

**North Dakota State University
Spring 2011**

History 489: Senior Seminar

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OfficeHours: T-R 2:00-3:00, W 1:30-3, or by appointment

Course Description

Capstone experience focused on understanding major concepts and applying knowledge of basic methods and problems. Students evaluate secondary literature, conduct primary research, and master standard forms of historical writing. *3 credits.*

Course Objectives

History 489 is the capstone course for history majors. By that we mean that it is the course in which you will have the opportunity to use and demonstrate your facility with the skills you have acquired over your undergraduate career. These skills include the ability to read for meaning, discuss your and others' work intelligently, research in both secondary and primary sources, analyze, synthesize, and think critically about sources, make and support a thesis, and write a paper using proper English.

The Nature of the Seminar

A seminar is not a lecture class, and my role will not be to deliver lectures to you. A seminar revolves around focused discussion. It will be my job to lead the seminar – usually – but it will be your job to provide the discussion. In order to do your job, you must be prepared, which is to say that you must read and think about course materials – including the writings of your fellow classmates – and come ready to discuss them.

In a seminar, participants are expected to be analytical and sometimes critical. It is important, however, that our discourse be civil and our criticism be constructive. We are engaged in a mutual endeavor to make our work better and more rewarding, and it must be based on mutual respect and trust.

On conclusion of this seminar, you should be able to do these things:

1. Discuss and evaluate secondary historical literature on a given topic.
2. Conduct primary historical research on a given topic.
3. Construct a sound historical narrative from your primary research.
4. Connect the findings of your primary research with the body of historical knowledge in secondary literature.
5. Write historical essays according to the conventions of the profession.
6. Discuss the assumptions, values, and approaches to the enterprise of History that have been articulated by great historians, and state your own.

Borrowing the words of Dr. Tom Isern: "These are stern standards, ones to which mature historians aspire to the end of their days. They are mirages on an ever-receding horizon. Individually and together, we do the best that we can, and in the end, we reflect on how far we have come."

There is no private writing in this course. Students can expect to read their own essays aloud, to read other student's essays, and to discuss and edit other peoples' work. By reading each other's work, critical skills will be developed that can be applied to your own writing as well. Each paper will emerge through a process of drafts and revisions. Hopefully, methods of revision will become second nature by the end of the course.

Accordingly, your paper topics, bibliographies, and required drafts must be shared in hard copy with the instructor and electronically with all members of the class. You may do this using the "Send Email" function in the Communication folder in Blackboard. All assignments must be received by noon on the day upon which they are due.

Please note: This syllabus is your contract with me, the professor, for the semester. By enrolling in this class you agree to the policies and requirements set out below. These terms are non-negotiable and will remain in effect for the duration of the semester. If you have any questions about anything in this syllabus, please ask.

Required Readings

The following books are available in the bookstore:

- Lynne Truss, Eats, Shoots and Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation. New York: Gotham Books, 2003.
- Perrin, Pocket Guide to the Chicago Manual of Style. ISBN: 9780618767236

Other minor readings, such as excerpts from primary sources or writing manuals, may be assigned periodically during class throughout the semester

Classroom Policies

All students are expected to observe basic tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive leaning environment. During class time, I expect your undivided attention. This means silencing cell phones, pagers, iPods, and other devices, and putting away newspapers and other forms of distraction, for the duration of the class period. Please come to class on time and plan to stay for the entire period. Coming late and/or disrupting the learning environment shows disrespect for your professors, your colleagues, and the educational endeavor in which you are engaged. If you must leave early, please let me know at the beginning of class. I can be very understanding of problems that might arise over the course of the semester, but only if I know what is going on with you. I encourage you to stop by during office hours, to get to know me, and to keep me informed of any issues you might have that would affect your performance in this class.

Special Accommodations

Students with disabilities who need accommodation in this course are encouraged to speak with me as soon as possible to make appropriate arrangements for these accommodations.

Academic Honesty

All work in this course must be completed in a manner consistent with NDSU University Senate Policy, Section 335: Code of Academic Conduct and Responsibility available at <http://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/policy/335.pdf>

In all courses, I expect that all work that you do and turn in is your own. No form of plagiarism, cheating, collusion, or any other form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated. Plagiarism is defined as

deliberately taking the words or ideas of someone else and passing them off as your own. Cheating is obtaining unauthorized assistance on any assignment. Collusion is the selling/purchasing of academic products with the intention that they be submitted to satisfy an academic requirement. Students are expected to uphold and support the highest academic standards at all times. Any student found guilty of academic dishonesty will fail the assignment in question, may fail the entire course, and will be subject to disciplinary action by the University. If you are ever unclear about what constitutes plagiarism or academic dishonesty, please ask.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Attendance and Participation: Attendance at each class meeting is required. You are responsible for all material covered in our class meetings, regardless of your physical presence in the room. Students are expected to come prepared to engage with and discuss the assigned material. This means preparing the assignment before class and bringing the reading material with you to class. I expect all students to participate in our class discussions and to contribute their thoughts, ideas, and questions to our collective exploration. I especially encourage you to bring your questions to class. I will create, and expect you to uphold, an intellectual environment in the classroom where we can listen to and consider others' arguments and opinions with an open mind and where we respect viewpoints other than our own. *Your participation grade* will be based on your engagement in our class discussions and be guided by the following rubric:

