

SENIOR SEMINAR
History 4820 • Section 10 (50154)
T/TH, 11:00 – 12:15, 107 CENTRAL CLASSROOM BLDG.

Dr. Shelby M. Balik
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office: 211 Central Classroom
office hours: T/Th, 12:30-1:30 p.m.,
3:30-5:00 p.m.

If history were only about “what happened,” it would be easy to write. But however historians strive to portray the past definitively and objectively, their work is subject both to available primary sources and the prevailing discourses of their own times. In this course, we will examine the practice of history from two different angles. First, we will consider historiography – the “history of history” – by exploring the rise of the historical profession and the central philosophies and debates that have driven the discipline. Second, we will explore the nuts and bolts of doing historical research by doing history ourselves; by the end of the semester, each student will produce a polished and substantial work of original research and analysis. For the research component of the course, we will work within the framework of historical memory: a historical subfield that will allow students to tackle a broad range of topics by using different kinds of sources and methods. In doing so, you will understand through experience how widely divergent theories and methodologies have guided historians’ efforts to reconstruct the past.

Required Readings: The following books will be available at the Auraria Bookstore (bargain-hunters should also try the selection of used books on Amazon.com and Bookfinder.com, but make sure you get the right editions). I have also placed copies on reserve at the library.

Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacob, *Telling the Truth About History* (1995)
Margaret MacMillan, *Dangerous Games: The Uses and Abuses of History* (2010)
Robert C. Williams, *Historian’s Toolbox: A Student’s Guide to the Theory and Craft of History*, third edition (2011)

The following book is recommended but not required:

Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (2007)

Assignments, Grading, and Course Policies: The course requirements and their value toward your grade are as follows. *You must complete all of these components in order to pass.*

Attendance and participation: 15%
Final paper: 50%

Preliminary paper assignments: 35%

Attendance policy: I expect regular attendance and will take roll. Everyone is allowed two “byes” – an unexplained absence – in the class. After that, any absences – except in the case of legitimate and documented emergencies, medical or otherwise – will detract from the attendance/participation portion of your grade. You are responsible for making up the work you miss during any absence, excused or otherwise. Classes will generally include a combination of discussion and student presentation. Your level of preparation and participation will both improve the quality of class meetings and boost your participation grade. It should go without saying (but often doesn’t) that when you attend class, you will refrain from disruptive behavior, including (but not limited to) talking amongst yourselves, reading the newspaper, or text messaging. **Please turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices before you enter the classroom.**

Preliminary paper assignments: You will have a series of assignments intended to help you progress through the writing and research process. These will include a topic proposal, an annotated bibliography of primary sources, a historiographic essay, a section draft, and a rough draft, which will represent the complete outline

of your paper (no sections missing) and will incorporate your primary and secondary research. Together, all of these assignments will count as 35% of your grade. *You must complete each step before moving on to the next.* This means that late work can have a domino effect by preventing you from completing (and earning credit for) subsequent course assignments. Don't fall into that trap.

Final paper: Your final paper will be 15-20-page work of original research. Your project can cover any place or chronological period (barring recent decades, which we cannot analyze historically yet), but it must take up the general topic of historical memory. I expect that this work will represent your best and most polished writing and thinking, make an analytical argument and support that argument through a well-organized analysis, make extensive use of primary sources, and include some historiographic discussion of the relevant scholarship. Over the course of the semester, you will receive more information on the paper assignment. *Your final paper must be submitted to Safe Assign and to me in hard copy to receive credit.*

Deadlines: All papers are due at the beginning of class, unless otherwise noted. Late papers will be graded down one-third of a grade (A to A-, etc.) for every day they are late, starting after the beginning of class. Papers will not be accepted late or via e-mail, except with a valid excuse (medical or family emergency, etc.) AND prior approval from me.

Special Needs: Students who need accommodations – for disability, religious observance, military service, or any other reason – should let me know within the first two weeks of class.

