



**Boston University**  
**Spring 2018**

**HI 801**  
**Graduate Research Seminar: The Historian's Craft**

Professor Eugenio Menegon

WEDNESDAY 2:30-5:15, HIS 110

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Office hours: M 12:30-2:00; W 1:00-2:30, and by appointment.

This course is intended to provide graduate students at the M.A. and Ph.D. levels with intensive training in the art of historical research and writing. The seminar will guide students through the various stages of **preparing a publishable article, including conceptualizing a historical problem, doing research in primary and secondary sources, writing and revising draft text, and submitting a manuscript article to a professional historical journal.**

Because the seminar is composed of students working in various historical fields and using a range of approaches, students will work closely with an academic advisor (ideally their major advisor) as they **formulate a problem, seek relevant sources, locate their project in a body of historiography, and scout appropriate venues for publication.** Seminar members will also gain experience in **presenting their work** to colleagues who are not specialists in their field.

**Requirements and Expectations:**

The principal written assignment for the semester is an **original research paper** on a subject relating to the student's field of interest. There will also be several **short written assignments** to help students refine their topics and polish critical thinking skills in preparation for the research paper and, during the last two weeks of the semester, a ten to fifteen minute **formal presentation** of this research.

In order to keep the focus on research and writing, common readings will be kept to a minimum and will consist of scholarly writings intended to provide **models** for analysis but also to provoke further thought about such problems as conceptualizing historical problems, constructing narratives, and incorporating theory. Most weeks' meetings will be divided into two or three parts and will include **(1) discussion of assigned journal articles, (2) individual progress reports and**

**presentations connected to each student's research project, and/or (3) small group work sessions of students in related fields with the instructor.** Students are expected to participate actively in discussion of assigned readings but also to share research findings and engage in constructive criticism of the work of others in the class. The more we all can do to make this a mutually supportive enterprise, the more you will enjoy the course and the better your papers will be.

The **final research paper** should be approximately twenty-five to thirty pages in length (and must be at least twenty-five pages if it is to count for the department's research requirement). **The paper is due on Friday May 4 (electronic copy by EMAIL),** and will be graded on the basis of:

- (1) its overall content and contribution to historical knowledge;
- (2) its analysis of primary sources and their use in establishing and defending a thesis;
- (3) its presentation, i.e. primarily its readability, or style, but also its technical apparatus (citations and bibliography).

**Unexcused late assignments will be marked down** a half grade (e.g.: B+ becomes B) for every day they are late. **All written work must be delivered in electronic copy by email.**

**Attendance:** Students should attend class regularly and contact me if illness or other serious problems cause them to miss more than a very occasional class. Contact me ahead of time if you will miss a deadline, to provide a valid excuse for that missed deadline, and to make up the missed work as soon as possible. **Students who miss discussion of assigned articles are to hand in a 2-3 page thesis statement and critical assessment for each article missed within a week of the missed class.** Students who miss more than one class for an **unexcused absence** will have their grade for the course lowered one-half grade for every additional unexcused absence.

**Academic honesty:** Students must adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty as outlined in the CAS *Graduate School Conduct Code* (<https://www.bu.edu/cas/files/2017/02/GRS-Academic-Conduct-Code-Final.pdf>). All work handed in for credit must be your own. I will refer cases of suspected academic misconduct to the Dean's Office and assign a grade of "F" for the course to any student whose work is judged by the Dean (after a hearing before a faculty/student Academic Conduct panel) to be plagiarized.

**Grading:** The final grade for the semester will take into account the following elements:

- **Book review and thesis statements 10%**
- **Research proposal and bibliography 10%**
- **Introduction and outline, and preliminary drafts 5%**
- **Final presentation 15%**
- **Seminar participation 20%**
- **Final paper 40%**

### **Resources:**

Please download, become familiar, and start using Zotero (<https://www.zotero.org/>; free online) or another similar bibliographic program for the writing of bibliographies in your assignments and papers.

