

UNITED STATES HISTORY SINCE 1945

History Major Research Seminar: HIST 490:001 (NJIT), R510:490 (RU-N)
NJIT-Rutgers, Newark: Fall 2017
Time: Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:00 - 2:25
Location: 307 Cullimore Hall

Instructor: Prof. Neil Maher
Federated Department of History NJIT-Rutgers, Newark

Office Hours: 329 Cullimore Hall
Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:30-4:00 p.m.
And by appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This research seminar is the capstone experience for history majors in the Federated History Department at NJIT and Rutgers University, Newark. It has three primary goals. First, it will introduce students to the history of the post-World War II United States. Second, it will teach students how to conduct archival research with primary historical documents, many of which will be found in local archives in the city of Newark. Finally, the seminar will provide students with in-depth guidance regarding the writing of their senior thesis, which will be a 15-17-page paper of primary historical research on a topic of the student's choosing.

The time period for this research seminar is from 1945 to the present. This is an extremely exciting and important time in American history. The end of World War II sparked an economic boom that lasted through the 1950s, lifted many families into the middle class for the first time, and allowed millions of Americans to migrate from urban areas to the suburbs. Beginning in the early 1960s and lasting into the late 1970s some Americans began questioning such changes; the civil rights, anti-Vietnam war, environmental, feminist, and counterculture movements all protested, demonstrated, and marched for social change. The 1980s produced a backlash against such liberal activism, with President Ronald Reagan leading a conservative movement that swept across the country. Finally, the 20th Century concluded with the fall of the Soviet Union, the end of the Cold War, and the rise of global terrorism. Throughout this semester you will explore these historical topics and many more.

The course schedule for the semester is divided into three parts. To better understand the context of the post-World War II period, we will spend the first 5 weeks of the semester reviewing the history of the U.S. since 1945. Beginning with week 6, we will shift our attention to understanding how one "does history." This will include reading assignments and in-class discussions that will help students choose a research topic,

locate archival source materials, organize their research, and ultimately write a final paper. Finally, the last 2 weeks of the semester will be dedicated to a “Paper Writing Workshop,” during which the entire class will read and critique a rough draft of your final paper.

One of the goals of the Federated History Department’s senior research seminar is to familiarize students with both the history of Newark and its archival opportunities. To foster this, during the early part of this semester we will take 3 field trips to local archives located at Rutgers University’s Dana Library, the New Jersey Historical Society, and the archives of the Newark Public Library. All of these field trips will be undertaken during our normal class hours.

COURSE GOALS:

There are three major goals for this course.

1. Students will understand the major historical actors, events, and issues that define the United States during the post-World War II period.
2. Students will locate and analyze both primary and secondary source materials relevant to the history of the postwar United States for their final research projects.
3. Students will use those primary and secondary sources to formulate, plan, and write a full-length historical research paper.

REQUIREMENTS:

Attendance and Class Participation: This is one of the most important components of your final grade. Because this is a small, seminar-style course, class participation should involve active listening and engagement — more than simply showing up, and more than sheer volume of oral output. It is essential that reading be done on time (each day before we meet) and that everyone come to class ready to raise questions and participate actively. Absence from class means you won’t be able to participate, and doing so will therefore hurt your grade. If you do miss a class meeting, you are responsible for finding out what was missed and making up any assignments. Attendance will be taken during each class session.

Reading Assignments: Reading assignments will average approximately 75-100 pages per week, and will consist of two types of materials. First, during the initial 5 weeks of the semester we will read a textbook on the United States from World War II to the present in order to familiarize ourselves with the key people, events, and themes of this specific historical period (During these 5 weeks the reading assignments are longer than during the rest of the semester, so plan accordingly). Second, near the end of the semester, we will be reading a second book that will explain how historians “do” history

— this book will help you choose a research topic, locate sources materials for that research topic, organize your research, and also help you outline and write your final papers.

You must purchase both books, which are currently on sale at the NJIT bookstore (NO ELECTRONIC COPIES PLEASE). As I mentioned in an email before the start of the semester, one of these books is MUCH cheaper when purchased online in a used edition. (See “Required Texts” below).

Writing Assignments: Because this is a Senior Research Seminar, this class will be a writing-intensive course. Throughout the semester you will be asked to undertake several different types of writing assignments, each of which will help prepare you for writing your final research paper during the spring semester. In each of the assignments described below, you will be graded on both your ideas and your writing.

1. On-Line Reader’s Responses:

Before many of our class meetings you will post a “reader’s response” to the assigned reading material in a Moodle online “Forum.” Directions for each “reader’s response” can be found on our Moodle page under each week’s assignment. To locate these directions, log into our course Moodle webpage, go to the week for which you are submitting a response, and click on the Forum tab. The Forum will then open in another window, and you will see my directions for that particular Reader’s Response assignment.

These posts by you in our Moodle “Forum” for each class meeting will not be individually graded, but will be considered as an overall part of your grade for the class. Late posting will not be accepted, and missing postings will bring your grade down. (See “Grading” below).