Cheating and plagiarism: Either offense is grounds for a zero on the assignment and failure in the course. If you are unsure of what constitutes cheating or plagiarism, I strongly encourage you to check with me *before* you hand in your assignment. Please also note that any student who cannot or will not produce the notes, outlines, and other preparatory work for his or her paper will be considered guilty of cheating or plagiarism and subject to the same penalties. The policy in this class is quite simple and is as follows. In the first documented instance of academic dishonesty (as described in the University guidelines, linked below), the student will receive a zero on the assignment. In the second instance, the student will fail the class. All code of conduct violations will be reported.

Metro State's Academic Integrity Statement: "As students, faculty, staff and administrators of Metropolitan State University of Denver, it is our responsibility to uphold and maintain an academic environment that furthers scholarly inquiry, creative activity and the application of knowledge. We will not tolerate academic dishonesty. We will demonstrate honesty and integrity in all activities related to our learning and scholarship. We will not plagiarize, fabricate information or data, cheat on tests or exams, steal academic material, or submit work to more than one class without full disclosure."

For more information on academic dishonesty, see

<https://www.msudenver.edu/deanofstudents/studentconduct/academicintegrity/academicdishonesty/>

For more information, please see the information on LAS policies and deadlines posted in the "Syllabus and Policies" folder on Blackboard.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

(subject to change)

Readings marked with an asterisk (*) are available in the "Assigned Readings" folder on Blackboard.

WEEK ONE: August 22-26

Readings: * Peter N, Stearns, "Why Study History?"

* John Fea, "What do Historians Do?" and "In Search of a Usable Past," from *Why Study History: Reflecting on the Importance of the Past* (Baker Academic, 2013)

* Thomas Andrews and Flannery Burke, "What Does It Mean to Think Historically?"

* *The Onion* on historians

Dangerous Games, introduction and chapters 1-2

* Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, chapter 1

August 23: Introductions

History: Why should we care?

August 25: The meanings of memory

WEEK TWO: August 29 - September 2

Readings: *Telling the Truth About History*, introduction and Part One

The Historian's Toolbox, chapters 1-3

Dangerous Games, chapter 3

August 30: Library research workshop: *Auraria Library Instruction Lab (rm. 116)*

September 1: Old school history

WEEK THREE: September 5-9

Readings: *Telling the Truth about History*, chapters 4-6

The Historian's Toolbox, chapters 4-5, 9.6, 12.2, 15.2

*Kelman, *A Misplaced Massacre*, chapter 1

*Mulford, "Figuring Benjamin Franklin into American Cultural Memory"

* selections from Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography*

* Lengel, *Inventing George Washington*, chapter 1

September 4: Challenging the canon

September 6: Workshop: Origins of historical memory

WEEK FOUR: September 12-16

Readings: *Historian's Toolbox*, chapter 8.1

**CONFERENCES INSTEAD OF CLASS – SIGN UP FOR YOUR INDIVIDUAL
CONFERENCES WITH ME TO DISCUSS YOUR IDEAS FOR PAPER TOPICS.**

***** TOPIC STATEMENTS DUE (BY E-MAIL) MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 19 *****

WEEK FIVE: September 19-23

Readings: Telling the Truth About History, chapters 7-8
Dangerous Games, chapter 4

September 20: New directions in history

September 22: Workshop: presentation of topics (plan to talk for a few minutes and field questions)

WEEK SIX: September 26-30

Readings: The Historian's Toolbox, chapter 12

* Sean Wilentz, "American Political Histories"

* Robert L. Harris, Jr., "The Changing Contours of African American History during the 20th Century"

* Donald Worster, "The Rise of Environmental History"

* Schocket, *Fighting over the Founders*, introduction

September 25: Workshop: Finding and using primary and secondary sources

September 27: Fields of history and historiography

WEEK SEVEN: October 3-7

Readings: The Historian's Toolbox, chapter 9

Dangerous Games, chapter 5

* Marcus, *Happy Days and Wonder Years*, chapters 1 and 5

* Schocket, *Fighting over the Founders*, chapter 5

October 4: The politics of historical memory

October 6: Workshop: Primary source presentations

***** ANNOTATED LIST OF AT LEAST THREE PRIMARY SOURCES DUE (HARD COPY)
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6 *****

WEEK EIGHT: October 10-14

Readings: Dangerous Games, chapter 6

* Joanne Melish, "Recovering (from) Slavery: Four Struggles to Tell the Truth," from Horton and Horton, eds., *Slavery and Public History*.

