



Historian as Detective
History 150
Spring 2002
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TTH 1:30-2:45

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Tuesday
January 22 — Housekeeping Details and Introduction

Thursday
January 24 — Reading *After the Fact*, Intro “Strange Case of Silas Deane”

TEXT AS EVIDENCE 1: Knowledge & Comprehension

We begin by reading a classic detective story and examining the kind of evidence most common to historians: text. We continue by asking ourselves several questions. How do detectives work? What kind of thinking do they engage in? What’s kinds of evidence do they use? How do they determine the validity of that evidence? We turn next to asking those same questions of historians. The goal in this section of the course is to write a solid narrative of a historical event—in this case the story of a crime that occurred on a late summer afternoon on the Chesapeake in 1681.

Tuesday
January 29 — Reading: *A Study in Scarlet*

ASSIGNMENT #1: Arthur Conan Doyle makes several references to historical events in his first novella. Select one of the historical events, persons, or places and, using the library or the web, find out a bit more about your selection.

DISCUSSION: Why does most of the story take place in Utah? How does Sherlock Holmes solve his problems? What does he use?

Thursday
January 31 — Reading: *After the Fact*, Ch. 1 “Serving Time in Virginia”
“Indentured Servant’s Confession, 1684”
<http://www.archiva.net/HIST150AY2002/indentureconf.html>
“Indentured Servitude in the Chesapeake, 1640”
<http://www.archiva.net/HIST150AY2002/indentureches.html>
“Sex in the Chesapeake, 1681”
<http://www.archiva.net/HIST150AY2002/sexchesapeake>

DISCUSSION: One way to begin thinking about a thesis is to place the topic in the “big picture.” With the exception of “Silas Deane,” all the readings address the character and development of indentured

servitude. Come to class prepared to discuss the nature of indenture and how indenture changed between 1623 and 1681. See also the questions attached to each reading.

Tuesday

February 5 — Discussion: Strategies for “Sex in the Chesapeake, 1681” Essay

DISCUSSION: What is the substance of each person’s testimony? Can you infer anything about the disposition of the case from testimony?

ASSIGNMENT #2: Before class, write a draft of first paragraph and bring it to the discussion. Be sure that you have a reasonable introduction and thesis sentence.

Thursday

February 7 — **1st DRAFT DUE: ASSIGNMENT # 1**

Discussion: Peer Review

Tuesday

February 12 — Discussion: Strategies for “Sex in the Chesapeake, 1681” Essay

Discussion: Revision

Thursday,

February 14 — **2nd & FINAL DRAFT DUE: ASSIGNMENT # 1**

IMAGE AS EVIDENCE 2: Knowledge & Comprehension

In this part of the course, we begin with a detective novel set on the Navaho reservation in the American Southwest. Hillerman’s novels are notable for their portrayal of Native American culture and the landscape of the American Southwest. In the process, we will grapple with a different kind of evidence—images—and make a start on understanding the historical variables of race, class, gender, and ethnicity. The goal in this section of the course is gain some mastery of comparison by looking at two landscape images.

Tuesday

February 19 — Reading: *The People of Darkness*

DISCUSSION: Jim Chee is a different kind of detective. How does Chee solve the crime? What does he use to solve crimes? How might a historian think like Chee?

Thursday

February 21 — Reading: *After the Fact*, Ch. 8 “Mirror with a Memory”
Dead Certainties, “The Many Deaths of General Wolfe”

Viewing: “Thomas Moran Exhibition” (optional)

<http://www.nga.gov/feature/moran/index.html>

“Crossing the Frontier Exhibition” (optional)

<http://WWW.CalHum.ORG/sfmoma-crossing/gallery.html>

“The Death of General Wolfe,” Benjamin West (optional)

<http://cgfa.kelloggcreek.com/west/p-west4.htm>

“Tower Falls, 1872” Thomas Moran & William H. Jackson

<http://www.archiva.net/hist150/schedule.html>

ASSIGNMENT #3: Complete the image analysis worksheet. One way to begin thinking about a thesis for a comparison is drawing up a list of categories for comparison—the basis for your discussion of similarities and differences. Put together a list of categories on which the painting and photograph can be compared and comment on the reasons for your choices.

