

History 491: Senior Thesis

<http://www.uhh.hawaii.edu/~dresner/thesis04>

Prof. Jonathan Dresner
e-mail: dresner@hawaii.edu
Phone: 974-7443
Office: UCB 353

Hist 491
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Class meeting times: to be determined
Office Hours: MWF 10am-noon

"Education is when you read the fine print.
Experience is what you get when you don't."
-- Pete Seeger

Description

History is not a set of answers, but a fluid and argumentative process. This semester you will make your most ambitious attempt to date to contribute to the body of historical research and argumentation by writing a substantial and original senior thesis paper. You have been preparing for this for several years, by selecting a speciality within the major, by building up a strong body of historical knowledge, research and writing skills, by taking Hist 490: Historiography. Now is the time to create something new and interesting, to apply the skills you've mastered and to grow even further in that application. Working with your thesis administrator (me), your thesis advisor (whomever is appropriate based on the content of your work) and with your thesis-writing colleagues, you will write a senior thesis. Most of your grade will be based on the final product, but a portion will be based on the process, so active participation is essential. It will also result in a better final product.

Course Application

This is the capstone course for History Majors. For anyone else, it's just a 400-level directed reading with lots of extra writing. This course is truly Writing Intensive.

Course Goals

This course is intended to guide students through the process of thesis writing. Students will develop research, analysis, writing and presentation skills.

Student Accommodation

Any student with a documented disability who would like to request accommodations (or with an undocumented disability who would like information on documentation and resources) should contact the University Disability Services Office (933-0816 (V), 933-3334 (TTY), Campus Center Room 311) as early in the semester as possible.

Advising

You are seniors: you should know who your advisor is. If you don't, talk to your primary area specialist in the History department: he or she is most likely your academic advisor. Advising is a shared responsibility, but students have final responsibility for meeting degree requirements. This is particularly important now: do a degree audit (through MyUH, it shouldn't be too hard) and make sure that you are really as close to graduation as you think.

Assignments

"Long experience has taught me that to be criticized is not always to be wrong." -- Anthony Eden

Course Website: <http://www.uhh.hawaii.edu/~dresner/thesis04>

Check it regularly. Bookmark it. I will use it for announcements, to maintain the course schedule, to archive handouts (so if you lose or miss one, it'll be there) and a few useful links.

Readings

Recommended: Diane Hacker, *A Pocket Style Manual*. Bedford/St. Martins; 3rd edition 2000.
Patrick D. Reagan, *History & the Internet: A Guide*. McGraw-Hill, 2002.

PLAGIARISM

<http://www.uhh.hawaii.edu/~dresner/plagiarism.html>

There are three options: put it in quotation marks and footnote; paraphrase and footnote; or be original. Of course it isn't quite that simple, but you should have extensive experience at this point with using primary and secondary sources and integrating them into your own arguments. If you have any questions or any concerns about citation format or necessity, ask someone who knows what they're doing. **Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course.**

Topic, Bibliography, Abstract and Outline

A senior thesis doesn't just happen. Your first tasks this semester will help you envision and plan the project, building (presumably) on the work you did in Hist 490. This will happen fairly quickly, as a semester is not really a lot of time to write a 30+ page original research paper.

Writing

There will be a number of writing assignments, most of which will be portions and drafts of your thesis. The page lengths assigned are minimums, based on double-spaced, 10-12 point, 1-1.5 inch margin text, not including notes. This is cumulative writing: each assignment should also include some revision of the earlier writing (if only to keep your reader from having to make the same marks on multiple drafts). Citations should be *Chicago* style footnotes or endnotes. More details on format nearer the end.

Meetings: Individual and Group

We will meet as a group every other week, and we will have one-on-one meetings at least every other week (more if necessary). These serve four functions: monitoring, support, feedback and education. Attendance is not optional: if you need to miss either a group or individual meeting, let me know in advance.

You should also be sharing your work and meeting regularly with your primary advisor, as their feedback on historical and bibliographic issues will be essential.

Grades

Two-thirds of your final grade for this course will be based on the quality of the final product: one-third from your primary advisor and one-third from your second reader (generally that will be me, unless I am your primary advisor). The final third of the grade will be based on your successful participation in this course: meeting deadlines, being prepared for meetings; collegial and substantive discussions.

Symposium

Thesis writers are expected to present their work orally to the History faculty and interested fellow students at the First Annual History Symposium, scheduled for Thursday, May 6th, 2004. This is a part of the course and failure to attend will affect your grade. Details to follow.

Schedule of Subjects, Readings and Assignments

"Next week there can't be any crisis. My schedule is already full." -- Henry A. Kissinger

Week 1 (1/12-16):	Individual meetings: bring topic and bibliography from 490. Group meeting: Friday, 3pm: Discuss syllabus and arrange regular meeting times.
Week 2 (1/20-1/23):	Due (Friday, noon): (Revised) topic and bibliography (indicating read and priorities).
Week 3 (1/26-30):	Individual meetings: Focusing topics and arguments Group meeting: Using theory; Abstract and Outline
Week 4 (2/2-6):	Due (Friday, noon): Abstract and Outline, bibliography updates
Week 5 (2/9-13):	Individual meetings: Feedback on abstract and outline Group meeting: How to write a thesis in 15 minutes a day; citation
Week 6 (2/17-20):	Due (Friday, noon): five pages, but not necessarily the first five.
Week 7 (2/23-27):	Individual meetings: Feedback on writing, etc. Group meeting: Writing process; scholarship and sources; anticipating problems
Week 8 (3/1-5):	Due (Friday, noon): ten pages F (3/5): last day to withdraw with "W"
Week 9 (3/8-12):	Individual meetings: Feedback on writing, etc. Group meeting: Revision as a part of writing: when to throw something away
Week 10 (3/15-19):	Due (Friday, noon): fifteen pages.
	[Spring Recess, 3/22-3/26]
Week 11 (3/29- 4/2):	Individual meetings: Feedback on writing, etc. Group meeting: Form of the thesis; symposium presentations.
Week 12 (4/5-4/8):	Due (Friday, noon): twenty-five pages plus properly formatted bibliography.
Week 13 (4/12-16):	Individual meetings: Feedback on writing, format, etc. Group meeting: The other side of writing: when to stop
Week 14 (4/19-23):	Due (Friday, noon): thirty pages.
Week 15 (4/26-30):	Individual meetings: Feedback on writing, etc. Group meeting: Reading like a reader.
Week 16 (5/3-5):	Due (Monday, noon): Complete, fully-formatted, polished and final version of thesis.
	Symposium presentations: Thursday, 5/6, 10-12.

"Writing history is a perpetual exercise in judgment." -- Cushing Strout