

**San Francisco State University
Seminar in Historical Analysis
History 300, Section 3
Professor Sherry Katz**

Fall Semester 2007

Day and Time: TTh 11:00-12:15

Room: SCI 268

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 12:30-1:30, and by appointment

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Course Overview:

Unlike many other history courses, which focus on past events, this course will introduce you to the world of working historians - the process by which historians research, analyze, write about, and revise previous interpretations of the past. In this course, we will discuss the evolution of the discipline of history, with a special emphasis on approaches, issues, and debates that emerged in the second half of the 20th century. We will explore the practical aspects of research method and historical interpretation, including how to gather, evaluate, and utilize historical evidence and how to construct and assess historical explanations. Students will have the opportunity to complete a research project from original historical sources.

Required Reading:

Three books and a number of articles on electronic reserve are required for this course. The books are available for purchase at the SFSU Bookstore and they are also on reserve at the Reserve Book Room in the SFSU-J. Paul Leonard Library. The articles on electronic reserve can be accessed via the SFSU library web site with the password "documents." You should print these articles, read them, and bring them to class for our discussions. In addition, several sample research papers are available on electronic reserve.

Anthony Brundage, Going to the Sources: A Guide to Historical Research and Writing (3rd ed.)

Mary Lynn Rampolla, A Pocket Guide to Writing in History (5th ed.)

George J. Sanchez, Becoming Mexican American:

Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945

Recommended Book: William Strunk and E.B. White, The Elements of Style (4th ed.)

Class Meetings and Assignments:

Because this class is a seminar, attendance is required, except for weeks 12-13 (Nov. 13, 15, 20, and 22) when we will not meet as a class so that students can work on their research projects and meet with me individually (week 13 is also Thanksgiving Break Week). Seminars are discussion-style courses and are created by their participants; it is their commitment and enthusiasm that makes a seminar intellectually stimulating, productive, and joyful. All students should therefore come to class fully prepared to

actively participate in our discussions by having already completed the reading, research, and/or writing assignments for that day.

Research Project:

During most of the semester, students will be working on a research project using primary sources. I encourage students to pick a topic dealing with some aspect of the history of California or the San Francisco Bay Area. The research project will result in a number of short research and writing assignments, a 12-15 page research paper (including footnotes and bibliography) and a 10-minute oral presentation. While the research project is in many ways the centerpiece of the course (and the research paper akin to a final exam), several other assignments will help students understand the discipline of history and master historical research and analytical skills.

Basic Information Competence Requirement (OASIS):

One major goal of this course is to assist students in improving their research skills. I therefore encourage all students to complete the Basic Information Competence Requirement (BICR, formerly the University Library Requirement) if they have not already done so. This requirement must be completed before graduation, and this course provides a great context in which to get it done. I am not making it a mandatory requirement of the course, but I will offer extra credit for evidence of its completion. The requirement must be completed through a web-based tutorial accessible through the OASIS home page (<http://oasis.sfsu.edu>). The requirement can be completed in short installments over several weeks or all at once. I recommend that students review at least some of the tutorial material relevant to using the library's research tools by Sept. 18 (when we are scheduled to meet with a research librarian to discuss historical research methods). In order to receive extra credit for the assignment, evidence of completion must be turned in on or before Dec. 13 (the last regular meeting of our course).

Grading:

Both class participation and written work are vital to success in this course. Your course grade will be based upon class attendance and participation (20%); ten short research and writing assignments (50%); rough and final drafts of the research paper (25%); the oral presentation of your research findings (5%); and extra credit for the BICR, if applicable (5%). See page 11 of the syllabus for a more detailed breakdown of the percentages for each assignment and the dates they are due. Each requirement will be explained in greater detail elsewhere in the syllabus, in special handouts, and/or in class discussion. The grading system is designed to reward you for proceeding through the research and writing process in a step-by-step manner that will enable you to move logically toward the final draft of your research paper and your oral presentation. Since one of the goals of the course is to improve your writing skills, the assignment and grading system is designed to discourage you from throwing together your research paper at the last minute. Procrastinators take note!!

