HIST 4399 “Senior Seminar”  
Spring 2017

Class Time: Monday, 4:40 pm - 7:10 pm  
Class Room: LABS (ARHU) 179

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

Office Hours: M/W 2:30 – 4:00 pm  
Office: LABS (ARHU) 346A

Course Goals and Objective

The aim of this capstone course is to provide seniors majoring in history with the opportunity and training necessary to write a research paper of 5,000 to 7,000 words. The semester project allows active participants to prove that they possess the skills expected of university graduate majoring in history. These skills include:

1) Reading and engaging with historical scholarship by identifying authors’ aims, arguments, approaches and methods.
2) Analyzing and interpreting primary sources using different historical approaches and theories.
3) Conducting independent historical research and presenting the findings in oral and written form.
4) Developing a thesis and argument based on the careful analysis of primary and secondary sources.

Course Topic

The course does not focus on a specific topic, but it is shaped by your professor’s areas of interest and expertise. This means that students may research a topic of their choosing as long as it falls within the purview of your professor. The research that you pursue has to fit into the fields of Modern European and North American (19th - 20th century) women’s history, gender history, history of sexuality, new military history, Alltagsgeschichte (history of everyday life), or Gesellschaftsgeschichte (history of society).

Required Readings

Over the course of the semester, we will read numerous scholarly articles that will be made available on blackboard. Students are required to print the articles out and bring them to class.

Course Format

The first third of the course is defined by regular class meetings during which we will discuss scholarly literature, analyze and interpret primary sources, and conduct short research exercises. Active participants will deepen their knowledge about different methodologies, theories, and approaches. The subsequent two thirds are devoted to independent research and the writing of the final research paper. To make the process of writing the senior research paper meaningful, it is divided into separate sub-steps.
Grades and Grading

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Percentage of Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Active Participation</td>
<td>15% of final grade</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Question &amp; Preliminary Bibliography</td>
<td>10% of final grade</td>
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<tr>
<td>Progress Report &amp; Extended Bibliography</td>
<td>10% of final grade</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Draft of Research Paper</td>
<td>15% of final grade</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Version of Research Paper</td>
<td>50% of final grade</td>
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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**

**In-Class Meeting: Introduction to the Course and the History of Education**

**Methodology and Practice: Reading Scholarly Literature**

**Monday, January 23, 2017**

**Required Readings:**


**In-Class Meeting: Discovering the History of Crime**

**Methodology and Practice: Developing a Research Question**

**Please Bring Laptop To Class**

**Monday, January 30, 2017**

**Required Readings:**


**In-Class Meeting: Approaches to Military History and the History of War**

**Methodology and Practice: Identifying Important and Reliable Scholarly Literature**

**Please Bring Laptop To Class**

**Monday, February 6, 2017**

**Required Readings:**


**In-Class Meeting: Approaches to Cultural History**

**Methodology and Practice: Identifying Good and Useful Primary Sources**

**Please Bring Laptop To Class**

**Monday, February 13, 2017**

**Required Readings:**

- Excerpts from *The Feminine Mystique* by Betty Friedan.

**No In-Class Meeting: Research Break**

**Monday, February 20, 2017**

*Students should take the time to work on and finalize their research question and preliminary bibliography.*

*I will be in my office. Please stop by if you have any questions or concerns.*

*Research Question and Preliminary Bibliography are due on Saturday, February 25, 2016 (by 6:00 PM) via email.*

**No In-Class Meeting: Special Required Office Hours**

**Monday, February 27, 2017**

*I will meet with students individually to discuss their research question and bibliography.*

**In-Class Meeting**

**Methodology and Practice: Developing a Thesis And Constructing An Argument**
Monday, March 6, 2017

Required Readings:

March 13 – 18, 2017 Spring Break

**Progress Report and Extended Bibliography is due by/on Saturday, March 18, 2017 (6:00 PM) via email.**

In-Class Meeting + Special Required Office Hours

**Methodology and Practice: The Writing Process**

Monday, March 20, 2017

Required Readings:
- “History and Rhetoric” and “Grammar for Historians” in Reading, Writing, and Researching for History: A Guide for College Students by Patrick Rael.

No In-Class Meeting: Writing Break
Monday, March 27, 2017

Students should work on the first draft of their research paper. During regular class time, I will be in our usual classroom. You may stop by for individual consultation or if you need a quiet space to read and write.

No In-Class Meeting: Writing Break
Monday, April 3, 2017

Students should work on the first draft of their research paper. During regular class time, I will be in our usual classroom. You may stop by for individual consultation or if you need a quiet space to read and write.

No In-Class Meeting: First Draft is Due
Monday, April 10, 2017

**First Draft of Research Paper is due by 6:30 pm. Please bring an unstapled (use paperclip) paper copy to my office.**

April 14 – 15, 2017 Easter Holiday

No In-Class Meeting: Required Office Hours
Monday, April 17, 2017

I will meet with students individually to discuss their first drafts.

No In-Class Meeting: Writing Break
Monday, April 24, 2017

Students should work on revising their first draft. During regular class time, I will be in our usual classroom. You may stop by for individual consultation or if you need a quiet space to read and write.
No In-Class Meeting: Writing Break

Monday, May 1, 2017

Students should work on revising their first draft. During regular class time, I will be in our usual classroom. You may stop by for individual consultation or if you need a quiet space to read and write.

Final Version of Research Paper is due Saturday, May 6, 2016 (by 6:00pm) via email.