I recommend as useful this manual, which is a sophisticated “checklist” for research and writing: **Wayne Booth, Gregory Colomb, and Joseph Williams, *The Craft of Research*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, revised third edition, 2009, available as e-book online via Mugar.** A practical, shorter guide for undergraduates is Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, Boston: Bedford St. Martin's, 2015. You may also wish to buy the most recent edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style* (or at least Robert Perrin, *Pocket Guide to The Chicago Manual of Style*, Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 2007); but the *Manual's* guide to citations can also be accessed through Mugar Library's Electronic Resources.

## Course Outline

(All readings not available through Mugar Library's Electronic Resources will be posted to the course website in advance of the discussion date. The Outline is subject to change as needed.)

### Week 1 (**Wednesday, January 24**): Introduction: The Historian's Craft & the Structure of the Research Article

#### *In Class*

1. Self-introduction by instructor and students (come prepared to discuss your interests).
2. Syllabus and expectations.
3. Discussion of Kieckhefer's article.

#### *Assignment for Week 1:*

1. Read: Richard Kieckhefer, “The Specific Rationality of Medieval Magic,” *American Historical Review*, 99.3 (1994): 813-836.
2. Prepare to discuss how this article is constructed; its purpose, evidence and argumentation; and how well you think it achieves its purpose.

### Week 2 (**Wednesday, January 31**): Scholarly Debates, Literature Review, and the Authors' Questions

#### *In Class*

1. Discuss research tools and their uses in general.
2. Discuss the impact of Richard Kieckhefer's article (and/or the ideas therein contained), and the respective value of the research tools used to explore this impact.
3. Learn from Dr. Vika Zafrin (Institutional Repository Librarian at Mugar) about Digital Humanities resources for historians.

➤ **TASK: Presentation by students of possible research topics.**

### Assignment for Week 2:

1. Investigate more recent periodical literature on medieval science and magic using JSTOR, Project MUSE, Historical Abstracts, and the Social Science Citation Index (or find other relevant databases/methods, and **report on them**). Has Richard Kieckhefer's research been taken up by other historians? If so, how has it been used? What have other historians found most suggestive in it? What have they criticized?
2. Look around for samples and consider the best way to construct a **literature review/state-of-the-field** for a given topic that a) reveals the main question(s) of an existing debate; b) helps inspire your own original questions. You may also want to explore this resource: <http://explore.qsrinternational.com/boston-university> about NVIVO, a platform for research available to you for free. For upcoming tutorials see: <http://www.bu.edu/tech/about/training/classroom/>
3. Read the History Department's Writing Guide. Although prepared for undergraduates, it has suggestions about finding a topic and writing and revising a research paper that may prove helpful. Check the similar sections in Rampolla's *Pocket Guide* (I will post some parts too) and/or the online version of *The Craft of Research*.
4. Investigate possible topics for your research paper; prepare a 5-10 minute presentation of research possibilities you are considering. If you do not already have a topic in mind, I strongly recommend that you browse the website of the Massachusetts Historical Society (<http://www.masshist.org>) and of Harvard University's several archival collections (<http://lib.harvard.edu/archives>), which are within easy walking distance of BU, or the Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center ([www.bu.edu/archives](http://www.bu.edu/archives)), which is on campus, and arrange to meet with one of the archivists to talk about possible topics that would make good use of archival materials available there.

### Week 3 (Wednesday, February 7) Evaluating and Using Primary Sources. Traditional and Digital Approaches

#### In Class

1. Discuss Leahey's "Jesuit Missionaries and the Native Languages of New France." Focus on how this article uses **primary sources**.
2. Progress reports on research topics.

➤ **TASK: One-paragraph statement of topic due.**

### Assignment for Week 3:

1. Read Margaret J. Leahey "Comment peut un muet prescher l'évangile?" Jesuit Missionaries and the Native Languages of New France," *French Historical Studies*, 19.1 (1995): 105-131. Track down in BU's library or online at least **ONE key primary document** used in this article, read it (you will see that the documents used are in French but that there are English versions), try to understand its **context** (including its publication context: where it is published/kept in the edition/version you are showing us; how it has been used so far/contextualized by editors, etc.); and comment on how it has been used as **evidence**, and in the **argumentation**; and whether you find that the source has been used properly (pay also attention, if you can read French, to linguistic layering in translation). Please bring the document (or a section) to class, and be ready to find it online for the class session if you want to raise a specific point with the seminar members.
2. Prepare a one-paragraph description of your proposed topic to hand in in class.

