

- Students will demonstrate the ability to collect historical data in printed and electronic forms.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to use bibliographic tools and databases.

3. Analysis

- Students will demonstrate the ability to identify chronological, geographical and thematic patterns, identify issues and problems in the past, formulate historical questions, interrogate historical data and sources, support interpretations with historical evidence and evaluate major debates among historians.

4. Synthesis

- Students will demonstrate the ability to write persuasive historical arguments, grounded in the sources, and in broad knowledge of related disciplines

- Students will demonstrate the ability to research and write a substantial and original long seminar paper on an historical subject.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to make a formal oral presentation of an historical argument researched and organized by the student.

5. Language skills

- Students will demonstrate the ability to construct coherent and persuasive arguments in written and oral forms.

University Studies Learning Outcomes (USLO):

Upon completion of the capstone study, students will be able to:

1. Synthesize the knowledge and skills gained within major courses, independently complete a research-based project or creative work and integrate the results of both in an open-ended project or experience (projects within the major are encouraged).
2. Integrate knowledge and principles from the field of study with those of the broader University Studies curriculum.
3. Demonstrate advanced information literacy skills by selecting, evaluating, integrating and documenting information gathered from multiple sources into discipline-specific writing.
4. Communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, the results of the project or experience.

Examples of Texts and/or Assigned Readings:

Because the seminar topics vary from class to class and semester to semester, it isn't terribly useful to include examples of readings. Each seminar, regardless of topic, includes a mix of scholarly articles and monographs, and primary sources. Most seminars also include at least some assigned readings in a guide to writing in the discipline of history.

All of the following have been used:

Jules Benjamin, *A Student's Guide to History*
 Anthony Brundage, *Going to the Sources: A Guide to Historical Research and Writing*
 Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*
 William Storey, *Writing History: A Guide for Students*

Example Learning Activities and Assignments:

There is considerable variation in the type and number of learning activities and assignments in our 400-level capstone seminars. Some professors use peer review of research paper drafts, and some don't. Some ask for two rough drafts before the final version, while others ask for one.

There are substantial commonalities, however:

1. All capstone seminars ask students to read scholarly books and/or articles in history and the primary sources on which they are based, particularly during the first 2 months of the semester, and to do writing assignments asking them to identify, summarize and analyze historical arguments. These assignments generally take the form of book reviews, or of papers asking students to take a position on an important historiographical question. Generally three-to-five of these papers are assigned, at 5 pages each. (USLO 1, USLO 2; CSLO 1, CSLO 3, CSLO 4). Examples:

- Assignment: 5 page paper assignment for seminar on early American history: *View the movie "Jeremiah Johnson" and write a historian's review, analyzing the action, storylines and portrayals in the light of Turner's "Frontier Thesis" on the one hand, and Goetzman's [scholarly] article on the other. Your goal is not to praise or pan the movie as worthy entertainment, but to explore the themes of transformative space, romance vs. reality, and history in film.*
 - Assignment: 5-page book review, for seminar on Global Slave Trade. The review should be a critical analysis of a book. A review is not a summary, but rather a vigorous description of the book, its context, its effectiveness, and its tools. This includes a description of what kind of book it is (novel, biography, anthology, etc), why did the author write the book (what did they seek to prove), did they accomplish their goal, how did the author present evidence, and what kinds of evidence did they use?
 - Assignment: 5-page paper assignment for seminar on America in the 1960s: *Explain Lewis' argument [Penny Lewis, Hardhats, Hippies & Hawks: The Vietnam Antiwar Movement as Myth & Memory]. How does she deconstruct and explain the myths she's looking at? What kinds of sources does she use to do so? Were you convinced by her argument?*
2. All capstone seminars ask to students to develop a research paper proposal/prospectus, including a thesis statement and an annotated bibliography of primary and second sources (**USLO 1, USLO 2; CSLO 2**)
- All paper proposal/prospectus assignments in the HST 401-405 capstone seminars (such as those below) will require students to briefly reflect on how their choice of topic/argument draws or reflects on their non-HST coursework.
 - **Assignment: Research Statement and Outline List.** In this assignment, you must do 3 things:
 - In one or two sentences, describe the research topic or question you intend to write about
 - Provide a Research Outline list. Essentially this is a research 'to do list,' itemizing the steps you intend to take to begin researching your topic -- books, databases, websites, libraries, journals you will consult, questions you will seek to answer, etc. Please be specific. "I will go on the internet" will not suffice.
 - Provide a list of 6 sources (3 primary, 3 secondary) using proper Chicago Manual of Style format. Write 1-2 sentences for each source on why/how you intend to use it.
 - Assignment: Prospectus, with 3 parts:
 - Description of the topic you have selected;
 - A working thesis (hypothesis) for your project: what you have found, or hope/expect to find;
 - An annotated bibliography of the sources you expect to use (understanding that it may not be complete).
3. All capstone seminars ask to students to demonstrate advanced information literacy skills by doing historical research for their proposed paper, and using proper discipline-specific citation formats (**USLO 3; CSLO 2**)
- For sample assignments, see #2 above
4. All capstone seminars ask students to synthesize the knowledge and skills gained from years of course work in history and other relevant CAS disciplines, and to demonstrate this through the development, research, and writing of a 15-25 page research paper (**USLO 1, 2, 3, 4; CSLO 1, CSLO 3, CSLO 4, CSLO 5**)
- No need for sample assignments here; the assignment (the research paper) is the same in all seminars.
5. All capstone seminars ask students to build their research paper through a series of stages, which include a proposal (see #2 above), a bibliography (see #2 above), an outline, and at least one rough draft (**USLO 1, 2, 3**). Examples:
- *Introduction and Writing Outline. This assignment requires you to do 2 things:*
 - **Write a draft of the introduction to your final paper.** *It is, of course, just a draft; you are welcome to alter it as you wish later. But trying to get a draft on paper now, however imperfect, will help you to get a clearer sense of what your paper will be about. Below [students receive a handout] you will find some suggestions and advice on writing*

introductions. The introduction should (obviously) be at least one paragraph, and certainly no more than two. You should try to keep it to one typed page.

- **Write an outline of your paper.** This too doesn't need to be the final version you actually use for your first or final draft of your paper. But it is useful to start putting an outline together before you've finished your reading and research, because it will help you to figure out what you still need to work on, what stuff you DON'T need to read or research, and what questions remain unanswered. There is no length requirement here, but the outline should be detailed enough to be useful to you, and to convey to your professor that you've given some detailed thought to not only what will go in your paper (and why), but in what order. [Students receive an instructional handout]

6. All capstone seminars ask students to do an oral presentation of their research findings (**USLO 4; CSLO 5**)
 - No need for sample assignments here. The assignment is the same in all seminars: students must make a presentation of 20 to 30 minutes to classmates and the professor, summarizing their sources, their research and their argument – and be prepared to answer questions.

Sample Course Outline:

As was discussed above, the calendar will differ from professor to professor, and from course to course. The brief outline below is merely an attempt at a "lowest common denominator."

Week 1:	Introduction to the themes of the course Discussion of possible research topics
Weeks 2-4:	Primary/secondary source readings and discussion in course topic
Weeks 5-6:	Research paper proposal, outline, and annotated bibliography due Continued reading, writing, discussion of course topic
Week 7-9:	Continued reading, writing, discussion of course topic
Week 10:	Outline and annotated bibliography due
Week 11-12:	First draft of research paper due
Week 13-14:	Second and/or final draft of research paper due
Week 15:	Presentation of research findings