HIST 4399 “Senior Seminar”  
Fall 2018

Class Time: Wednesdays, 4:40 pm - 7:10 pm  
Class Room: LABS 256

Professor: Friederike Brühöfener  
Email: friederike.bruehoefener@utrgv.edu

Office Hours: Wednesdays 2:30 – 4:00 pm  
Office: LABS 346A

Course Goals and Objective

The aim of this capstone course is to provide you—a senior majoring in history—with the opportunity and training necessary to write a research paper of 6,000 to 8,000 words (excluding title page, footnotes, bibliography, and appendixes). The semester project allows active participants to prove that they possess the skills expected of university graduate majoring in history. These skills include:

- Conducting independent historical research and presenting the findings in oral and written form;
- Developing a feasible research project and question;
- Identifying useful and reliable primary and secondary sources, and compiling a bibliography;
- Engaging with scholarly secondary sources;
- Analyzing and interpreting primary sources using different historical approaches and theories;
- Developing a thesis and argument based on the careful analysis of primary and secondary sources.

Course Topic

This semester, our senior research seminar will focus on the depiction of early 20th-century German history in Texas newspapers. This means that students may chose an event, development, group(s), or individual(s) in German history between 1900 and 1949 and study how it/they was/were covered by a specific set of Texan newspapers.

Readings

To complete this course, you need to purchase a copy of


Course Format, Assignments, and Grading

This is a reduced-seat-time course. We will not always have regular in-class meetings during which we discuss your research. Instead, while working on your own original research topic, you and I will meet during special office hours to discuss your work and progress.

To ensure that your research project is a meaningful and successful exercise, it is divided into sub-steps.

- Research Topic, Question, & Bibliography (10% of your final grade)
- Discussion of Research Topic, Question, & Bibliography (05% of your final grade)
- Progress Report & Preliminary Outline (10% of your final grade)
- Discussion of Progress Report, & Preliminary Outline (05% of your final grade)
- Partial First Draft of Research Paper (10% of your final grade)
- Discussion of Partial First Draft (5 % of your final grade)
• Final Research Paper (55% of your final grade)

The course grading will use our university’s standard scale:
A 90 to 100 points
B 80 to 89 points
C 70 to 79 points
D 60 to 69 points
F 59 points or less

Rules of the Road

1. Assignments completed and submitted late (passed the deadline) will not be accepted. Exceptions are only made in cases of well-documented dire emergencies (e.g. death or severe illnesses in the family; student suffers from illness/disease/disorder that prevents him/her to complete work on time; complications during pregnancy or childbirth; loss of housing). Please note that for every case you have to submit some form of official documentation (an official hospital or doctor’s note; official note from the funeral home; official note from your electricity company in case of power outages etc).

2. No extra-credit will be offered or accepted in this class. Thus, make sure to care and keep track of your performance from the very first day of the semester. Make-up assignments will only be granted and offered in case of well-documented emergencies.

3. No electronics in class unless your professor asks you to take out your laptop/tablet to perform a task or conduct a research exercise. In general, electronics have to be turned off and stored away in your bags during class time. Each time a student is caught disregarding this rule, he/she will negative participation points. Repeated violation will result in a complete dismissal/disenrollment from class.

4. Email Standards: do not hesitate to contact your professor if you have any questions. Yet, before contacting your professor figure out if the answer to your question can be found on the syllabus, on your course’s blackboard site. When contacting your professor (or any other person) follow the rules of professional, cordial communication. Make sure to start your email with an appropriate greeting (e.g. “Dear Dr. …” or “Dear Professor …”); if you email a person for the first time, you should introduce yourself (e.g. My name is … and I am in your course …); pay attention to grammar, spelling, and punctuation; make sure that you properly sign off your email (e.g. Cordially, …/Sincerely, …/ With the best wishes, …). I will not respond to emails that do not follow these stipulations.

5. Academic Dishonesty: As members of a community dedicated to Honesty, Integrity and Respect, students are reminded that those who engage in scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and expulsion from the University. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarism, and collusion; submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person; taking an examination for another person; any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student; or the attempt to commit such acts. Since scholastic dishonesty harms the individual, all students and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced (Board of Regents Rules and Regulations and UTRGV Academic Integrity Guidelines). All scholastic dishonesty incidents will be reported to the Dean of Students.

6. Sexual Harassment, Discrimination, and Violence: In accordance with UT System regulations, your instructor is a “responsible employee” for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and so must report any instance, occurring during a student’s time in college, of sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, domestic violence, or sexual harassment about which she/he becomes aware during this course through writing, discussion, or personal disclosure. More information can be found at www.utrgv.edu/equity, including confidential resources available on campus. The faculty and staff of UTRGV actively strive to provide a learning, working, and living environment that promotes personal integrity, civility, and mutual respect in an
environment free from sexual misconduct and discrimination.

