

HIS 5939-345H—Spring 2019

Second-Year Seminar

Keene-Flint 13/Monday 11:45-2:45

Jack E. Davis

Ofc Hours: W & F 11:30-1:00

273-3398/Keeme-Flint 235

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Think of this course as a workshop on the basic mechanics of the history profession: research, writing, and critical thought. The central idea behind the second-year seminar is to properly hone the skills necessary for successful completion of graduate school's most demanding writing assignments. The PhD dissertation, as the MA thesis or non-thesis paper, is a mere embarkation point into the larger profession, which requires the practitioner to undertake long- and short-forms of writing. Keeping to a strict word limit is arguably more challenging than prolixity. The 17th-century French mathematician and theologian Blaise Pascal once wrote a fellow clergyman, "I only made this letter longer because I had not the leisure to make it shorter." A century later, Ben Franklin offered his own version of the same idea, apologizing in a letter, "I have already made this paper too long, for which I must crave pardon, not having time to make it shorter." Less apologetic but more briefly, Henry David Thoreau wrote, "Not that the story need be long, but it will take a long while to make shorter."

The final assignment for the course will require you to complete a long paper of original research. Leading up to that point, you will undertake a number of one- and two-page writing assignments. Shorter papers will enable a focused evaluation of your work, evaluation undertaken by your professor and classmates alike, and, if we achieve our goals in this seminar, advance your skills as a researcher, writer, and thinker before tackling the final assignment.

Course Requirements:

Class participation (attendance and discussion and evaluation contributions)	20%
Short papers (4x15%)	60%
Long paper	20%

Assigned Books:

William Strunk and E. B. White, *The Elements of Style*

Ann Curthoys and Ann McGrath, *How to Write History that People Want to Read*

January 7: Cogitating a Few Things

Patricia Limerick, "Dancing with Professors"

Eva Goldstein, “The Academy is Largely Itself Responsible for Its Own Peril” (look for rebuttals on social media and elsewhere)

Jerry Muller, "Style is not a Luxury Option"

Laura Mitchell, "Beyond Tense"

Gordon Wood, "In Defense of Academic History Writing"

Victoria Clayton, "The Needless Complexity of Academic Writing"

January 14: Think, Write, and Rewrite . . . Rewrite, Rewrite

*One-page writing assignment: Is History a Craft or Art, and What is its Purpose? (hint: Fischer on the dichotomous question, and Patchett on shoulders) (Important Announcement: write all papers in third person)

Strunk and White, chapter 2.

January 21: (MLK Day)

January 28: Rats in the Archives, Dogs in the Databases

Curthoys and McGrath, chapters 1-3

Judith Walkowitz, “On Taking Notes”

Brad Gregory, “Managing the Terror”

Katie Hafner, “History, Digitized (and Abridged)”

Jill Lepore, “Birth Control in the Cabinet: Planned Parenthood in the Archives”

(Come prepared to share a memorable and edifying research story)

February 4: What’s that You Said?

*Two-page paper on the importance of knowing and respecting your audience.

Strunk and White, chapter 1.

Jill Lepore, “An American King: Noah Webster’s Holy Bible”

February 11: In Search of Voice and an Introduction

Don Fry, “Analyzing Faulkner’s Voice”

Curthoys and McGrath, chapters 6, 8 & 9

February 18: So You Propose . . .

Zachary Schrag, “How to Write a Prospectus”

Brown University, “Prospectus Writing Tips”

Ann Lamott, “Shitty First Drafts”

February 25: Now Write It

*Two-page introduction to your forthcoming prospectus

Strunk and White, chapters 3 & 4

March 4: Spring Break

March 11: Interpret This

Dan Malouff, “Here are Five Street Signs”

Suzannah Lipscomb, “A Question of Interpretation”

UCLA History, “Historical Analysis and Interpretation”

Carleton College, “How to Analyze a Primary Source”

(electronic version of your prospectus draft—including literature review and bibliography—due to me by email in Word file attachment)

March 18: Style, Structure, and Narrative; or Reach, Rigor, and Resonance

Rumer Godden, “Find the Right Word”

Curthoys and McGrath, chapter 7

John McPhee, “Structure”

March 25: Let’s Talk

Individual meetings to discuss your prospectus and paper

April 1: Book Review

*Write a 500-word review of an academic monograph of your choice. Bring the final and all edited versions of the review showing track changes. The review should do the following: identify the central argument and the historiographic place of the book; summarize the book around its supporting arguments or themes; and evaluate the quality of the research and presentation (meaning organization and writing).

April 8: Correcting the Past, and Editing the Present

Jill Lepore, “President Tom’s Cabin”

Curthoys and McGrath, chapter 11

Strunk and White, chapter 5

Penultimate draft of your final paper due

April 15: Penultimate

Individual meetings to discuss your penultimate draft

April 22: The Last Hurrah

Final version of your paper due

General Business:

Plagiarism:

Keep in mind that your written assignments must represent original work. You cannot copy the words, phrases, arguments, ideas, and conclusions of someone else or of another source (including Internet sources) without giving proper credit to the person or source by using quotation marks and a foot note. Do not cobble together paragraphs or passages of separate texts and then try to claim that you have done original and legitimate work. You must write with your own ideas and in your own words. If you copy the words of someone else without putting those words in quotation marks, REGARDLESS OF CITING THE SOURCE, you are plagiarizing. Plagiarism is theft, and it is academic dishonesty. Plagiarism is grounds for an automatic failing grade in the course, a grade that is final and that cannot be made up. If you have any questions about how you are citing or using sources, come to me for the answers. Please also review the university's honesty policy at:

{<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.htm>}. <C:\Users\Owner\Google Drive\courses\Second-Year Seminar\http:\>

Classroom Assistance:

Please do not hesitate to contact the instructor during the semester if you have any individual concerns or issues that need to be discussed. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office {<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drp/>}. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide that documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

UF Grading Scale

This is the university's grading scale, which gives the 4.0 ranking for the letter grade you earn in the class based on the course's numeric scale cited above.

- A = 4.0
- A- = 3.67
- B+ = 3.33
- B = 3.0
- B- = 2.67
- C+ = 2.33
- C = 2.0
- C- = 1.67
- D+ = 1.33
- D = 1.0
- D- = 0.67
- E = 0.0

E1 = 0.0 Stopped attending or participating prior to end of class

I (incomplete) = 0.0

Note: A grade of C– is not a qualifying grade for major, minor, Gen Ed, or College Basic distribution credit. For further information on UF's Grading Policy, see:

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

<http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>

Course Evaluation:

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.