Tuesday

February 26 — Strategies for “Tower Falls, 1872” Essay

ASSIGNMENT #4: Before class, write a draft of first paragraph and bring it to the discussion. Be sure that you have a reasonable introduction and thesis sentence.

DISCUSSION: How do the images compare? Which is more true? How might nineteenth-century viewer have interpreted the images as evidence? What do we learn about nineteenth-century perceptions of the American West?

Thursday

February 28 — **1st DRAFT DUE: ASSIGNMENT #2**
Discussion: Peer Review

Tuesday

March 5 — Discussion: Strategies for “Tower Falls, 1872” Essay
Discussion: Revision

Thursday

March 7 — **2nd & FINAL DRAFT DUE: ASSIGNMENT #2**

Tuesday

March 12 — **NO CLASS/SPRING BREAK**

Thursday

March 14 — **NO CLASS/SPRING BREAK**

TEXT AS EVIDENCE 2: Application & Analysis

In this section of the course, we start off by looking at a particular kind of textual document—court transcripts. As we look at them carefully, we will consider three items: first, the kind of evidence available from court records; second, questions of race, class, ethnicity, and gender; and the ways in which historians have used court cases to write historical narrative and carry out historical analysis. The goal is to apply the techniques gleaned from reading the monographs to an analysis of the issues at stake *State v. Rehberg*.

Tuesday

March 19 — Reading: *Sold Down River*
After the Fact, Ch. 10 “Saco & Vanzetti”

DISCUSSION: How would you describe the effect of race or ethnicity on the central figures in *Sold Down River* and the Saco and Vanzetti case?

Thursday

March 21 — Reading: *Death of an Overseer*

ASSIGNMENT #5: Using the Internet, find four images that you would use to illustrate either *Death of an Overseer* or *Sold Down River*. Import them into a word processing document, make four copies and bring them to class in preparation for discussion on the reasons for your choices. (You might have to resize the images to fit your document size.)

DISCUSSION: According to the author, how does race influence the proceedings in *Death of an Overseer*? How does the discussion of slavery in *Death of an Overseer* compare with its depiction in *Sold Down River*?

Tuesday
March 26 — *Dead Certainties*, “Death of a Harvard Man”
DISCUSSION: How does social class affect the investigation and legal proceedings in “*Death of a Harvard Man?*”

Thursday
March 28 — Reading: *State v. Rehberg*, 1885
DISCUSSION: What is the substance of each of the witness’s testimony? How do social class and gender affect the proceedings in *State v. Rehberg*? If you were a nineteenth-century juror, how would you have voted and why? Remember that the standard in a criminal case is “reasonable doubt.” Does the defense manage to present a reasonable doubt in the course of its argument? What do you think the verdict was in 1885? Why?

Tuesday
April 2 — Discussion: Strategies for *State v. Rehberg*, 1885 Essay
ASSIGNMENT #6: Before class, write a draft of first paragraph and bring it to the discussion. Be sure that you have a reasonable introduction and thesis sentence.

DISCUSSION: What is the substance of each of the witness’s testimony? How do social class and gender affect the proceedings in *State v. Rehberg*? What specific evidence could you present to document your assertions?

Thursday
April 4 — **1st DRAFT DUE: ASSIGNMENT # 3**
Discussion: Peer Review

Tuesday
April 9 — Discussion: Strategies for *State v. Rehberg*, 1885 Essay
Discussion: Revisions

Thursday
April 11 — **2nd AND FINAL DRAFT DUE: ASSIGNMENT # 3**

MOVING IMAGE AS EVIDENCE: Synthesis & Evaluation

Mystery writer like Mickey Spillane and Raymond Chandler created the hard-boiled detectives of the 1940s and 1950s. These books popularized a particular kind of manhood, and films both during the period and after reflected this view of manliness. Movies continued to be popular and war movies became a staple and the major conduit for ideas about manhood and war. Since many Americans obtain (and obtained) their “history” from movies, getting a handle on this medium is important. This part of the course seeks to introduce to moving images—in this case, films about the Viet Nam Era—as historical evidence, as representations of American culture, and as a means of understanding change over time. We also want to bring disparate pieces of evidence and ideas together and try our hands at historical evaluation.