2. Research Paper Proposal

This written proposal will serve as a guide for you, your classmates, and me regarding your research topic. There are several components to your “Research Paper Proposal,” including:

- *Overall Project Description* (including a preliminary paper title and a description of the historical questions and issues you will be examining in your research paper).
- *Description of Primary Sources* (here you will have to include copies of your sources, as well as brief descriptions of them).
- *Annotated Bibliography of Secondary Sources* (this will include a short description of your secondary source materials, and how each one will help you with various parts of your final paper).

- *Paper Outline* (this will be a detailed outline that you will rely on while writing your final paper).

During the second half of the semester you will submit each of these components of the “Research Paper Proposal.” More detailed directions for each of these writing assignments will be distributed during the semester.

3. Final Research Paper

Finally, you will submit a final thesis between 15-17 pages in length (not including footnotes).

GRADING:

In-Class Participation:	25%
On-Line Reader’s Responses and Research Proposal	25%
Final Research Paper	50%

Consistent effort and improvement will be weighted heavily in grading.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Paul Boyer, *Promises to Keep: The United States Since World War II* (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005). Third Edition. (**This book is MUCH cheaper if purchased on-line in a used edition**).

Wayne Booth, Gregory Colomb, and Joseph Williams, *The Craft of Research* (University of Chicago Press, 2008). Fourth Edition (**This must be the 4th edition**)

NOTE ON REQUIRED TEXTS: Please remember to bring the assigned reading for each class meeting with you to class every day. In other words, bring to class whatever we’re reading for that day. We will constantly refer to these readings during in-class discussions.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

All Students should be aware that the History Department takes the NJIT Honor code seriously and enforces it strictly. Because of the nature of our assignments, if you plagiarize it will be obvious and I will be forced to report such actions to the Dean of Students. If you are caught plagiarizing, you will fail the course for the semester and therefore not be able to graduate.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

INTRODUCTION

WEEK 1: THE SYLLABUS

September 6: **What is a Historical Research?**

Required Reading:

None

In-Class Discussion:

Your Possible Topics

PART I: UNITED STATES HISTORY SINCE WORLD WAR II

WEEK 2: WAR AND PEACE

September 11: **The End of World War II**

Required Reading:

Boyer, *Promises to Keep*, chapters 1 & 3 (pages 1-32 and 65-95).

NOTE: You do NOT have to read chapter 2 (pages 35-63).

Assignment:

Reader's response on Boyer (due on Moodle 1 hour BEFORE class).

September 13: **Economic Prosperity in the 1950s**

Required Reading:

Boyer, *Promises to Keep*, chapters 4 & 5 (pages 97-158).

Assignment:

Reader's response on Boyer (due on Moodle 1 hour BEFORE class).

WEEK 3: THE COLD WAR AND POLITICAL DISSENT

September 18: **1960s Liberalism and the Civil Rights Movement**

Required Reading:

Boyer, *Promises to Keep*, chapters 6 & 7 (pages 160-212).

Assignment:

Reader's response on Boyer (due on Moodle 1 hour BEFORE this class).

September 20: **Class Trip to the New Jersey Historical Society**

Required Reading:

Boyer, *Promises to Keep*, chapters 8 & 9 (pages 214-261).

Assignment:

Reader's response on Boyer (due on Moodle 1 hour BEFORE this class).

WEEK 4: WAR IN VIETNAM AND THE COUNTERCULTURES

September 25: **Class Trip to Dana Library**

Required Reading:

Boyer, *Promises to Keep*, chapters 10 & 11 (pages 263-319).

Assignment:

Reader's response on Boyer (due on Moodle 1 hour BEFORE this class).

September 27: **The Anti-War, Environmental, and Feminist Movements of the 1970s**

Required Reading:

Boyer, *Promises to Keep*, chapter 12 (pages 322-346).

Assignment:

Reader's response on Boyer (due on Moodle 1 hour BEFORE this class).

WEEK 5: THE RISE OF CONSERVATISM

October 2: **The 1980s and the "New Right"**

Required Reading:

Boyer, *Promises to Keep*, chapters 13-14 (pages 349-421).

Assignment:

Reader's response on Boyer (due on Moodle 1 hour BEFORE this class).

October 4: **Class Trip to the Newark Public Library**

Required Reading:

Boyer, *Promises to Keep*, chapter 15-16 (pages 425-509).

Assignment:

Reader's response on Boyer (due on Moodle 1 hour BEFORE this class).

PART III: DOING HISTORY

WEEK 6: CHOOSING A TOPIC

October 9: **How to Find a Research Topic**

Required Reading:

Booth, *Craft of Research*, pages 1-64.

Assignment:

Reader's response on Booth, (due on Moodle 1 hour BEFORE this class).

October 11: **Asking Historical Questions**

Required Reading:

Each other's "Paper Topic Description" Draft

Assignments:

1. Overall Project Description draft (to be explained)
2. Written comments on each of your classmate's proposals

(NOTE: both due on Moodle Tuesday, Oct 10 by 5:00 p.m.).

