

History 440
Senior Research Seminar: Race, Class, and Gender

University of Illinois at Chicago
Behavioral Sciences Building 113

Spring 2018
Thurs. 2-4:50 p.m.

Prof. Jeffrey Sklansky
Office: University Hall 921
Office Hours: Wed. 3:30-4:30 p.m., Thurs. 12:30-1:30 p.m., and by appointment
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Course Description: Along with History 300, History 440 is one of the core courses for history majors at UIC. Its main purpose is to guide students through writing the senior research paper, required of all majors. The paper must be based principally on primary sources, it must make an original argument, and it must reflect a clear and comprehensive understanding of the major secondary scholarship on the topic. This particular section of History 440 focuses on the broad theme of race, class, and gender, considered as categories of historical analysis and as objects of historical study. The first half of the semester will be mainly devoted to working on the basic skills entailed in writing a research paper—reading primary and secondary sources, taking notes, analyzing evidence, formulating an argument, citing sources, writing a first draft, and revising it into a final draft. The second half of the course will be largely devoted to individual work on the papers, individual meetings with the instructor, and oral reports at the end of the semester.

Required Book:

Jim Cullen, *Essaying the Past: How to Read, Write, and Think about History*, 2nd ed. (2013)

Graded Work:

1. *Reading responses* (15 percent of course grade). Students will write three, 2-4-page responses to the required readings on race, class, and gender as historical categories. The goal of the responses is to summarize the key points of the assigned pieces, identify the central problems they identify, discuss what they are arguing both for and against, and explain what you find persuasive or unpersuasive, useful or not useful, and why. Each response paper is worth 5 percent of the course grade.
2. *Proposal and bibliography* (5 percent of course grade.) A 2-3-page proposal and prospective bibliography for the research paper is due in the fifth week of class, on Feb. 15. The proposal should describe in some detail the topic you plan to study, identify the main interpretive question(s) you aim to address, identify the main areas of previous scholarship relevant to your paper, explain your motive and rationale for undertaking this study, and describe how you plan to answer the question(s) you have set for yourself. The bibliography should include at least three primary sources and three secondary sources, either published articles or books.
3. *Progress report* (5 percent of course grade.) A 1-2-page progress report on your work for the research paper is due in the tenth week of class, on March 22. The report should describe in some detail what you have done since handing in your proposal and bibliography, what surprises or

discoveries you have made, what challenges or problems you are facing, and what remains to be done before handing in your first draft.

4. *First draft* (10 percent of course grade). A complete first draft of the research paper is due in the eleventh week of class, on April 5. You should proofread your draft before handing it in.

5. *Oral presentation* (10 percent of course grade). In the last two weeks of the semester, students will present 10-15-minute oral reports on their research papers to the class.

6. *Final paper* (45 percent of course grade). The final paper is due on the last day of class, May 3. It must be 12-15 pages (double-spaced, in 12-point font).

7. *Participation* (10 percent of course grade). All students are expected to participate consistently and actively in class discussion. A grade of “C” will be given for consistent attendance, with no more than two unexcused absences; a grade of “B” for consistent participation; and a grade of “A” for especially well-prepared and active participation throughout the semester.

Late papers: All written work is due at the beginning of class on the day it is due. Late papers will be graded down by one-third of a grade per day late: in other words, an A becomes an A-, then a B+, then a B.

Academic Honesty: All assignments that you turn in must be strictly your own work. It is essential that you cite fully and specifically any and all sources and resources, of any kind, that you use. Any instances of academic dishonesty or plagiarism will result in a grade of “F” for the assignment and will be reported to the Dean of Students.

Students with Disabilities: If you are a student with a documented disability and require special arrangements or accommodations, please let me know as soon as possible. I will be happy to make an appointment to meet with you.

Schedule of Topics, Assignments, and Readings

All required readings other than those from *Essaying the Past* will be posted on Blackboard.

Week 1 (Jan. 18): Introductions and Thinking Historically

Reading: *Essaying the Past*, 1-36.

Week 2 (Jan. 25): Race as a Category of Historical Analysis—First Reading Response Due

Reading: Barbara J. Fields, “Slavery, Race, and Ideology in the United States of America”;

Thomas C. Holt, “Marking: Race, Race-Making, and the Writing of History”

Week 3 (Feb. 1): Reading Historically and Analyzing Primary Sources—Bring One Primary Source to Share and Discuss

Reading: *Essaying the Past*, 37-71; David L. Ransel, “The Ability to Recognize a Good Source”; Judith Walkowitz, “On Taking Notes”

Week 4 (Feb. 8): Library Research Workshop—Class Meets in the Daley Library IDEA Commons Classroom (1-010).

Week 5 (Feb. 15): No Class—Proposals and Bibliographies Due

Week 6 (Feb. 22): Class as a Category of Historical Analysis—Second Reading Response Due
Reading: Seth Rockman, “Class and the History of Working People in the Early Republic”; Sonya Rose, “Class Formation and the Quintessential Worker”

Week 7 (March 1): No Class—Work on Research Papers

Week 8 (March 8): Writing Historically and Critiquing Secondary Sources—Bring One Secondary Source to Share and Discuss
Reading: *Essaying the Past*, 71-119; Lynn Hunt, “How Writing Leads to Thinking”; Deborah Harkness, “Finding the Story”

Week 9 (March 15): Gender as a Category of Historical Analysis—Third Reading Response Due
Reading: Joan W. Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis”; Joanne Meyerowitz, “A History of ‘Gender’”

Week 10 (March 22): Short Reports on Research Projects—Progress Reports Due
Reading: *Essaying the Past*, 120-163; 173-192; Exercises on Summarizing, Paraphrasing, Quoting, Citing, and Plagiarism

Spring Break (March 29)

Week 11 (April 5): Meet with Peer Editors in Class—First Drafts Due

Week 12 (April 12): Individual Meetings with Instructor

Week 13 (April 19): Turning Rough Drafts into Final Drafts

Week 14 (April 26): Oral Presentations

Week 15 (May 3): Oral Presentations—Final Papers Due