Tuesday
April 16 — Reading: *After the Fact*, Ch. 15 “Where Trouble Comes”
Viewing: *Platoon*
Discussion: The Films
ASSIGNMENT #7: Find the New York Times op-ed piece that David Halberstam wrote about *Platoon*. Do you agree or disagree with his assessment?

April 18 — Viewing: Films of Your Choosing
Discussion: The Films

ASSIGNMENT #8: View two films from the following list: *The Deer Hunter*, *The Green Berets*, *Apocalypse Now*, *Good Morning Viet Nam*, *Full Metal Jacket*, *Hamburger Hill*, *Coming Home*, *Rambo*, or *Born on the Fourth of July*. Complete the film analysis worksheet. Again, one way to begin thinking about a thesis for a comparison is drawing up a list of categories for comparison—the basis for your discussion of similarities and differences.

Tuesday
April 23 — Reading: Periodical Literature
Discussion: The Periodical Literature

ASSIGNMENT #9: Using either the library or online resources (or both), find four articles that discuss the films that you chose. To prepare for class, photocopy or print the articles, read them, and bring them to class in preparation for discussion.

Thursday
April 25 — Discussion: Strategies for Viet Nam Films, 1970–1990

ASSIGNMENT #10: Before class, write a draft of first paragraph of your essay. Be sure that you have a reasonable introduction and thesis sentence. In addition, comment on one of your classmate’s contributions.

Tuesday
April 30 — **1st DRAFT DUE: ASSIGNMENT # 4**
Discussion: Peer Review

Thursday,
May 2 — Discussion: Strategies for Viet Nam Films, 1970–1990
Discussion: Revisions

Tuesday
May 7 — Reading Day
I will set aside time for all those who wish to meet with me to go over the drafts of their papers. We will schedule this during the last week of classes for those who are interested.

Tuesday
May 9 — **2nd FINAL DRAFT DUE: ASSIGNMENT # 4**
SELF-EVALUATION DUE

COURSE

This course is designed as an introduction to the practice and writing of history via examination of mystery novels and primary source documents that contain a “mystery.” First, the novels teach a method of inquiry that often is remarkably close to that of the historian. Historians have to learn how to ask good questions and to sense when they have, at last, by serendipity or logic, arrived at the right question. Historians need to know what is an irrelevant detail—a red herring—and what will carry an inquiry to its main goal. Historians have to learn to interrogate (and to distrust) evidence. They must master the art of inference. They have to piece together the bits and pieces of evidence in an engaging narrative and convincing analysis. And historians have to learn how to relate findings to an audience, whether large and essentially anonymous, as the writer of detective fiction knows, or an audience of one before the classroom giving a report. In short, the methodologies of history and of detective fiction are closely related.

BOOKS

The following books are required for the course. They are available in the Campus Bookstore.

Davidson & Lytle, *The Art of Detection*
Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet*
Tony Hillerman, *People of Darkness*
Barbara Hambly, *Sold Down River*
Simon Schama, *Dead Certainties*
Michael Wayne, *Death of an Overseer*

POLICIES

Late Assignments

I regret that I will be unable to accept late electronic discussion contributions or other assignments except in cases of bona fide and documented instances in accordance with the regulations of the university. This means that participants must provide documentation that indicates illness or other kinds of trauma. Failure to manage time effectively will not be a sufficient reason for failure to complete assignments. In addition, the class depends on the completion of assignments as the basis for discussion. Neglecting an assignment, therefore, undermines both individual and group effectiveness and achievement. In short, this is a zero-tolerance course.

Attendance & Class Preparation

This class depends on discussion and collaborative work on writing. There are 28 class meetings; you can miss 3 classes for any reason. After you have used your “free” absences, you will need written documentation to excuse your absence in accordance with the rules of the university. (Since it is virtually impossible to make up attendance, an excused absence will result in a reduction of the total points. In other words, a participant uses the free absence and then is deathly ill; on receiving a written excuse, the total points will drop to reflect the excused absence.) Or, you can elect to lose the points. Each class attendance is worth 5 points for a total of 125 pts.