Schedule:

Week 1: **Aug. 28** **Introduction to the Course**
 Aug. 30 **Research Project: Getting Started**

Topics:

Aug. 28: Introductions and overview of course content, requirements, and goals. Brief overview of history as a field, the nature and significance of historical analysis and perspective, and the role of the historian.

Aug. 30: Discussion of planning a research project: selecting a topic; exploring the secondary literature; locating primary sources; constructing a thesis/argument. We will also introduce students to some local archives.

Individual Consultations with Instructor on Research Project:

Sign up in class on Aug. 30 for meetings on Aug. 30, 31, and Sept. 4, 5, and 6.

After these consultations, students should begin to investigate archives and libraries relevant to their research projects.

Week 2: **Sept. 4** **Evolution of the Field of History: Changes in Historical Writing, Research, and Interpretation**
 Sept. 6 **Current Controversies in Historical Scholarship**

Topics:

Sept. 6 and 8: Exploration of how the field of history has evolved: trends in 19th and 20th centuries; changes in historiography; current conceptualizations, methods, and controversies growing out of the “new” social history.

Reading assignment: Brundage, chap. 1 and pp. 103-104; Kessler-Harris, “Social History” (on electronic reserve); Leuchtenburg, “The Pertinence of Political History” (on electronic reserve); Lerner, “The Necessity of History” (on electronic reserve).

Writing assignment; due Sept. 6: Write a 3-4 page paper that defines the “new” social history and then critically assesses its contributions and shortcomings. In this paper, you should have a thesis, support that thesis with evidence from the course readings, and cite the sources in some consistent manner. We will learn the proper Chicago Manual documentation style for footnotes and bibliography later on in the course (see Rampolla).

Class discussion for Sept. 6 and 8: Define history and historiography. Can historical facts have meaning without interpretation? Why do historical interpretations change over time? What is the “new” social history? Is it a useful, even necessary, approach to studying the past? How can social history be reconciled with political history? How have new approaches to historical study changed our assumptions about historical relevance, objectivity, and truth? How might contemporary historians answer the question: why does history matter?

Week 3: Sept. 11 Public vs. Scholarly History
Sept. 13 Primary vs. Secondary Sources
Conceptualizing Historical Questions

Topics:

Sept. 11: Exploration of the relationship of history to national identity, collective memory, and civic consciousness through conflicts over the Enola Gay exhibition.

Sept. 13: Discussion of the kinds of questions historians ask and of the types of secondary and primary sources historians utilize.

Reading assignment: Brundage, chap. 2; Rampolla, pp. 1-28; Boyer, “Whose History is it Anyway? Memory, Politics, and Historical Scholarship” (on electronic reserve); Hogan, “The Enola Gay Controversy: History, Memory, and the Politics of Presentation” (on electronic reserve).

Research assignment: Review all issues of one historical journal published in the course of one year (for example in 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, or 2006). Journal assignments will be given out in class on Sept. 6. Review the journal issues for the following: purpose and scope of the journal; frequency of publication; audience (general or specialist interest); types of articles and/or reviews; and content (topics or issues emphasized). In addition, read one issue of the journal closely for the types of questions historians ask and the sources they utilize.

Writing assignment, due Sept. 13: Type the information gathered regarding the historical journal (see research assignment) on 2 pages. Be sure to include a summary of the types of questions historians ask and the sources they utilize as gleaned from your close reading of one issue of the journal. Your name and the title of the journal should appear at the top of the first page.

Class discussion for Sept. 11: Should the Enola Gay exhibition have been staged at the Smithsonian? Why did the exhibit generate controversy and why was it cancelled? Are there differences between the history produced and practiced by academic historians and the history consumed by the general public? What purpose should public history exhibitions serve? Can tensions between the “commemorative impulse” and critical historical scholarship be resolved?