WEEK 7: PRIMARY SOURCES

October 16: **Primary vs. Secondary Sources**

Required Reading:

Booth, *Craft of Research*, pages 65-104.

Assignment:

Primary Source Description (due on Moodle 1 hour BEFORE this class).

October 18: **Primary Source Workshop**

Required Reading:

Each other's "Primary Source Assessment."

Assignment:

Written comments on each of your classmates' primary source description

(NOTE: bring 2 hard copies to class, one for me and one for your classmates).

WEEK 8: SECONDARY SOURCES

October 23: **Contextualizing Your Secondary Sources**

Required Reading:

The first 50 pages of a secondary source for your research project.

Assignment:

Annotated Bibliography

(NOTE: Due on Sunday night, October 22nd by 5:00 pm).

October 25: **Secondary Source Workshop**

Required Reading:

Each other's "Annotated Bibliography."

Assignment:

Written comments on each of your classmates' Annotated Bibliographies.

(NOTE: Due on Moodle Tuesday, Oct. 24 by 5:00 p.m.).

Bring a hard copy to class that you will give to your classmate.

WEEK 9: MAKING HISTORICAL ARGUMENTS

October 30: **Retelling Facts vs. Making an Argument**

Required Reading:

Booth, *Craft of Research*, pages 105-154.

Continue reading your secondary sources

Assignment:

Reader's response on Booth, (due on Moodle 1 hour BEFORE this class).

November 1: **Understanding Warrants**

Required Reading:

Booth, *Craft of Research*, pages 155-172.

Assignment:

Reader's response on Booth, (due on Moodle 1 hour BEFORE this class).

WEEK 10: ORGANIZING YOUR PAPER

November 6: **Outlining**

Required Reading:

Booth, *Craft of Research*, 173-197.

And continue reading for your own research.

Assignment:

Reader's Report on Booth, pages 173-199 (due on Moodle 1 hour BEFORE this class).

November 8: **Outline Workshop I**

Required Reading:

Each others outlines

Assignment:

1. Preliminary Paper Outline
2. Written comments on each of your classmates' outlines

(NOTE: Both due on Moodle Tuesday, Nov. 7th by 5:00 p.m.).

WEEK 11: USING AND CITING SOURCES

November 13: **Outline Workshop II**

Required Reading:

Each others outlines

Assignment:

1. Preliminary Paper Outline
2. Written comments on each of your classmates' outlines

(NOTE: Both due on Moodle Sunday, Nov. 12th by 5:00 p.m.).

November 15: **Writing and Citing Sources**

Required Reading:

Booth, *Craft of Research*, 200-231.

And continue reading for your own research

Assignment:

Submit citations, in the correct format, for 3 primary and 3 secondary sources you are using in your paper. (due on Moodle 1 hour BEFORE this class).

WEEK 12: WRITING A DRAFT

November 20: **Paper Introduction Workshop I**

Required Reading:

Booth, *Craft of Research*, 232-247.

And one another's Paper Introductions

Assignment:

1.A draft of your Paper Introduction

2.Comments on your classmates Paper Introductions

(NOTE: Both due on Moodle Sunday, Nov. 19th by 5:00 p.m.).

November 22: **No Class – Thanksgiving Break**

Required Reading:

Continue reading for your own research

WEEK 13: REVISING YOUR DRAFT

November 27: **Paper Introduction Workshop II**

Required Reading:

One another's Paper Introductions

1.A draft of your Paper Introduction

2.Comments on your classmates Paper Introductions

(NOTE: Due on Moodle Sunday, November 26th at 5:00 p.m.)

November 29: **The Necessity of Revising**

Required Reading:

Booth, *Craft of Research*, 248-267.

And continue reading for your own research

Assignment:

Reader's Report on Booth, (due on Moodle 1 hour BEFORE this class).

WEEK 14: PAPER WORKSHOP I

December 4: **Discuss Fellow Student Paper Proposals**

Required Reading:

Your classmates' Paper Proposals

Assignment:

Comments on the "Paper Proposals" of your classmates

(NOTE: Due on Moodle Sunday, December 3rd at 5:00 p.m.)

December 6: **Discuss Fellow Student Paper Proposals**

Required Reading:

The "Paper Proposals" of your classmates

Assignment:

Comments on the "Paper Proposals" of your classmates.

NOTE: Due on Moodle Tuesday, December 5th at 5:00 p.m.)

WEEK 15: PAPER WORKSHOP II

December 11: **Discuss Fellow Student Paper Proposals**

Required Reading:

The "Paper Proposals" of your classmates

Assignment:

Comments on the "Paper Proposals" of your classmates

(NOTE: Due on Moodle Sunday, December 10th at 5:00 p.m.)

December 13: **Discuss Fellow Student Paper Proposals**

Required Reading:

The "Paper Proposals" of your classmates

Assignment:

Comments on the "Paper Proposals" of your classmates

(NOTE: Due on Moodle Tuesday, December 12th, at 5:00 p.m.)