## Week 4 (Wednesday, February 14): Constructing Historical Narratives in an Article and in a Proposal

### *In Class*

1. Discuss Casale, "Global Politics in the 1580s."
2. Discuss the crafting of fellowship applications and research proposals.
3. Individual reports on the nature of available primary sources for your project and how you expect to use them.

➤ **TASK: Research proposal and bibliography are due by the beginning of class. Discussion of sample primary sources in class.**

### *Assignment for Week 4:*

1. Read Giancarlo Casale, "Global Politics in the 1580s: One Canal, Twenty Thousand Cannibals, and an Ottoman Plot to Rule the World," *Journal of World History* 18.3 (2007): 267-296. Prepare to discuss how this article is constructed; its purpose, evidence and argumentation; and how well you think it achieves this purpose. Comment on the specific format of the *Journal of World History*, its editorial board, peer reviewing system, and style sheet, and what you think is its audience (try to get your hands on a physical issue of this journal). How does this article fit within the *JWH*?
2. Find out as much information as possible on Professor Giancarlo Casale, tracing what you think is the intellectual and publication trajectory he has followed up to the present, how the article fits within that trajectory, and what this little investigation reveals to you as an aspiring professional historian (including how you would consider issues of audience and disciplinary genre in searching for a publication venue).
3. Read the fellowship applications posted to the course site. These can serve as models for the research proposal that is your other assignment this week, as well as serving as the basis of a discussion of how to write fellowship applications and research proposals. Think of your audience.
4. Prepare a **research proposal** of 1000-1200 words for your seminar project. In addition to stating the proposed subject of research, the proposal should briefly locate this subject in the historical literature, explain how this research would contribute to the literature, and offer a tentative thesis or expected outcome for the research. Append a one or two-page bibliography, in correct form, listing relevant primary and secondary sources, including both monographs and journal articles.
5. Prepare to report orally on available primary sources for your proposed topic. Bring in a sample document (or one-page portion of a document) to share with the class.

## Week 5 (Wednesday, February 21) Article, Dissertation, and Book

### *In Class*

1. Discuss Casale's *The Ottoman Age of Exploration*, and how the book compares in argumentation and structurally relates to Casale's article we read last week, and his original dissertation.
2. Small group meetings to discuss research strategies and revised research proposals.

➤ **TASK: Précis of two articles related to your project are due by the beginning of class.**

### **Assignment for Week 5:**

1. Read Giancarlo Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, and compare it with Casale's 2004 dissertation available in the UMI/Proquest database (Harvard University dissertation). Have a closer look at chapter six of the book and chapter five of the dissertation, and the stylistic changes therein. What do they reveal? Do you find traces of the *JWH* article? What do you think is the relationship (temporal and logical) of that article with the book? And with the original dissertation?
2. Meet with your advisor to discuss your research proposal and get suggestions for revising or refining its conceptualization and for additional primary and secondary sources. Outline a research strategy and bring it, along with a revised proposal, with you to class.
3. Write **précis** (one-paragraph thesis statements) for two articles relevant to your research project; follow each with a paragraph indicating how your research builds on or modifies this thesis.

## **Week 6 (Wednesday, February 28) In the Historian's Workshop: A Meeting with the Author**

### **In Class**

1. Discuss publication process of articles with author, Professor Alexis Peri.
2. Progress reports on research and the evolving hypotheses you are pursuing.
3. Discuss editorial suggestions for book reviews with members of your discussion group.