Preparation for class is also part of the process. You would never arrive at work unprepared; the same is true of class. You are expected to bring your texts to class so that we may consult them if necessary. In addition, you are required to bring printed copies of materials from the Web and the essays (or parts of essay) assignments from the electronic discussion. This is particularly necessary when we examine images or engage in peer critiques. Similarly, if an assignment involves looking at web sites, you should bring a printed example of a page or two from the site or, at the very least, notes. Probably the best strategy is to maintain a three-ring binder with all your materials in it. At each class, I will be checking for preparation and points will be subtracted from the attendance mark for lack of preparation.

Computer Use

This course makes extensive use of computers. Computers are a great boon to the student writer. But, as with any technology, you must take steps to minimize the problems that computers inevitably cause. Do not expect to get through the semester without having at least one computer crisis. Prepare for this well in advance. Back up your work constantly and have alternative plans for obtaining computer use, if your primary options fail you. We will never accept computer problems as excuses for missed assignments. You must also keep backup copies of submitted assignments—either in electronic form or hard copy.

Similarly, computers and email permit around-the-clock communication. If you have questions or need to apprise me of an emergency situation, contact me via email. Do not, however, expect an immediate response. Many of your questions can be answered by consulting the web site at:

<http://www.archiva.net>

The site contains a duplicate of the syllabus, including the schedule and writing assignments. The on-line syllabus also has links to the resources listed with URLs in the print version of the syllabus and may be a more convenient means to access some of the web-based materials.

Grades

Grades, including +s and -s, will be assigned in the following manner. REMEMBER THEY REPRESENT AN EVALUATION, NOT A REWARD. To rephrase Smith-Barney, the investment folk, we do grades the old-fashioned way—earn them.

A—Outstanding work, complete mastery of the material presented, combined with some originality.

B—A solid command of the material with some gaps or mistakes in a basically sound essay or discussion.

C—Some knowledge of the material; mistakes and confusion are acceptable if mixed with some understanding. Not a reward for attendance or effort.

D—An incomplete and minimal knowledge of the material, major confusions and errors.

F—A failure to present the material in a reasonably accurate and comprehensible manner.

I—There are no “incompletes” given in this course except in cases of bona fide and documented instances in accordance with the regulations of the university.

P—For a “pass” a “C” average is required.

The nature of the course suggests that breaches of academic integrity will be difficult to accomplish. If, however, a class member engages in plagiarism or other forms of cheating, he or she will receive a zero for that assignment and an accompanied trip to the Dean’s Office to discuss further academic action.

If you receive a grade or criticism that seems unfair or if you desire further explanation, see me. If you come to argue for a better grade, come prepared to present your case in the most coherent and organized manner possible.

REQUIREMENTS

I am explaining and stating these policies now, in the clearest possible terms, so there can be no dispute over what I expect. If you have questions about my expectations, please raise them. But whenever you ask me to modify expectations because you failed to plan and use your time efficiently, you put me in the ethically difficult position of applying different standards to different people. I ask that you accept responsibility for your actions rather than put us all in an uncomfortable position.

The requirements for the course are as follows: (1) Class Assignments (100 pts); (2) four essays (400 pts); (3) Class Attendance & Preparation (125 pts); and (4) a self-evaluation (1 page, typed, single-spaced) assessing your performance in the course (not graded but required).

WRITING

The university has made a commitment to improve students' writing both through its writing across the curriculum program and its writing intensive courses requirement. Toward that end, instruction in writing will be a part of this course. Effective writing is a major component of effective thinking, and, as such, is the foundation for history, among other disciplines. It is impossible to teach the whole of composition in a semester, but it is possible to impart several useful techniques and develop a writing discipline via a continuous schedule of writing exercises. Because this is a Writing Intensive course, the both the format and schedule of the course emphasize multiple revision—the process of rewriting and rethinking. Revision does not simply entail the

Writing assignments are to be typed or computer printed, double-spaced, with standard margins. If you elect to use a word processor, you should use a standard typeface of 12 points. (For example, 12 pt. Mac Helvetica or Times is appropriate for a laser or inkjet printer; 12 pt. Mac New York or Geneva is appropriate for an Apple StyleWriter or other dot-matrix printer; Times Roman and Arial are good bets on the Wintel platform; and 10 or 12 pitch Courier is appropriate for typewriter, and so forth.) The assignments will range from between two pages or 500 words to four pages or 1000 words, depending on the nature of the assignment. Your name, the course number, a date (all single-spaced to the left) and a short descriptive title (centered) should appear on the first page. Pages must be numbered and stapled or otherwise fastened together.