Class discussion for Sept. 13: Turning to historical scholarship, what different kinds of historical writing (texts, monographs, articles, review essays, etc.) did you identify through your historical journal research? Can you articulate the differences between primary and secondary sources? Can you categorize the different types of primary sources historians utilize in their research and writing? Can a source sometimes be both primary and secondary? What kinds of questions do historians ask when they write articles (or books) based on primary sources? How do book reviews and review essays differ from articles written from primary sources? How can these reviews be useful to historians beginning a new research project?

Week 4: Sept. 18 Using the Library for Historical Research
Sept. 20 Using the Library Continues

Topics:

These sessions will provide an introduction to the use of the rich resources of the library and www for historical research, including online library catalogues (INVESTIGATOR, MELVYL, GLADIS), printed and electronic indexes and abstracts, printed bibliographies and reference books, electronic databases, and www sites containing primary sources.

Reading assignment: Brundage, chap. 3, and pp. 68-71, 91-92, 101-102; Rampolla, pp. 69-84, 138-151.

Research assignment: Complete (or simply review) as much of the Basic Information Competence Requirement (OASIS) as you can before Sept. 18. The requirement must be completed by Dec. 13 for extra credit. Students should also use this week (and the following week) to make a final decision regarding the topic of their research project and to develop a preliminary bibliography (including both primary and secondary sources) for the project.

Class discussions on Sept. 18 and 20: The class will meet in the library at 11:00 sharp in room 426a. After one-hour presentations by the research librarian, you may use the library's resources to further develop the bibliography on your research topic.

Week 5 Sept. 25 Using Historical Archives I
Sept. 27 Using Historical Archives II

Topics:

These sessions will be devoted to learning about the types of primary sources that can be found at historical archives and about the archival research process.

Reading assignment: Review Brundage, pp. 16-20; 68-71; Rampolla, pp. 6-7; read Wiener, "The Dyspeptic Disney Archives" (on electronic reserve).

Class discussion for Sept. 25: A research librarian from the Labor Archives and Research Center at SFSU will discuss archival sources and research with us. We will meet at the Labor Archives and Research Center, located close to campus at 480 Winston Drive, at 11:10 sharp. The presentation and discussion will take place in the archives reading room.

Class discussion for Sept. 27: A research librarian from the San Francisco Public Library will come to speak to our class about archival sources (or we will see a documentary film on the use of local sources: "A Midwife's Tale.")

Week 6 Oct. 2 Roundtable on Student Research Projects
Oct. 4 Roundtable Continues

Topics and class discussion:

This week we will have a roundtable on student research projects. This roundtable will provide space for each student to present their research topic and for all of us to brainstorm on that topic – to provide help in identifying possible primary sources, secondary sources, questions to ask, etc.

Writing assignment; due Oct. 4: Write a 2-3 page preliminary proposal for your research project. Describe the topic, pose the question(s) you hope to answer, and explain why your topic and question(s) are important and interesting. Attach a preliminary bibliography of both primary and secondary sources; list sources separately under those two categories.

Week 7: Oct. 9 Understanding Historiography
Oct. 11 Research Process Components
Reading and Note-Taking Strategies

Topics:

Oct. 9: Discussion of the importance of historiography to new historical research projects and original analysis.

Oct. 11: Review and discussion of the key components of the research process. Also discussion of reading and note-taking strategies.

Reading assignment: Read Brundage, chap. 4, and pp. 71-75; read/review Rampolla, pp. 36-38, 25-28, 84-86; read Sanchez, introduction.

Recommended reading assignment: Gordon, “U.S. Women’s History” in Foner, ed., The New American History (book on reserve).

Writing assignment; due on Oct. 11: Complete a brief review of the nature and usefulness of historiographic essays using the historiographic analysis handout (to be distributed in class on Oct. 4). This review will rely on the assigned readings for the week. I will ask you to discuss the purpose and usefulness of historiographic essays, and the ways in which Sanchez’s introduction suggests a model of the central themes and components of historiographic analysis.