- A = Always prepared, frequently participates, rarely absent
- B = Always prepared, participates only when called on, rarely absent
- C = Usually prepared, rarely speaks, rarely absent
- D = Often unprepared, almost never speaks, several absences
- F = Usually unprepared, frequent absences

Written Assignments:

Seminar Paper

The requirements for your paper are detailed on a separate handout. The paper is due in eight stages:

Wednesday, January 18 Preliminary Paper Topic Due

Wednesday, February 1 Final Paper Topic Due

Wednesday, February 8 Preliminary Bibliography Due

This preliminary bibliography should include a list of at least 3 primary sources that you anticipate using in your paper, along with a brief explanation (1-2 sentences) of how you hope to use each of them.

Wednesday, February 22 Revised Bibliography Due

This revised bibliography, which can be based substantively on the preliminary bibliography that was due during Week 5, should include at least 3 primary and 5 secondary sources.

Wednesday, February 29 Essay Fragment (5+ Pages) Due

Your essay fragment should represent the core of your writing. It should be at least 5 pages of writing that showcase your best sources and/or thinking in your paper. A brief outline of your entire paper should be provided to help contextualize your fragment.

Monday, March 19 First Draft Due

Your first draft should represent your best thinking and writing. It should be complete, with an introduction and a conclusion. It should be typed and double-

spaced, proofread, and spell checked. Be certain to consult your Pocket Guide to the Chicago Manual of Style for guidance on the correct format for citations as well as for matters of style.

Monday, April 30

Final Research Paper Due

The final version of your paper is due by 5:00 p.m. on Monday, April 30. Hand in the first draft with my comments when you turn in your final draft. Your final draft should be 15-20 typed, double-spaced pages.

Monday, May 7

Final Presentation

Students are encouraged to take advantage of the resources of the Center for Writers for assistance with drafting their papers. The writing consultants will not write your paper; they *will* help you improve your writing skills. If you use the Center, please plan ahead. They can only help you if you see them in advance and have time to incorporate their suggestions into the final paper. More information can be found at <http://www.ndsu.edu/cfwriters/>

Grade Breakdown: Your grade for the class will be composed of the above elements, broken down as follows:

Participation	50% (500 points)
	[Your participation grade will be comprised of in-class participation (10% (100 points)), the bibliography (10% (100 points)), the fragment (10% (100 points)), the first draft (10% (100 points)), and the final presentation (10% (100 points))]
Final Paper	50% (500 points)

Your grade for the course will be determined as follows: A = 900-1000 points; B = 800-899 points; C = 700-799 points; D = 600-699 points; F = below 600 points.

Your grades for written work will be determined based on the following rubric:

- A = Mastery of reading and class material; factual accuracy; thoughtful, historical argumentation demonstrating ability to synthesize and/or some originality of thought; technically clean
- B = Good to excellent command of most reading and class material; accuracy; good level of historical argumentation; reasonable thesis statement
- C = Good command of class material; accuracy; ability to articulate a historical point of view, even if it is not compelling or is poorly reasoned
- D = Poor command of required assignments; errors; ahistorical or narrow reasoning

Please note: To pass this class, all assignments must be turned in. Failure to turn in any assignment listed above (not including unscheduled quizzes) by the end of the semester will result in a failing grade on that assignment. All assignments are due at the start of class on the date listed in the Course Schedule below.

Late assignments may be accepted only with the advance approval of the professor and may be assessed a penalty of 5 points per business day, which will be applied to the Final Paper grade. If you have a problem with a due date because of a specific emergency, please notify the professor in advance or plan to turn it in early. *I can be very understanding and flexible with you, but only if you come to talk to me in advance.*

Course Schedule:

January 11	Introduction to Course Discussion of Sources Discussion of Style and Form
January 18	Meet at Institute for Regional Studies & University Archives for Orientation Skills & Technology Training Center, Room 117 1305 19th Avenue North Fargo, ND Preliminary Topic Due In-Class Discussion of Topics
January 25	Guest Lecture: "Finding Primary Sources Online," Kathryn Thomas, Humanities Reference Librarian In-class Discussion of <u>Eats, Shoots, & Leaves</u> , chapters 2-6
February 1	Final Topics Due Discussion of Final Topics
February 8	Preliminary Bibliography Due In-class Discussion of Bibliographies
February 15	No Class
February 22	No Class (Revised Bibliographies Due)
February 29	Essay Fragment (5+ pages) Due In-Class Evaluation of Fragments
March 7	Individual Meetings with Instructor
March 14	Spring Break
March 19-23	Individual Meetings with Instructor First Draft Due
March 28	No Class
April 4	In-Class Evaluation of Evolving Drafts
April 11	Individual Meetings with Instructor
April 18	Individual Meetings with Instructor
April 25	No Class
May 2	Final Research Project Due (18-20 pages)
Monday, May 7: 10:30am – 12:30pm	Research Presentations