



HIST 120-003
Fall 2007
Robinson B 228
MWF 12:30 1:20
Prof. Paula Petrik
<http://www.archiva.net>

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Office Hours: MT 2:00-3:30
and by appointment
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1. A CHESAPEAKE AFTERNOON MYSTERY

Monday,
August 27 Housekeeping Details and Introduction

Wednesday,
August 29 Reading: Syllabus & Website
Discussion: TypePad Orientation 1
CLASS MEETS IN INNOVATION 327

Friday,
August 31 Lecture: "Evidence: Text"
TYPEPAD URL & INTRO DUE

Monday,
September 3 **NO CLASS-LABOR DAY**

Wednesday,
September 5 Reading: *American Journey*, Chaps. 3 4
Reader, "Chesapeake Afternoon Mystery"
Discussion: Chesapeake Afternoon Mystery: Narrative

Friday,
September 7 Discussion: Chesapeake Afternoon Mystery: Analysis

2. THE CLUE IN THE PAINTING

Monday,
September 10

Lecture: “Evidence: Images”
Reading: *American Journey*, Chaps. 9 10
Reader, “The Clue in the Painting”
LAST DAY TO ADD CLASSES

Tuesday,
September 11

LAST DAY TO ADD CLASSES

Wednesday,
September 12

Discussion: Typepad Orientation 2
CLASS MEETS IN INNOVATION 327

Friday,
September 14

Discussion: The Clue in the Painting: Thesis
TYPEPAD POST #1: CHESAPEAKE MYSTERY DUE

Monday,
September 17

Lecture: “The Federalists & Republicans”

Wednesday,
September 19

Discussion: The Clue in the Painting: Intro

Friday,
September 21

Discussion: The Clue in the Painting: Evidence

3. WHERE IS BARROW'S PLANTATION?

Monday,
September 24

Lecture: "Evidence: Maps"
Reading: *American Journey*, Chap. 11-12
Reader, "Where Is Barrow's Plantation"

Wednesday,
September 26

Discussion: "Hygeia" (handout)

Friday,
September 28

Discussion: Where Is Barrow's Plantation
TYPEPAD POST #2: CLUE IN THE PAINTING DUE
LAST DAY TO DROP CLASSES

Saturday
September 29

Wednesday,
October 26

ELECTIVE WITHDRAWAL PERIOD (SEMESTER COURSES)

Monday,
October 1

Reading: *American Journey*, Chaps. 13-14
Discussion: Where Is Barrow's Plantation?

Wednesday,
October 3

Discussion: Where Is Barrow's Plantation? (online)
CLASS MEETS IN INNOVATION 327

Friday,

4. THE TREASURE OF THE DARK CHAMBER

Monday,
October 8

NO CLASS-COLUMBUS DAY

Tuesday,
October 9

Reading: *American Journey*, Chaps. 15-16
Discussion: Occupational Photographs (handout)

Wednesday,
October 10

Lecture: "Thinking Through Barrow's Plantation"
TYPEPAD POST #3: BARROW'S PLANTATION DUE

Friday,
October 12

NO CLASS

Monday,
October 15

Discussion: "Evidence: Photographs"
Reading: *Reader*, "The Treasure of the Dark Chamber"
Website: [Sample Photo Essay: Antietam](#)
Discussion: Battlefield Photographs & Drawings

Wednesday,
October 17

Lecture: "Citation"
Discussion: Treasure of the Dark Chamber: Photo Essay: Topics & Images

Friday,
October 19

Discussion: Treasure of the Dark Chamber: Photo Essay: Writing Strategy

5. THE SECRETS OF THINGS

Monday,
October 22

Lecture: "Evidence: Objects"
Reading: *American Journey*, Chaps. 27-29
Reader, "1960s Online Exhibit"

Wednesday,
October 24

Discussion: Mystery Object (handout)

Friday,
October 26

Discussion: Online Exhibit: Intro
TYPEPAD POST #4: "SECRETS OF THINGS" PHOTO ESSAY DUE

Monday,
October 29

Discussion: Online Exhibit: Topics
Websites: [HistoryWired](#)
[Paint By Number](#)

Wednesday,
October 31

Discussion: Online Exhibit: Object List & Images

Friday,
November 2

Discussion: Online Exhibit: Writing Strategy

Monday,
November 5

Lecture: "Evidence: Film 1"

Wednesday,
November 7

Lecture: "Evidence: Film 2"

Friday,
November 9

Discussion: Native American Film
TYPEPAD POST #5: "1960S ONLINE EXHIBIT" DUE

6. THE CASE OF THE GRASSY KNOLLS

Monday,
November 12

Lecture: “Getting to 9/11”
Reading: *American Journey*, Chap. 30–31
Reader: “9/11’s Grassy Knolls”