Class Discussion for Oct. 9: Why are historiographic essays written? What are the central components of historiographic essays? How can these essays be organized effectively? How can historiographic essays help us situate and shape our own primary source research and analysis? How might you find a historiographic essay relevant to your topic? How would you compile a list of secondary sources from which you could construct your own historiographic understanding? How would you decide if a secondary source should be included in the historiographic section of your research paper?

Class discussion for Oct. 11: We will use a research process guidelines handout, as well as our previous class discussions, to develop a list of the essential components of the

research process that underlie the construction of a good research paper. This discussion should help students identify methods and sources to complete their research. We will also discuss historians' reading and note-taking strategies.

**Week 8: Oct. 16 Interpreting the Past, Revising Past Interpretations:
 Oct. 18 Reading and Evaluating Historical Scholarship**

Topics:

Oct. 16 and 18: This week we will gain practice in identifying the historian's arguments, evaluating the historian's evidence, assessing the historian's methodology, and understanding historiographic revision as central to historical analysis.

Reading assignment: Read Sanchez, entire book; read/review Brundage, pp. 17-20, 71-75 and Rampolla, pp. 14-16, 31-33.

Writing assignment; due on Oct. 18: Complete a critical review of Sanchez's book using the critical review handout (to be distributed in class on Oct. 11). You will be expected to identify and evaluate the book's purpose, subject, and scope; major arguments and sub-points; structure and organization; methodology (approach to gathering and evaluating primary sources); evidence; conceptual framework/theoretical assumptions/point of view; contribution(s) to historiography; and usefulness for understanding 20th century American history.

Class discussion for Oct. 16 and 18: We will use Sanchez's book to discuss the central elements in historical scholarship (listed above) and how to identify them. In so doing, we will ask how historians are able to interpret the evidence they find. We will then utilize your critical reviews, as well as several published reviews distributed in class, to assess the contributions and shortcomings of Sanchez's work. We will think about how historical scholarship can be appropriately and usefully evaluated.

**Week 9 Oct. 23 Finding and Evaluating Historical Evidence:
 Oct. 25 Discussion of Primary Source Research**

Reading assignment: Read/review Brundage, pp. 17-20, 79 and Rampolla, pp. 9-13, 17-24; selections from interview with Gordon in Visions of History (on electronic reserve); excerpt from Limerick, "The Unleashing of the Western Public Intellectual" (on electronic reserve); and Marius, "Thinking About History," (on electronic reserve).

Recommended Reading: Wexler, "Emma Goldman and the Anxiety of Biography" in Alpern, ed., The Challenge of Feminist Biography (book on reserve).

Writing assignment; due Oct. 25: Write a 3 page report on a major primary source for your research project (e.g. a manuscript collection, a newspaper, an autobiography). Describe the nature of the source, its scope, size, and accessibility. Explore its reliability,

point of view, and potential biases (this involves thinking about who produced the source and for what purposes, and about how representative the source might be). Discuss how the source might help you answer the question(s) you've developed for the research paper. Does this source raise questions that you will need to explore through other primary sources? Attach a list of the all of the primary sources you have identified thus far in your research.

Class discussion for Oct. 23 and 25: First, students will report on their archive visits and main primary sources. Then we will explore the process of evaluating primary sources by reading and discussing several sample documents I will provide. Think about the following questions. What problems can archival research pose? What types of primary sources have you found the most useful for your research project? Why have they proven useful? How can you evaluate primary sources for representativeness, reliability, perspective, and/or bias? Why is it important to understand and acknowledge the “partial” perspective your sources can offer? Must you compensate for this partiality and how can you do so? In order to discern how your documents would have been understood in their own time (their contemporary meanings and messages), what do you need to know about the larger historical contexts in which they were produced?

**Week 10 Oct. 30 Interpreting Historical Evidence:
 Nov. 1 Discussion of Secondary Sources**

Reading assignment: Review Rampolla, pp. 14-16, 31-33; read Ware, “Unlocking the Porter-Dewson Partnership: A Challenge for the Feminist Biographer” (on electronic reserve); read secondary source (book) for research paper.