* Blight, *Race and Reunion*, chapter 9

* Coontz, *The Way We Never Were*, chapter 2

* Tetrault, *The Myth of Seneca Falls*, chapter 4

October 11: Race in historical memory

October 13: Gender in historical memory

***** HISTORIOGRAPHIC ESSAY DUE (HARD COPY) THURSDAY, OCTOBER 11 *****

WEEK NINE: October 17-21

Readings: The Historian's Toolbox, chapters 10 and 20

Dangerous Games, chapter 7

* Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, chapter 4

* Blight, *Race and Reunion*, chapter 3

* Bodnar, *The Good War in American Memory*, chapter 5

* Andrew Lynch on Medieval War in Modern Memory (podcast)

* Danny Postel, "Did the Shootouts over 'Arming America' Divert Attention from the Real Issues?"

* Joyce Lee Malcolm, "Disarming History"

* Jerome L. Sternstein, "Historical Fraud and the Seduction of Ideas"

* "Historians on the Hot Seat"

October 18: Historical memory of war

October 20: Workshop: Historians behaving badly

WEEK TEN: October 24-28

Readings: The Historian's Toolbox, chapters 11 and 13

Dangerous Games, chapter 8, conclusion

* Handler and Gable, *The New History in an Old Museum*, chapter 5

* Sturken, *Tourists of History*, chapter 4

* Wallace, "Mickey Mouse History: Portraying the Past at Disney World," in *Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory*

* William Cronon, "A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative"

October 25: How popular culture creates collective memory

October 27: Workshop: Telling stories

***** SECTION DRAFT DUE (BY E-MAIL) FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27 *****

WEEK ELEVEN: October 31 - November 4

Readings: None – work on your papers.

NO CLASS – ALLOTTED TIME TO WRAP UP RESEARCH AND WRITING ROUGH DRAFTS.

WEEK TWELVE: November 7-11

Readings: None – work on your papers.

November 8: No class (work on your rough drafts). **AND VOTE!!!**

November 10: Peer review of rough drafts

***** ROUGH DRAFTS OF FINAL PAPERS DUE NOVEMBER 10 (BRING TWO HARD COPIES TO CLASS.) STUDENTS WHO ARRIVE LATE TO CLASS ARE NOT GUARANTEED A PEER REVIEW PARTNER. KEEP IN MIND THAT PEER REVIEW IS A REQUIREMENT FOR THIS PAPER. *****

WEEK THIRTEEN: November 14-18

Readings: None – work on your papers

CONFERENCES INSTEAD OF CLASS – Sign up for your individual paper conference with me during the week of November 14-18.

WEEK FOURTEEN: November 21-25 – NO CLASS (THANKSGIVING BREAK)

WEEK FIFTEEN: November 28 - December 2

NO CLASS – ALLOTTED TIME TO WRAP UP RESEARCH AND WRITING ROUGH DRAFTS.

Sign up for a presentation date for week 16.

WEEK SIXTEEN: December 5-9

Readings: None – work on your papers

December 6: Final paper presentations (plan to talk for about 5 minutes)

December 8: Final paper presentations (plan to talk for about 5 minutes)

***** FINAL PAPERS DUE THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8. BRING ONE HARD COPY TO CLASS AND SUBMIT YOUR FINAL DRAFT ON SAFE ASSIGN. *****

***** FINAL MEETING (DURING EXAM WEEK): DATE AND TIME TBA *****

- **final papers returned**
- **required paperwork for Senior Experience**
- **quite possibly free food**

SENIOR SEMINAR SCHEDULE OF PRELIMINARY AND FINAL PAPER ASSIGNMENTS

Paper topic conferences (week of September 12-16): You will sign up for a meeting time to talk about possible paper topics and strategies for developing your ideas. Come prepared with concrete ideas for topics.