➤ **TASK: Submit your book review to the instructor and members of your discussion via Blackboard by noon on Monday, February 26.**

### **Assignment for Week 6:**

1. Read Prof. Alexis Peri's journal article's draft, readers' report, and published version "The Art of Revision: How Vera Inber Scripted the Siege and her Self during WWII." Prepare to discuss the two pieces, their contents and structure, and the submission process with their author. Examine also Prof. Peri's actual book and her book proposal submitted to an academic press (available on Blackboard, *The War Within: Soviet Diaries of the Leningrad Blockade, 1941-1944*) and feel free to relate the articles to the book as proposed.
2. Actively continue your research in primary and secondary materials.
3. Write a 750-word **review of a secondary work** relevant to your proposed research topic. Use reviews in *The American Historical Review* or a premier journal in your field as your model.
4. Read and make editorial suggestions on the reviews submitted by other members of your discussion group in preparation for small-group discussion of the reviews in class.

**Wednesday, March 7: No Class – Spring Break [March 5-11]**



## Week 7 (Wednesday, March 14) The Journal Submission Process: How Editors Think

### *In Class*

1. Discuss how journals select articles and shape fields with *Modern Intellectual History* editor, Professor Charles Capper.
2. Discuss as well with Prof. Capper the genres of pieces by Oshatz, Collins, and August.
3. Discuss the results of journal surveys.
4. Progress reports on research.

➤ **TASK:** Revised book reviews are due by the beginning of class.

### *Assignment for Week 7:*

1. Read/skim for structure and style these three different genres of articles in *Modern Intellectual History* (check also the front matter of the journal), and prepare related questions for Prof. Capper: a) Research article: Molly Oshatz, "The Problem of Moral Progress: The Slavery Debates and the Development of Liberal Protestantism in the United States," *MIH*, 5 (Aug. 2008): 225-250; b) Essay: Jeffrey Collins, "Quentin Skinner's Hobbes and the Neo-Republican Project," *MIH*, 6 (Aug. 2009): 343-367; c) Review Essay: Thomas August, "Literary Practices and the Social Life of Texts," *MIH*, 5 (Nov. 2008): 643-655. Try also to find out who these authors are.
2. Revise your book review and bring the revised version to class to turn in.
3. Select two professional **journals** that are possible publication sites for your seminar project. One should be a major journal in your field, the other more specialized or local. Survey the past five years of articles to judge audience and the range of themes covered in published articles; examine the journals' style sheet and note how/if it differs from that employed by the *AHR*, *JWH*, and *MHI* (check the online guidelines for submission). Prepare to report on your findings to the class.

Suggested journals in the first category:

*Comparative Studies in Society and History*  
*International Journal of African Historical Studies*  
*Journal of American History*  
*Journal of Interdisciplinary History*  
*Journal of Modern History*  
*Past and Present*  
*Speculum*  
*William and Mary Quarterly*

## Week 8 (Wednesday, March 21) Conceptualizing Historical Problems

### *In Class*

1. Discuss Harrison's and McKeown's articles.
2. Progress reports on research.
3. Small group work sessions to go over introductions and outlines.

- **TASK:** Submit introduction and one-page outline of research project to the instructor and to members of your group by 5 pm on Tuesday, March 20.

***Assignment for Week 8:***

1. Read Henrietta Harrison, "The Qianlong Emperor's Letter to George III and the Early-Twentieth-Century Origins of Ideas about Traditional China's Foreign Relations," *American Historical Review* 122. 3 (2017): 680–70, and Adam McKeown, "Ritualization of Regulation: The Enforcement of Chinese Exclusion in the United States and China," *American Historical Review* 108.2 (2003): 377–403. How did they conceptualize the historical problem they are studying in existing debates and beyond them?
2. Continue research for your paper. Draft an introduction and one-page outline for your proposed research paper.
3. Read and make editorial suggestions on the introductions submitted by other members of your discussion group in preparation for small-group discussion of the introductions in class.

**Week 9 (Wednesday, March 28) Individual Meetings with Instructor**

***In Class***

Instructor will schedule individual meetings to discuss progress on your drafts and questions about them.

***Assignment for Week 9:***

Work on the rough draft of your paper; prepare your meeting with instructor.

**Week 10 (Wednesday, April 4): Individual Work**

***In Class***

Individual writing. Instructor can schedule individual meetings to discuss progress on your drafts and questions about them if needed.