Writing assignment; due Nov. 1: Write a 4 page critical book review of one of the secondary sources for your paper, the one that you feel at this point is the most important. Do not simply summarize the book, but analyze it as you did the Sanchez monograph. First, discuss how the book addresses your research topic. Then identify and evaluate the book’s arguments, methodology, evidence, and conceptual framework. Explore its contributions to the historiography. Assess its usefulness – in terms of providing you with historical context, assisting your interpretation of your primary sources, and/or raising new questions for your research. Finally, discuss what reading this book taught you about how historians interpret primary sources and develop their arguments.

Class discussion for Oct. 30: Come to class prepared to discuss how your secondary source has shaped your thinking about your research project. What did you learn about the historiography, conceptual approaches to your topic, primary sources, methodologies, and historical context? In addition, think about what this book taught you about how historical scholarship is produced. What did you learn about the process by which historians interpret evidence and construct arguments? How do historians incorporate arguments, information, and quotations into their writing?

Documentary Film on Nov. 1: “Indians, Outlaws, and Angie Debo”

Writing assignment; due Dec. 20: The final draft of the research paper is due by 2:00 sharp in the instructor's office (Science 265). Submit two copies of the final draft. Attach the first draft of your research paper with my comments. If we do not need to meet on Dec. 20 for the last of the presentations, I will be in my office from 10:45-1:15 to accept the final drafts.

Grading:

<i>Assignment:</i>	<i>Percentage of Grade:</i>
Class attendance and participation	20%
“New” social history paper (9/6)	5%
Historical journal report (9/13)	5%
Research project proposal (10/4)	5%
Historiographic analysis (10/11)	5%
Critical review of Sanchez book (10/18)	5%
Primary source report (10/25)	5%
Secondary source book review (11/1)	5%
Annotated bibliography (11/8)	5%
Research paper preliminary outline (11/13-11/16)	5%
Rough draft of research paper (11/27)	5%
Critique of student partner's research paper (12/4)	5%
Oral presentation of research findings (11/27, 11/29, 12/4, 12/6, 12/11, 12/13 and perhaps 12/20)	5%
Basic Information Competence Requirement certificate (12/13) Optional; extra credit	(5% of A work)
Final draft of research paper (12/20)	20%
Total	100%

All written assignments must be typed, double-spaced, paginated, and stapled in the upper left-hand corner. Written work will be evaluated for both content and composition, so be sure to use your word processing program's spell checker and to watch for errors in grammar and form. If you cannot turn in an assignment on time, contact me immediately (preferably before the assignment is due). Late assignments due on or before Nov. 8 must be completed within two weeks of the due date; after Nov. 8 assignments must be turned in as soon as possible. **This late assignment policy allows some flexibility, but students are still required to turn in most of their assignments on time.** Assignments that are not completed will receive a failing grade and this can seriously affect your overall course grade. But if you fail to complete the research paper (rough and/or final drafts), you cannot receive a passing grade in the course. Remember to keep a hard copy of all assignments you turn in.

Because this is a seminar, class attendance is required. More than two absences will affect your grade. Do not cut class because you don't have an assignment that is due. If possible, phone or e-mail me in advance if you cannot attend class. You are expected to arrive on time and to stay for the entire class period; if you consistently arrive late or leave early your grade will be affected. Finally, you will also be evaluated on the quality of your participation – everyone is expected to contribute not only to the substance of our discussions, but to the construction of a respectful, supportive, and enthusiastic environment in which those discussions can flourish. Attendance will basically be graded as follows: 0-2 absences (A); 3-4 absences (B); 5-6 absences (C); 7 absences (D); more than 7 absences (F). But the quality of participation will be factored in as well.

If you cannot finish the course requirements by the end of the semester, it is your responsibility either to withdraw from the course or receive my permission (and file the paperwork) for an incomplete. I will not issue instructor-initiated withdrawals.