Topic statement (due Monday, September 19): You should turn in a short paragraph (3-5 sentences) sketching out the topic you plan to explore, the kinds of primary and secondary sources you expect to find, and what big points you expect to make. Your topic statement should demonstrate that you have thought in specific ways about how you will proceed with this project. You may turn this assignment in via e-mail.

Annotated list of three primary sources (due Thursday, October 6): This is part of the primary source presentation, graded separately, but you can think of it as a preliminary paper assignment, as well. You should turn in a list of at least three primary sources that you have located and will use in your paper. Include bibliographic information. For each source, you should write a brief (3-4 sentence) description to explain what it is, why it's relevant, and how you will use it in your paper. Hand in this assignment in hard copy.

Historiographic essay (due Thursday, October 11): You will write a short essay (4-5 pages) in which you explore the historiography of your topic (or part of it). Your essay should focus how different interpretations of your topic (or part of it) have developed over time, and in dialogue with each other. In other words, it makes sense to organize your paper roughly chronologically (or chronologically within sections) to show how historians have built upon and departed from each other's work to develop new interpretations and analytical approaches. If done correctly, you should expect to use parts of this essay in your final paper – either in the introduction, the body, or the footnotes (or, more likely, all of the above). This essay will be based on a *working bibliography*; in other words, you should not assume that you are done with your secondary research when you turn in this assignment. Your essay should include at least *seven* Scholarly (peer-reviewed) sources. Hand in this assignment in hard copy

Section draft (due Thursday, October 27): This assignment has three main parts. First, you should prepare a draft of a section of your paper (about 3-5 pages). Ideally, this would be the part of your paper for which you have your research pretty far along (not the introduction). Second, you should include an outline that shows how and where the section you've drafted fits into the paper. This need not be a paragraph-by-paragraph outline, but it should be more specific than a broad sketch, and it should show analytical structure. And finally, should include your main argument, sketched out in paragraph form. You need not prepare the entire introduction, but you should at least submit a current thesis statement. Hand this assignment in by e-mail.

Rough draft (due Thursday, November 10): This draft should be a reasonably complete effort. It should include all the of the sections of your paper, take a good-faith stab at articulating and developing your main points, and incorporate your full range of primary and secondary evidence. It should be in the rough page range of the final paper assignment, and you should use correct citations. Do the best work you can at this stage of the process, because the more complete this draft is, the more useful my comments will be in helping you polish the final paper. Also, the more effort you devote to this draft, the fewer revisions you will likely have to do for your final draft. *Bring two hard copies to class* (no exceptions).

Rough draft conferences (week of November 14-18): Sign up for a conference slot to discuss your draft. You will get your draft back with my comments during your conference. You must attend your conference to get your draft back and get the go-ahead to work on your final paper.

Final paper (due December 8): These papers should represent your best work and most polished writing and analysis. You will be graded on the quality of the writing, the sharpness of your argument and analysis, the clarity of your organization, and your use of primary and secondary evidence. The final paper should be about 15-20 pages long, with citations (preferably footnotes) in the current Chicago Manual of Style format, and a full bibliography. You will give a brief (5-minute) presentation on your paper on December 7 in class. Turn in the paper in hard copy (no exceptions).

SENIOR SEMINAR WRITING TIPS

The Basics: Every paper should have....

- *a title.* Enough said.
- *a thesis statement.* Your thesis statement (1-2 sentences) should appear toward the end of your introduction. It must make some sort of historical argument, which you will then support with evidence in the rest of your paper. Some examples:

Weak thesis: "This paper will discuss how African Americans' legal status changed in the decades after World War II." [*Describes the topic but makes no argument.*]

Somewhat better: "African Americans' legal status improved dramatically in the decades after World War II." [*Suggests an argument but not the reasoning behind it.*]

Much better: "African Americans' legal status improved dramatically in the decades after World War II, partly due to improved economic opportunities and growing sympathy among whites, but even more due to mounting activism by blacks themselves." [*States a clear argument, and summarizes the reasoning behind it.*]

