

METHODS IN HISTORICAL RESEARCH AND EXPOSITION: A PROCESS-BASED APPROACH TO WORLD HISTORY

Peking University, Fall 2009

Wednesday, 2:40-4:30; Building 2, Room 408

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<http://groups.google.com/group/MIHRAE>

Overview

By researching and composing original academic essays and presentations on a variety of topics in world history ancient and modern, students will gain facility in synthesizing disparate sources of information to support convincing written and spoken arguments. The course will culminate in a final report of significant length and depth that students will have the opportunity to present to their peers in a class symposium.

Aims

- To become fluent in a variety of research tools
- To learn how to both critically and constructively analyze and synthesize complex information
- To gain facility in composing persuasive and focused evidence-based arguments
- To cultivate interest in a wide variety of topics in world history ancient and modern
- To develop comfort with and confidence in the use of professional spoken and written English

Required Texts

All course readings will be provided weekly in printed handouts to be distributed in class. Students are strongly encouraged to collect readings in a binder or folder for easy access and review.

Turning in Assignments

It is expected that all assignments be completed on time and emailed in Word document format to swanberg@post.harvard.edu before the due date and time. Late or printed reports will not be accepted unless otherwise noted.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism, or copying the work of others, will not be tolerated and will be grounds for **automatic failure of the course**. The term "plagiarism" encompasses the use of **any** ideas published by others, even those that are expressed in your own words, as your own without proper referencing as defined by our initial lesson on source citation in the Chicago Style. Given the advances of modern technology, plagiarism is extremely easy to spot, so do not be mistaken: You will be caught.

Grading

90+ and 80+ will only be awarded to the students who produce exceptional and above-average work, respectively. 70+ will be given to the students who produce the minimum acceptable, and 60+ and below 60 to those who do not meet even the minimum assignment standards and/or plagiarize others' work. Grading will be competitive, but remember that your biggest opponent is yourself.

Vocabulary quizzes (10%): One for every lecture. Will have to produce English definitions for words on list distributed in advance.

Response papers (25%): One for every lecture. An essay of defined length that uses evidence from discussions, readings, and outside research to support an original response(s) to the given question(s).

Presentations/participation (15%): Each student will offer a formal presentation of a response paper to the class at least once according to the schedule on the sign-up sheet passed out during the first week of class. This is an assignment separate from the final presentation.

Midterm exam/project (20%): TBA

Final exam/project (30%): TBA

Course Outline

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|--------------------------|---|
| Week 1 (September 16) | Course introduction In-class writing assessment <u>Reading:</u> A Brief Guide to Historical Research Source Packet I: Dealing with Doubt |
| Week 2 (September 23) | Review in-class writing assessment; brief introduction to historical research LECTURE 1: Dealing with Doubt: The linguistic history of modern English <i>Response paper I (due by 11 P.M. on Monday, September 28)</i> <u>Reading:</u> Source Packet II: Systems History |
| Week 3 (September 30) | LECTURE 2: Systems History: The asymmetrical rise of civilization <u>Debate/Presentation:</u> Dealing with Doubt: The linguistic history of modern English <i>Response paper II (due by 11 P.M. on Monday, October 5)</i> <u>Reading:</u> Source Packet III: Identifying Bias |
| Week 4 (October 7) | (National Day Holiday) |

- Week 5
(October 14) **LECTURE 3: Identifying Bias: Collapse of the Han dynasty**
Debate/Presentation: Systems History: The asymmetrical rise of civilization
Response paper III (due by 11 P.M. on Monday, October 19)
Reading: Source Packet IV: Interpreting Imperfect Information
- Week 6
(October 21) **LECTURE 4: Interpreting Imperfect Information: Cortés and the Aztecs**
Debate/Presentation: Identifying bias: Collapse of the Han Dynasty
Response paper IV (due by 11 P.M. on Monday, October 26)
Reading: Source Packet V: Might Makes Right
- Week 7
(October 28) **LECTURE 5: Might Makes Right: Commoners in the European Renaissance**
Debate/Presentation: Interpreting Imperfect Information: Cortés and the Aztecs
Response paper V (due by 11 P.M. on Monday, November 2)
Reading: Source Packet VI: The Nation-State Bias
- Week 8
(November 4) **LECTURE 6: The Nation-State Bias: Pre-Colonization Pacifica**
Debate/Presentation: Might Makes Right: Commoners in the European Renaissance
Response paper VI (due by 11 P.M. on Monday, November 9)
- Week 9
(November 11) **MIDTERM EXAMINATION**
- Week 10
(November 18) Review midterm examination
LECTURE 7a: No Man Is An Island
Response paper VI draft (due by 11 P.M. on Wednesday, November 25)
Reading: Source Packet VII: No Man Is An Island
- Week 11
(November 25) **LECTURE 7b: No Man Is An Island**
Response paper VI (due by class on Wednesday, December 2)
- Week 12
(December 2) **LECTURE 8a: Remember the Ladies**
Response paper VII draft (due by 11 P.M. on Wednesday, December 9)
Reading: Source Packet VIII: Remember the Ladies
- Week 13
(December 9) **LECTURE 8b: Remember the Ladies**
Response paper VII (due by class on Wednesday, December 16)
- Week 14
(December 16) **LECTURE 9a: Applying History**
Response paper VIII draft (due by 11 P.M. on Wednesday, December 23)
Reading: Source Packet IX: Applying History
- Week 15
(December 23) **LECTURE 9b: Applying History**
Response paper VIII (due by class on Wednesday, December 30)
- Week 16
(December 30) **LECTURE 10: Questioning Progress**
- Week 17
(January 6) **FINAL EXAMINATION**
- Week 18
(January 13) Review final examination