7. Disabilities: If you have a documented disability (physical, psychological, learning, or other disability which affects your academic performance) and would like to receive academic accommodations, please inform your instructor and contact Student Accessibility Services to schedule an appointment to initiate services. It is recommended that you schedule an appointment with Student Accessibility Services before classes start. However, accommodations can be provided at any time. **Brownsville Campus:** Student Accessibility Services is located in Cortez Hall Room 129 and can be contacted by phone at (956) 882-7374 (Voice) or via email at accessibility@utrgv.edu. **Edinburg Campus:** Student Accessibility Services is located in 108 University Center and can be contacted by phone at (956) 665-7005 (Voice), (956) 665-3840 (Fax), or via email at accessibility@utrgv.edu.

8. Mandatory Course Evaluations: Students are required to complete an ONLINE evaluation of this course, accessed through your UTRGV account (http://my.utrgv.edu); you will be contacted through email with further instructions.

**Schedule**

**Week One**
Wednesday, August 29, 2018
*In-Class Meeting: Introduction to Course Topic, Agenda, and Goals*
No required readings

**Week Two**
Wednesday, September 5, 2018
*In-Class Meeting: Texas Newspapers as a Primary Source*
Required Readings:
- “Newspapers,” by Anne Rubenstein, *World History Sources*.
- *The Function of Newspapers in Society*, ed. Shannon E. Martin and David A. Copeland
- “Newspapers” by Louise C. Allen, Ernest A. Sharpe, and John R. Whitaker, *Texas State Historical Association*.

**Week Three**
Wednesday, September 12, 2018
*Blackboard Discussion Forum: Present and Discuss Your Research Topic, Question, and Agenda*
Required Readings:

**Week Four**
Wednesday, September 19, 2018
*In-Class Meeting: Developing a Bibliography – What Do You Need?*
Required Readings:

**Week Five**
Wednesday, September 26, 2018
Independent Research: Finding Primary and Secondary Sources
I will be available from 2:30 to 7:10 PM for in-person consultation in my office (ELABS 346A). In addition, I will provide online consultation via the designated Discussion Forum Page.

Research Topic, Question, and Bibliography are due by 11:59 PM on Sunday, September 30 via Blackboard!

Week Six
Wednesday, October 3, 2018
**Required In-Person Consultation: Research Topic, Question, and Preliminary Bibliography**
You are required to meet with me during individual consultation session to discuss your bibliography (see schedule on office door to sign up for slot).

Week Seven
Wednesday, October 10
**In-Class Meeting: How to Engage Your Secondary and Primary Sources**
Required Readings:

Week Eight
Wednesdays, October 17, 2018
**Independent Research: Engaging Primary and Secondary Sources**
I will be available from 2:30 to 7:10 PM for in-person consultation in my office (ELABS 346A). In addition, I will provide online consultation via the designated Discussion Forum Page.

**Progress Report and Outline is due by 11:59 PM on Sunday, October 21 via Blackboard!**

Week Nine
Wednesday, October 24, 2018
**Required In-Person Consultation: Your Progress Report and Outline & Your Future Work**
You are required to meet with me during individual consultation session to discuss your progress report (see schedule on office door to sign up for slot).
Required Reading:

Wednesday, October 31
**Writing – Writing – Writing**
I will be available from 2:30 to 7:10 PM for in-person consultation in my office (ELABS 346A). In addition, I will provide online consultation via the designated Discussion Forum Page.

Wednesday, November 7, 2018
**Writing – Writing – Writing**
I will provide online consultation via the designated Discussion Forum Page.

**First draft of introduction and at least two chapters are due by 11:59 PM on Sunday, November 11 via Blackboard!**

Wednesday, November 14, 2018
**Required In-Person Consultation: Your First Draft & Your Future Work**
You are required to meet with me during individual consultation session to discuss your first draft (see schedule on office door to sign up for slot).

Required Reading:

- Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*, 100-123 and (if need be) re-read 380-399.

**Wednesday, November 21, 2018**

*Writing – Writing – Writing*

I will be available from 2:30 to 7:10 PM for in-person consultation in my office (ELABS 346A). In addition, I will provide online consultation via the designated Discussion Forum Page.

**Wednesday, November 28, 2018**

*Writing – Writing – Writing*

I will be available from 2:30 to 7:10 PM for in-person consultation in my office (ELABS 346A). In addition, I will provide online consultation via the designated Discussion Forum Page.

**Wednesday, December 5, 2018**

*Final Paper is due by end of class (07:10 PM). You have to submit an electronic file via Blackboard and hand in a stapled hard-paper copy*