Wednesday,
November 14

Reading: “We Have Some Planes”
Discussion: “We Have Some Planes”

Friday,
November 16

Reading: Reader’s Choice (Blog & Blog Comment)

Monday,
November 19

Lecture: “Evidence: Sound”

Wednesday,
November 21

NO CLASS-THANKSGIVING BREAK

Friday,
November 23

NO CLASS-THANKSGIVING BREAK

Monday,
November 26

Viewing: *The History of Oil*, Pt 1, Pt 2, Pt 3, Pt 4, Pt 5
Discussion: *The History of Oil*

Wednesday,
November 28

Viewing: *Loose Change*
Discussion: *Loose Change*

Friday,
November 30

Viewing: Viewer’s Choice (Blog & Blog Comment)

Monday,
December 3

Discussion: History as Conspiracy

Wednesday,
December 5

Discussion: The Usefulness of Evidence

Friday,
December 7

SELF-EVALUATION DUE
TYPEPAD POST #6: “GRASSY KNOLL” ANALYSIS DUE

COURSE

This course is designed as an introduction to the practice and writing of history via examination of primary source documents that contain a “mystery.” The course involves learning how to ask questions and knowing by serendipity or logic the right question. It is also about knowing what is an irrelevant detail – a red herring – and what small detail will carry an inquiry to its main goal. It is about learning to interrogate (and to distrust) evidence and mastering the art of inference. The course is about piecing together the bits and pieces of evidence in an engaging narrative and convincing analysis. And last but not least, the course is about learning how to present findings to an audience, whether large and essentially anonymous. Doing history is much like solving a problem in any other discipline, and it’s a great deal like what a professional does every day. Note: You will probably not improve your Jeopardy won/loss record.

BOOK

The following book is required for the course. It is available in the Campus Bookstore.

Goldfield et al., *American Journey*, TLC

BLOG

You are required to obtain a Plus-level subscription to Typepad, a blog. TypePad is available at: <http://www.typepad.com>. All of your writing assignments and projects will be posted to your Typepad blog. The cost is \$8.95 per month or roughly \$27.00 for the semester (the cost of a modest textbook). The best thing to do is sign up for a free trial; this will furnish you with two week’s free service. At the end of the semester, you can cancel your subscription. Or, you may discover that you like blogging so much that you retain your TypePad account.

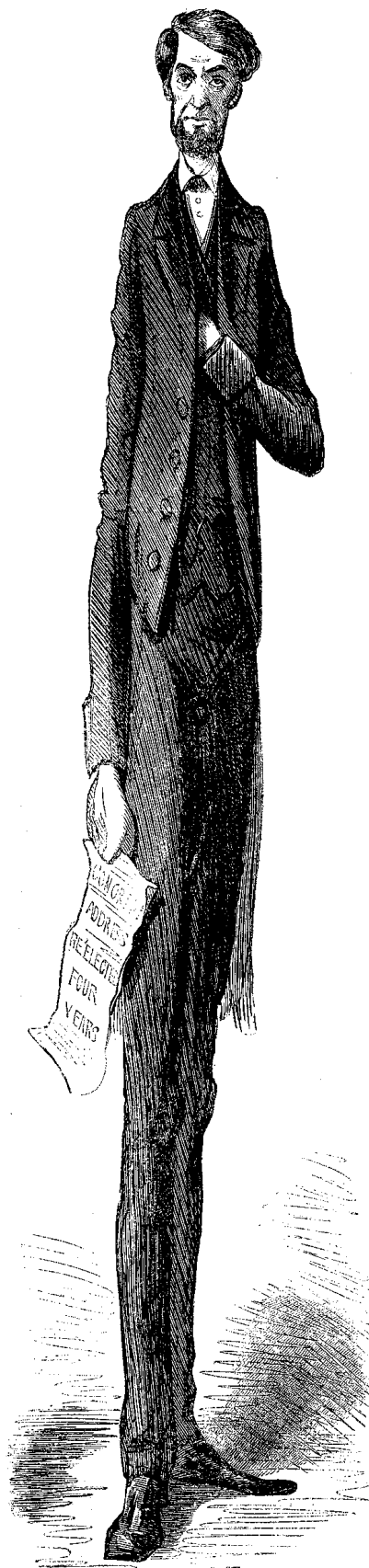
A word about design. Good design helps your blog visitors find what they are looking for and read it once found. Certain design elements contribute to readability and legibility. For your TypePad blog, you can choose any design in Classic, Bold Colors, Cool Colors, Pale Palettes categories except Folio, Beckett, Sunburned, and Porpoise. These are just plain difficult to read, and I do not want to go blind. You should not choose anything from the Special Interest group. When you choose a layout, choose a two or three column layout. Avoid the mixed media layout; they are not appropriate for history.

