INTRODUCTION TO HISTORICAL RESEARCH AND WRITING
History 4000, Fall 2016
Tuesdays, 12:20-2:15, Rockefeller 189.

Prof. Aaron Sachs (as475@cornell.edu)
Phone: (6) 255-1978
Office Hours: McGraw 350, Mon. 2-4pm and by appointment.

This seminar is an introduction to the theory, practice, and art of historical research and writing. One key purpose of this course is to prepare students to work on longer research projects—especially an Honors Thesis. We will analyze the relationship between evidence and argument in historical writing; assess the methods and possible biases in various examples of historical writing; identify debates and sources relevant to research problems; think about how to use sources creatively; and discuss the various methodological issues associated with historical inquiry, analysis, and presentation.

NOTE: this course is required for all students wishing to write an Honors Thesis when they are seniors (i.e., if you are an aspiring Honors Student, make sure to take this course BEFORE your senior year). BUT: you do NOT need to apply to the Honors Program in order to sign up for this course, and taking this course does not represent a commitment to write a thesis. Most students take this course in their junior year, but it is open to anyone, including non-majors. If you are considering the Honors Program and also hoping to go abroad for your junior year, then you should take this course as a sophomore.

Requirements: All readings listed on the syllabus; Active participation in discussions; All papers listed on the syllabus. Please contact me immediately (in advance, whenever possible) about any class you have to miss. You can make up the work from a missed class by turning in a two-page response paper to the appropriate readings within one week of your absence. This should be an analytical essay and NOT a simple summary. NOTE: especially given how infrequently this class meets, I’m hoping for perfect attendance from everyone.

ALSO PLEASE NOTE: I have a no-electronic-devices policy in the classroom.

Grading: This is a reading- and writing-intensive course. They key to its success is your active engagement and participation, and your grades will be assigned accordingly. Overall participation will determine 25% of your final grade. Paper #1 is worth 10% of your grade, and papers #2 and #3 are worth 15% each. The final paper is worth 35%. Please understand: regardless of these percentages, it is impossible to pass this course without turning in all the required assignments. In other words, it is not acceptable to skip a paper and simply take a “zero” on it. Out of fairness to everyone in the class, you must complete all the papers (even if they’re late), or you will receive a failing grade for the semester. Also, any case of plagiarism will automatically receive a failing grade and may result in a failing grade for the entire semester.
The requirements explained further:

*Papers:* Each will have its own assignment sheet and be discussed in class. Again, in fairness to the class as a whole, I ask that you don’t request extensions except under extreme circumstances. Late papers will be marked down by half a grade for every day they’re late.

Paper #2: 4 pages. Discussion of Primary Sources; what is your story?
Paper #3: 4 pages. Discussion of Secondary Sources; what is your historiographic intervention?

*Final Paper (15 pp.):* There are two options for your final paper, and you should think about which one you’d like to pursue at the very beginning of the semester. Either you can write a short historical research paper; OR you can write a prospectus explaining what you anticipate working on for your Honors Thesis. Both options require you to do significant primary and secondary research on your own during the semester, but the paper option has a slightly narrower scope than that of the prospectus.

*A few paper guidelines (to be supplemented later in the semester):*
-- The most common academic problem at Cornell is **plagiarism.** Please make sure that you are well informed on this issue. Use citations whenever necessary; follow an established citation format; and be consistent in the format you choose. Always leave yourself plenty of time to complete assignments. And don’t rely uncritically on the internet. Wikipedia is generally not an acceptable resource for the purposes of this class. If you ever have any questions about citations, talk to me or a librarian, or visit the library’s webpage and check out the link to “citation management,” which will also give you the university’s full academic integrity policy.
--Always number your pages.
--On the first page, include your name, my name, the name and number of the course, the name and number of the assignment, the date, and the title of your paper. Use a title that actually means something.
--Always double-space your papers and leave at least one-inch margins.
--Make sure your paper is not too long or too short.
--**PROOFREAD.** Leave yourself plenty of time to read and revise your work. Even better, trade papers with a classmate and get his/her comments and corrections. **DO NOT RELY ON A COMPUTER’S SPELLING/GRAMMAR CHECK.** Your paper grades WILL be affected by stylistic problems such as spelling and grammar errors.
--I prefer two-sided printing/copying, if possible.

**WEEKLY TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS:**
*Note: Readings are listed under the sessions when they will be discussed—but you’ll want to start them several days in advance whenever possible.*
**Week One.**
**Tuesday, August 23rd. Introduction.**
—Assignment for Paper #1 handed out in class.
--Reading for next week handed out in class.
--Order your books right away (or visit Buffalo Street Books).