- *clear paragraph structure.* Your paragraphs should be clear both unto themselves and relative to one another. Each paragraph should begin with a recognizable topic sentence that takes up *one particular point*, which in turn supports your thesis statement. When you are finished making your point, transition to the next paragraph, which should focus on another component of your overall argument. Use transitions to show how your argument builds logically from one paragraph to the next, and how all these points relate to your central argument.
- *a combination of primary and secondary evidence.* Every point you make needs to be backed up with historical evidence from the readings or lectures. You are expected to use the relevant chapter in the *Major Problems* document reader, but you should also use other course readings that apply. *You are not expected to do outside research, but if you do use outside sources, you must include a Works Cited page.* For more on evidence (and correct citation), see below. These papers should focus not just on the documents (the primary evidence), but also on how the details fit into a broader historical context. So, for example, if you are writing about African Americans' struggles after World War II, you might show how one person's recollection of difficulties finding work reflected the broader context of employment discrimination at the time. This secondary evidence should come from course texts, the essays in your document reader, and from lectures (cite accordingly).
- *clear style.* Get to the point, use clear wording, and avoid awkward phrases and sentences. Steer clear of overly formal or informal prose (for example, unnecessarily complicated or elaborate language, colloquialisms or slang, contractions, etc.) Use correct grammar and spelling.

Using Evidence: You must include primary and secondary evidence in order to craft and present a historical argument. Otherwise, it's not a historical argument – it's just an opinion piece. Evidence can include quotes (brief quotes from primary sources only, please), facts, statistics, anecdotes – anything that helps support your argument AND that you can document. Here are a few practical tips on using evidence.

- *Quoting:* When you quote from a source, you must use quotation marks to indicate those portions that you are quoting. You should reproduce the words exactly and use citations to indicate from where they

came. **Quote ONLY primary sources** (that is, sources from the time you are writing about that serve as evidence in your paper). You may quote from a secondary book or article, but only if the portion you are quoting comes from a primary source (so you might, for instance, use a quote from George Washington that appears in a book, but you should not quote the author of that book, who is writing about George Washington.). The reason: when you quote the author of a secondary source, you are letting that person do the historical thinking and analysis for you. In these assignments, *you* must do that work yourself. *The exception: you may quote from secondary sources when engaging in historiographic discussions.*

- *Paraphrasing*: When you paraphrase, you use someone else's idea but explain it in your own words. You must indicate whose idea it is, just as you would for a direct quotation. You should not, though, use the original author's words; you must rephrase it in your own words. If you are paraphrasing, you may use ideas or arguments that historians present in their secondary works, as long as you give credit and synthesize these points in your own argument.
- *Citing your sources*: You should cite all evidence that is not common knowledge, using the Chicago Manual of Style format for footnotes and bibliographies. This includes quotes, little-known facts and anecdotes, and statistics, along with any paraphrasing or reference to someone else's ideas. You will not be penalized for excessive citation, so if you are in doubt, cite it. Citing sources properly is an important matter of academic integrity. If you paraphrase or quote another person's ideas without acknowledgment, you are plagiarizing. This is illegal, unethical, and grounds for a failing grade. Don't do it.

Some Other Things to Do, Questions to Ask, Ideas to Try:

- Please do not begin your first paragraph with some variation of "Throughout time" If it's been true throughout time (and almost nothing of historical consequence has been true forever), then it probably isn't relevant to the specific topic at hand. It's not a bad idea to start with some general perspective, but you should limit your scope to the immediate context of the paper topic (for example, a general statement on slavery during the antebellum era if you're writing about slavery during the antebellum era).
- Does your paper say what you want it to say? Does it say what you think it says? I can't read your mind. The most brilliant thought in the world is of no use if it's only in your head and not on the paper.
- What is your argument? Can you summarize it in a single sentence without looking at your introduction? If not, you need to clarify it some more.
- Have you answered the question? If you've decided to focus on only one part of a question, have you justified that decision in the paper?
- Read the paper aloud. You'd be amazed at how many little mistakes you'll catch and how much this will improve your writing. I should never be the first person to read your paper, nor should I ever be grading the first draft of a paper. Get a friend to read it. Go to the writing center and have an instructor there review it. Put the paper away for a while and then come back to it; time and distance will give you a fresh perspective on it.