POLICIES

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 my expectations because you failed to plan and use your time efficiently, you put me as well as the rest of the class 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.

Attendance

At this point in your intellectual development, you should have some sense of personal responsibility. Class attendance, therefore, will be up to you. It will be very difficult, however, to pass the course without attending class because the assignments are the focus of many of the class discussions. In fact,



failure to attend class on many occasions will have grave consequences. A word to the wise, in short, should be sufficient.

Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at (703) 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Email

Please check your GMU mailbox periodically or arrange for your GMU mailbox material to be forwarded to your preferred email address. In addition, be sure that your mailbox has not exceeded its capacity so that your mail bounces back to me. If I send out announcements, I use the GMU mailing class mailing lists per university regulations. If you need to email me, please put HIST 120 in the subject line and sign your full name. Putting something like “Hi” or “Have a question” is a common “spam” technique, and my emailer is trained to junk these messages. Using HIST 120 in the subject line will help my spam detector route you to the proper folder, guarantee that I read your email, and ensure that I know who you are. Do not, however, expect an immediate response.

A Note on Computer Use

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 the instructor of an emergency situation, contact me via email. Should you need to discuss an issue with the instructor, contact me via email or by phone. 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. Since the course makes use of the Internet, you might find it more convenient to use the Web version of the syllabus and its links.

Non-Sexist Language

George Mason University has also pledged itself to the use of non-sexist language in the classroom. We will support that effort by using both the masculine and feminine forms in our discussions and writing rather than masculine generic terms. For example, we will use instead of simply “men,” men and women; instead of “mankind,” humankind and so on. Such an effort may seem awkward initially, but the effort is well repaid by the gain in the content of class discussion and class writing.

Grades

Grades, including +s and -s, will be assigned in the following manner. REMEMBER THEY REPRESENT AN EVALUATION, NOT A REWARD. To rephrase Solomon, 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 be reported to the Honor Board for 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

The requirements for the course are as follows: (1) 6 TypePad post (50 pts. each=300 pts.); (2) class participation (50 pts); (3) a self-evaluation (1 page, typed, single-spaced) assessing your performance in the course (not graded but required). Total points for the course is 350 points. There is no final and no mid-term exam in this course.

BLOG POSTS

There are seven posts required for the course. They are due in class on the date stated on the syllabus schedule. Points or partial points will be awarded for the following:

1. promptness (0 or 10 pts.)
 2. introduction (1-5 pts.)
 3. thesis (1-5 pts.)
 4. argument (1-10 pts.)
 5. evidence (1-5 pts.)
 6. grammar (1-10 pts.)
 7. format (1-5 pts.)
 8. bonus (0 or 5pts)
- TOTAL 50+ pts.

Although the posts result in short pieces, a good deal of thinking and drafting is necessary to prepare a good post.



WRITING

George Mason University has made a commitment to improve students' writing. 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. (The word, history, comes from the Latin, historia, meaning story or chronicle.) Although it is impossible to teach the whole of composition in a semester, it is possible to impart several useful techniques and develop a writing discipline via a continuous schedule of writing

exercises. Should you need some extra help with your writing, the university maintains writing centers at several locations on campus in addition to an online writing program. The writing center will not line-edit the drafts of your posts, but the tutors will help you think through the writing process and offer helpful suggestions. The writing center can be accessed at:

<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/services/index.html>

THE GOOD BLOG POST

Students often ask about writing a good post. Essentially, a TypePad entry should be three to four paragraphs—roughly 400-500 words or the equivalent of 1-2 double-spaced pages. You might want to draft your entry in a text editing program first and copy and paste after you have finished. Use a plain text editor, such as Notepad on a Wintel platform or Tex-Edit on a Mac, to avoid pasting in all sorts of weird characters that result from using MS Word. In other words, do not write your post in MS Word and then copy and paste it into your blog editing window. Although we will discuss the elements of a good post and comment post extensively in class, these paragraphs are offered as a reference and a summary of how your posts will be evaluated.

Promptness

Punctuality is a virtue. Assignments that are submitted on time receive full credit; late assignments are docked 10 points. Late assignments have one week's grace period. After that time, they receive no credit or a zero.

Title & Introductory Paragraph

A good post begins with a good title. A good title gets the Reader's attention immediately and sets the tone for the rest of the entry. A title, such as "Entry #1," is not particularly effective or even interesting. Since this is a class, you must number the entries so that the Reader knows which assignment you are addressing. Examples might include: "#1: Edenton's Women: Early Politics" or "No. 8: SimUtopia: Pleasantville." You can be much more creative, but your post must have a number. And if you use a catchy title that might be confusing or ambiguous, be sure that the document title(s) is indicated in the first paragraph.