**Week Two. Your Worldview in Context.**
**Tuesday, August 30th.**
*Paper #1 due in class. PLEASE BRING TWO COPIES.*
--Jonathan Holloway, excerpt from *Jim Crow Wisdom* (2013)
BOOK DELIVERY

**Week Three. The Art of Historical Analysis.**
**Tuesday, September 6th.**
--Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre*

**SPECIAL EVENT: SCREENING OF THE RETURN OF MARTIN GUERRE**
**MONDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 12TH, 7PM, MCGRAW 366.**
(REQUIRED)

**Week Four. Scholarly Debate.**
**Tuesday, September 13th.**

**Week Five. Making Sense of Archival Materials.**
**Tuesday, September 20th.**
--Michael Lesy, *Wisconsin Death Trip*
--Paper assignment #2 handed out.

**Week Six. LIBRARY SESSION.**
**Tuesday, September 27th.**

**Week Seven. Your Primary Sources.**
**Tuesday, October 4th.**
*Paper #2 due in class.*
Week Eight.
Tuesday, October 11th. NO CLASS: FALL BREAK. ENJOY!

Week Nine. History and Memory/The Politics of History.
Tuesday, October 18th.
--Michel-Rolph Trouillot, Silencing the Past
--Assignment for Paper #3 handed out.

Week Ten. Foucault vs. De Certeau.
Tuesday, October 25th.
--Foucault, excerpts from Discipline and Punish. (Packet)
--De Certeau, excerpt from The Practice of Everyday Life. (Packet)

Week Eleven. An All-encompassing Individualism (Foucauldian history)
Tuesday, November 1st.
--Cotten Seiler, Republic of Drivers
--Final Paper Assignment handed out.

Week Twelve. Do Individuals Matter? (De Certeauian history)
Tuesday, November 8th.
--Douglas Sackman, Wild Men

Week Thirteen. Your Secondary Sources.
Tuesday, November 15th.
--Paper #3 due in class.

Week Fourteen. Models.
Tuesday, November 22nd.
--Jill Lepore, The Mansion of Happiness

Week Fifteen. On Writing.
Tuesday, November 29th.
--Verlyn Klinkenborg, Several Short Sentences about Writing (first 100 pages)

--FINAL PAPERS DUE ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2ND, AT NOON!

PURCHASING BOOKS

I've ordered all of the books NOT at the Cornell Store but rather at Ithaca's only independent (and cooperatively owned) bookstore, Buffalo Street Books. Store details:

The books are already in stock at the store, and you are welcome to shop there whenever you’d like. **But also please note that you can have the books delivered to you at the second meeting of this class, on Tuesday, August 30th, at 12:20, in Rockefeller 189.** To have the books delivered in class, all you have to do is go to the store’s website and place your order. There is no delivery charge, and NO TAX. Here’s the appropriate link: http://www.buffalostreetbooks.com/#!students/cuiy

It’s fine to pursue used copies, but please try to get the right edition of each book, since we'll be referring to the text frequently in class, and I’d like everyone to have the same pagination if possible. These books will also be available on the Cornell library system as “networked resources” or on 2-hour reserve at Uris Library; for the most part, I was able to put the correct edition on reserve, though in some cases it was not available. **Please bring the actual book to class when we are scheduled to discuss it. If you read a book on reserve, then please bring precise notes with you to class.**

The complete list of books for the course is below. Again, the course number is History 4000, and you can order any or all of these titles for delivery.

Michael Lesy, *Wisconsin Death Trip* (U. New Mexico) 978-0826321930
Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past* (Beacon, 20th anniv. ed.) 978-0807080535
Cotten Seiler, *Republic of Drivers* (U. Chicago) 978-0226745640
Verlyn Klinkenborg, *Several Short Sentences about Writing* (Vintage) 978-0307279415

**NOTE: THERE IS ALSO A SHORT XEROX PACKET FOR THE COURSE TO BE PURCHASED AT THE UPS STORE IN COLLEGETOWN, AT 407 COLLEGE AVE. PLEASE GO TO THE STORE AS SOON AS YOU CAN, ESPECIALLY SINCE THEY MIGHT RUN OUT OF PACKETS, IN WHICH CASE THERE WILL BE A 24-HOUR WAIT WHILE THEY PRINT NEW ONES.** Whenever we will be discussing a reading from the packet, please bring it to class.