Correct grammar and mechanics are an important element in effective communication. You are expected to employ correct grammar, spelling, and mechanics in your writing. If you do not have a writing handbook, please purchase one at the bookstore. (Most of you should have acquired a handbook for ENG 101; we will use this as our standard reference.) Elsewhere in the syllabus is a list of common errors. It might be helpful to review them, or take them with you to the writing center should you need to make a visit to the center.

Writing Assignments

The following paragraphs describe the writing assignments and the dates on which the assignments are due:

Assignment #1:

Indenture in the Chesapeake (1681)

Write a 3–4-page essay in which you write a narrative of the testimony given at the examination and, in your conclusion, explain what the document tells the reader about the nature of indenture in the Chesapeake in the seventeenth century. (A narrative is the “orderly, continuous account of an even or series of events;” exposition is the “explanation of” or “commentary on” an event, series of events, or issue. Most historical writing combines both narrative and exposition; it tells a story and explains its significance.) For historians, the first step is getting the story that right. Sometimes this task is straightforward; sometimes it is not. (If all else fails, you might begin your *second* paragraph with, “In September 1681, Katherine Watkins came before the justices in Virginia and...”)

DUE: February 14, 2002

Assignment #2:

Tower Falls (1872)

Write a 3–4-page essay comparing William Henry Jackson's photograph of Tower Falls and Thomas' Moran's painting of the same and, in your conclusion, discuss the “objectivity” of both the painting and the photograph as historical evidence. (Comparison involves determining how two or more items are

similar *and* how they are different. Historians are constantly gauging both differences and similarities between events, series of events, or issues. In other words, they are in the business of calculating continuity and discontinuity over time. Historians are also always weighing the reliability of the evidence as they go.)

DUE: March 7, 2002

Assignment #3:
State v. Rehberg (1885)

Write a 5–6-page essay in which you write a narrative summarizing the testimony contained in the court transcript. In your conclusion, discuss the influence of gender and social class on the court proceedings and verdict. (Historians take pains to describe how their interpretations fit into a historical context and, further, into the work of historians who have written on the same subject. In short, they analyze their documents and apply others' insights and techniques to their own work. Although our reading has focused on race, some of the same thinking can be applied to the Rehberg case.)

Due: April 11, 2002

Assignment #4:
Viet Nam Era Films (1970–1990)

Write a 5–6 page essay discussing four Viet Nam War films. The key question you should address is: what does your discussion tell you about discontinuity and continuity in Americans' view of the Viet Nam War between 1970 and the present? In your conclusion, assess the extent to which the films reflected their historical periods. (Two of the most difficult tasks that historians undertake are synthesis and evaluation. In synthesis, historians draw together the different threads from different sources and so forth in order to arrive at some general elucidation. Evaluation involves judging or appraising. For example, historians will assess the degree to which a series of events culminated in a significant incident or the contribution of an individual to an episode in the past or the degree to which a film reflects the historical record.)

DUE: May 9, 2002

Grammar for Historians & Others

Here are some common grammatical problems that arise in history papers, listed with the correction mark for each and a solution to the problem. You will find these abbreviations used on your papers, so it is a good idea to

Shift in verb tense (ST):

“Benjamin Franklin outlines a list of moral improvement for himself because he wanted to become a better person.” (Put “outlines” in the same tense (past): “outlined.”)

Shift in person (SP):

“You really have to appreciate what Christopher Columbus did. I think that he....” (Use the third person singular or plural in writing historical prose: “Readers should appreciate Christopher Columbus’s accomplishments. He....”)

Passive voice (PV):

“The Indians were removed by Andrew Jackson.” (Identify the proper subject of this sentence and rework, as in “Andrew Jackson removed the Indians.”)

Run-on sentence (RO):

The Taney court made the Dred Scot Decision, it did other things.” (Add a semicolon after “Decision” to join two independent clauses properly or use two separate sentences.)