Once you've decided on an interesting title, the next step is framing an introduction. An introductory paragraph can take many forms, but in a blog post, two strategies are usually successful: the brief anecdote or narrative or the quotation. How might these work? Here are two examples.

The New Yorker magazine observed, "We believe that the truth can turn up in a cartoon, in one of the magazine's covers, in a poem, in a short story,...." *The New Yorker* statement might well apply to the British reactions to events preceding the Revolutionary War depicted in an early cartoon. [The quotation]

In 1770, Boston citizens skirmished with a small band of British soldiers in front of the Customs House. Although witnesses to the event differed on who was responsible for the starting the altercation, the results were not in dispute—five dead Bostonians. Four years later, the women of Edenton decided to oppose the British Tea Act by boycotting tea. [The short anecdote or narrative]

The last sentence of the introductory paragraph should be the thesis. You should be aware that it is acceptable (and often necessary because of time constraints) to skip the introductory sentences in an essay examination question and begin immediately with a thesis statement.

Thesis

A thesis is a proposition or statement of an argument. It is not "stage direction" (e.g., "In this paper I will tell you about the British and American attitudes toward pre-revolutionary activism, and then I'll show..."). An adequate thesis is a clear, precise, declarative statement: "The British cartoon 'Women of Edenton, North Carolina,' suggests that the British attitude toward patriot activism was _____ and _____. Obviously, your interpretation of the source will determine what you put in the blanks. Note, too, that this statement identifies the source.

Argument

The body of your post follows the terms of your thesis and outlines your argument, beginning with a transitional sentence. (The easiest way to frame a transitional sentence is to take an important word or phrase from the sentence in the preceding paragraph and build on it.) In the Edenton example, the next paragraph would discuss the first "blank" and include the supporting evidence. The second

paragraph would follow with a discussion of the second “blank” (usually its best to put the most compelling evidence last) and its evidence. The third paragraph would take up the conclusion.

A conclusion not only summarizes your argument – usually in a sentence or two – but also discusses its historical significance. The last is the most critical. A conclusion puts your argument into “the big picture,” as Richard Nixon was fond of saying. It is an effort to relate your findings to a broader theme in the course. Does Edenton cartoon say something about how the British viewed patriot seriousness of purpose? Does the image offer any insights into British and American views on gender and politics? Et le voilà – your blog post is finished, and you have a nicely ordered 3–4 paragraph post.

Evidence

Evidence is a summary description or a short quotation from the source that supports the point that you wish to make in your paragraphs or provides a attribution for an author’s idea. For example: “The cartoonist suggested that the patriotic women of North Carolina were _____ and _____ by depicting the women’s careless parenting (the child under the table) and slovenly housekeeping (spilled food and the dog’s urinating under the table).” If you use a quotation from a source other than the documents that are part of the assignment, you must use quotation marks and a citation. Since footnotes and endnotes are difficult to achieve on the web, we’ll go with the bracketed reference mark [1] at the end of the sentence containing the quoted material and a bracketed reference mark at the end of your post with the source. Your post must contain at least one reference to the textbook either as a summary or direct quotation.

Grammar

Grammar and mechanics are important for a variety of reasons – all of them good. All your posts should be grammatically correct in all their particulars. Correctness includes spelling, punctuation, diction, and mechanics. A list of common grammar errors and suggestions for correcting them appears elsewhere.

Format

Online writing and reading differs from print for a variety of reasons. Clarity is the name of the game. Each post must conform to the following format:

1. Post number
2. Post title
3. Underlined or bolded thesis sentence
4. Space between paragraphs
5. Titles of books should be italicized, titles of articles or documents should put in quotation marks, and so on.
6. Use text links to comments should use the author’s name. Do not simply use a URL.
7. Use text links to sources on the web. Do not simply use a URL.

Bonus

Bonus points are awarded for an especially creative, original, or stylistically sophisticated post. Those who go the extra mile will be rewarded.

GRAMMAR FOR HISTORIANS & OTHERS

Here are some common grammatical problems that arise in history papers. They can be downloaded from <http://www.archiva.net/writing.html>. These are the grammatical errors that count in your blog posts, so it is a good idea to look these over.

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. blogs
 2. group meetings
 3. readings
 - C. Class participation
 1. In-class contributions
 2. Group 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

BLOG POST CHECK LIST

My blog post contains or accomplished the following:

1. Submitted on time
2. Post Number
3. Post Title
4. Underlined or bolded thesis sentence
5. Space between paragraphs
6. Text links not simply URLs to comments or to web sources
7. An argument in three or four paragraphs
8. Citations for attribution of quoted material or ideas
9. One reference to the textbook
10. A conclusion
11. Checked the grammar
12. Proofread my post for pesky typos or bad “copy & pastes”
13. Checked my blog to be sure that I remembered to publish my post
14. Tried to do something a bit extra this time (optional)