Administrative Unit: History and Social Sciences

Course Prefix and Number: HIST 490

Course Title: Historiography

Number of: Credit Hours: 3
Lecture Hours: 3
Laboratory Hours: 0

Catalog Description: Historiography is a proseminar on the works of historians from antiquity to the present. It provides participants an opportunity to study significant historical fields of inquiry and to consider how historians have dealt with such concerns as the cause of events, the reliability of evidence, and the citation of sources. All participants develop a proposal for a senior thesis on a historical topic. The proseminar is required of all history majors. Prerequisite: Three previous courses in history. Offered Fall.

Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): Three previous courses in history.

Text(s): Choose at least one of the following:

Choose at least one of the following:

Additional monographs of readers may be assigned as appropriate.
Course Objectives:

• To think seriously and systematically about history as a discipline shaped by many and often contradictory concerns.
• To analyze a selection of significant historical writings culled from the works of ancient, medieval, and/or modern historians.
• To master the knowledge, theories, and skills for properly researching a historical topic.

Measurable Learning Outcomes:

• Demonstrate knowledge about the scholarly literature of American and world history.
• Criticize a major school of history and its approach to historical methods.
• Summarize the best practices of great historians in the past and in the present.
• Identify appropriate primary sources on a historical topic.
• Demonstrate the ability to detect assumptions, bias, and opinions in secondary source materials on controversial issues in the past.
• Produce a literature review and a research prospectus using the Chicago Style.
• Evaluate the strengths and the weaknesses of a historical field of inquiry.
• Demonstrate an understanding of an essential question for historical research.

Topical Outline (major areas of coverage):

Instructors should introduce participants to various tools—practical and theoretical—that historians have used in their work as well as current approaches to the study of the past. Each participant must progress through the various stages of historical inquiry, that is, exploring possible interests, identifying a worthy topic, studying books and journals, locating documents and data, determining a particular angle, formulating a hypothesis, and crafting a prospectus. The process must include, but not be limited to, the writing of a proposal at least 2,000 words in length on a topic for development in the culminating seminar for the history major. Instructors should organize the proseminar meetings to focus upon the traditions and the practices that are indispensable for the study of history as a discipline. Topics should include, but not be limited to, the following:

• The profession of history
• Early historical epics from around the world
• The Greco-Roman traditions of historical writing
• Judaic-Christian jeremiads
• The Middle Ages and scholasticism
• The Renaissance humanists
• Enlightenment and the craft of research
• The rise of romanticism and nationalism
• History and the social sciences
• The Germanization of the academy
• The Chicago Manual of Style
• Varieties of modern history
• Postmodernity, discourse, and metanarratives
• The future of the past
Recommended maximum class size for this course:  15

Library Resources: Online databases are available at http://www.ccis.edu/offices/library/resources.asp. You may access them from off-campus using your eServices login and password when prompted.

Prepared by:  Brad D. Lookingbill

Date:  April 1, 2005

NOTE:  The intention of the master syllabus is to provide an outline of the contents of this course, as specified by the faculty of Columbia College, regardless of who teaches the course, when it is taught or where it is taught.  Faculty members teaching this course for Columbia College are expected to facilitate learning pursuant to the course objectives and cover the subjects listed in the topical outline.  However, instructors are also encouraged to cover additional topics of interest so long as those topics are relevant to the course’s subject.  The master syllabus is, therefore, prescriptive in nature but also allows for a diversity of individual approaches to course material.

Office of Academic Affairs
12/04