Comma splice (SPLICE):

“Many thought the Mormons were un-American as a result, they persecuted them in several locations.” (Replace comma after “un-American” with a semicolon to join two independent clauses properly.)

Sentence fragment (FRAG):

The Crow caught between the Sioux and white settlement, between a rock and hard place, in the 1870s.”
(The sentence needs a verb for its subject, Crow.)

Not a sentence (NS)

Used sometimes to describe a comma splice or sentence fragment or a combination of the two.

Faulty pronoun reference (REF):

“The South disliked the North because of their politics.” (The referent for “their” (“North”) is singular; change “their” to “its” or change “North” to “Northerners.”)

Subject-verb agreement (S/V):

“Each of the Presidential soldiers carry a rifle.” (Each is singular and requires a singular verb; change the sentence to, “Each of the Presidential soldiers carries a rifle.”)

Faulty predication (PRED):

“The belief in Manifest Destiny cannot conceive of Indians having rights.” (“Conceive” is a verb that “belief” is incapable of carrying out. Identify proper subject for the verb: “People who believe in Manifest Destiny cannot conceive...”)

Misplaced modifier (DP)

“Booth shot Lincoln with a derringer, angered by his politics.” (The participial phrase “angered by his politics” cannot modify “derringer”; it must be placed immediately after “Booth.”)

Dangling modifier (MOD):

“Arriving by boat in the New World, the weather was brutal.” (The weather cannot arrive by boat in the New World; identify the proper subject for the first clause, as in “Arriving by boat in the New World, the Puritans found the weather brutal.”)

Faulty parallel structure (||ISM):

“States prevented women from voting by laws and believing in traditional gender roles.” (A noun, “laws” is listed in series with a gerund, “holding.” Rework so both are the same, as in “laws and beliefs” or “enacting laws and believing.”)

Colloquial (COLL):

“George Washington was a cool dude.” (Substitute non-colloquial phrase for “cool dude,” as in “George Washington was statesman and farmer.”)

Word choice (WW):

“One slave tells of how he was able to get a job after the war and earn enough money to travel to North Carolina to find his long separated mother.” (His mother had probably remained in one piece; substitute “lost” for “separated.”)

Spelling (“sp”)

“The army traveled on it’s belly.” (The word it’s is misspelled and must be corrected.)

Quotations (QUOT)

The Virginia patriots were forceful in their protest. “Give me liberty or give me death.” (The Virginia patriots were forceful in their protest. When Patrick Henry said, “Give me liberty or give me death,” his statement bordered on treason; a quotation needs to be introduced, punctuated, connected to the material that it illustrates, and formatted correctly.)

Other correction comments you may see:

source? What is your source for saying this? Add a citation telling your readers where this came from.

evidence? What is the evidence that supports this argument? You need to incorporate primary or secondary source evidence.

thesis? What is the thesis for the essay? You need to revise your thesis or frame a different proposition or argument.

trans? Where is the transitional sentence? You need to rewrite or include a transitional sentence to move between paragraphs.

[a way underline] What is going on here? The prose makes no sense, and the reader cannot understand what you wish to communicate. You need to wholly revise the statement or paragraph.

SELF-EVALUATION GUIDELINES

Oftentimes, a letter grade does not reflect the effort that students put into a course, the amount a student has learned, or the skills that a student has acquired. A self-evaluation is one way of remedying this deficiency by illustrating and documenting your participation in the course from your perspective. This is the time to argue for yourself and put your best foot forward. In fact, it is in your interest to do the best job that you can on this assignment. The self-evaluation should be a one-page, typed single-spaced paper in which you address the following topics:

I. Evaluation of your participation in the class

A. attendance

B. Time devoted to the materials

1. Assigned reading

2. Electronic discussion

3. Writing assignments

4. Writing revisions

C. Class participation

1. In-class contributions

D. The ways in which you think you improved or not

E. The problems you encountered in your effort to complete the class assignments to your satisfaction.

F. What you would have done differently

G. Some of the skills or knowledge that you acquired

II. A general assessment of how you will apply what you have gained (or not) from the class in the future

III. Other activities of a historical nature that you participated in