***Assignment for Week 10:***

Work on the rough draft of your paper.

**Week 11 (Wednesday, April 11) Rough Drafts and the Revision Process**

***In Class OR ELSEWHERE***

Group meetings to discuss first drafts.



- **TASK:** Exchange copies of your draft with members of your group (on Blackboard/Google Drive or in hard copy, whichever your group decides), deliver one copy to your advisor, and place one in my mailbox **by 5 p.m. on Monday, April 9.**

***Assignment for Week 11:***

1. Complete the first draft of your paper. Footnotes can still be in informal style, but citations should be provided for direct quotations and also for paraphrases and borrowed ideas that are not your own.
2. Arrange a meeting with your advisor to get criticism and suggestions on your draft.
3. Read the drafts of other members of your group and prepare to discuss them. Within each group, each student should do a close reading of one other paper, marking the draft with suggestions for style and syntax as well as content, but everyone should read all of the papers and prepare to offer more general suggestions on argument and use of evidence. Make a list of who reads whose paper and rotate through the list, so that everyone eventually does a close reading of each paper in the group.

**NO CLASS on Wednesday, April 18 [MONDAY SCHEDULE]: Individual work**

**Week 12 (Wednesday, April 25) Part I: Incorporating Theory: Museums, Imperialism and Decolonization – Part II: Group Work**

***In Class***

1. Discuss Wintle article.
2. Discussion of questions about footnoting and style.
3. Small group meetings to go over suggestions for further revisions.

***Assignment for Week 12:***

1. Read Claire Wintle, "Decolonizing the Smithsonian: Museums as Microcosms of Political Encounter," *The American Historical Review*, 121. 5 (2016): 1492–1520. How does Wintle use theory to conceptualize her argument and interrogate her sources?
2. Work on revising and polishing your paper in response to the suggestions you have received. Do additional research if necessary. Finish textual revisions and begin stylistic and technical polishing. Be sure that your notes conform to the style employed in *The American Historical Review*. Add a separate bibliography, using the *Chicago Manual of Style* as your guide. Re-read Rampolla's *Pocket Guide*, *The Craft of Research*, or the section on style in the *History Department Writing Guide*, and revise your paper stylistically to profit from these suggestions.

## Week 13 (**Wednesday, May 2**): Final Draft & Presentations

### *In Class*

Final presentations of research projects

- **TASK:** Exchange second drafts with your group and place a copy in my mailbox **by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, April 27**. Bring the second drafts marked with your comments to class.

### *Assignment*

1. Continue to revise your paper. Make final corrections to the text and notes of your paper; carefully proofread it, and check the form of the notes and bibliography in preparation for handing it in.

2. Prepare a 10-15 minute presentation of your project to deliver in class. The presentation should (1) explain the question your paper addresses, (2) provide enough historical context to allow the class to understand why this is a significant issue that needs addressing, (3) explain your central argument, and (4) present enough evidence to convince the class that your argument is a valid one. Contact me ahead of time if you need an overhead projector or computer for your presentation.

- **TASK:** Final papers are due by email **on Friday May 4**; send/deliver a copy to your advisor at the same time.

## HI 801 Research Paper Due Dates

- Wk 2: Jan. 31**, Oral presentation of preliminary topics
- Wk 3: Feb 7**, One-paragraph statement of topic
- Wk 4: Feb 14**, Research proposals and bibliography
- Wk 5: Feb 21**, Précis of two articles
- Wk 6: Feb. 28**, Book review discussion (exchange **Monday, Feb. 26**)
- Wk 7: Mar 14**, Revised book review
- Wk 8: Mar 21**, Introduction and outline (exchange **Tuesday, Mar 20**)
- Wk 9: Mar 28**, Individual meetings with instructor
- Wk 10: April 4**, Individual drafting
- Wk 11: Apr 11**, Completed rough draft (exchange **Monday, Apr 9**)
- Wk 12: Apr 25**, Individual drafting & group discussion of drafts
- Wk 13: May 2**, Revised drafts (exchange **Friday, Apr 27**) & Presentations
- Wk 13: May 4**, final papers are due.