

## HISTORY SEMINAR History 5905

Fall 2012  
Wednesday ... 2:00 – 5:20  
265 Labovitz School of Business and Education

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Office Hours: Monday ... 9:00 – 10:00,  
Wednesday ... 9:00 – 10:00,  
and by appointment

### Course Description

This course is designed to serve as a research and writing seminar for history majors working on their capstone projects. While it is possible for majors to satisfy the capstone requirement through completion of an individual directed research project, it is my hope that the dynamics and structure of a collaborative and congenial group environment will make the capstone experience far more profitable and enjoyable than an individually pursued project would allow. We will address issues of history and theory – in particular, how questions about power and “objectivity” relate to the construction of historical narratives – but most of the semester will be devoted to “doing” history. You will, individually and collectively, learn how to effectively conduct research, situate yourself in the historiography, craft persuasive historical arguments, and properly document your findings. Because this seminar will stress the process of history writing, your final grade will not be determined solely by the finished product. Rather, how well you complete the process itself will determine much of your final grade.

### Required Books

Margaret MacMillan. *Dangerous Games: The Uses and Abuses of History*. New York: Modern Library, 2008.

Mary Lynn Rampolla. *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, Seventh Edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2012.

There will also be selected readings posted on the course website.

### Course Requirements

1. Class Participation and Attendance. I expect you to have completed all of the weekly readings listed on the syllabus or conveyed in class before the meeting on the date next to which they appear; I may call on you to answer questions or discuss pertinent points. Because this class relies so heavily on your active participation, attendance is mandatory. Every unexcused absence after the first will result in the lowering of your final grade by one third of a letter grade. In other words, if your work and effort merited a “B” for the course but you had two absences, you would instead receive a “B-”; similarly, three unexcused absences would drop your grade to a “C+.” Legitimate circumstances for an absence include a religious holiday, verifiable illness, serious family emergency, subpoena, jury duty, military service, or participation in a group activity sponsored by the University. However, I must be notified ahead of time of any and all absences. If you are confused or concerned about any of the material in

the course, you are encouraged to speak with me during my office hours. If you cannot meet during my regular office hours, you may e-mail me to schedule an appointment at another time.

2. Research and Writing. All of your work product must be secured in a notebook or binder. This includes feedback you have given (or received); in-class and at-home writings such as the topic statement, annotated bibliography, citation exercises, et cetera; and the drafts of your final paper. You must have these materials with you in every class session, as I may occasionally review them or ask you to discuss them. Each of the following will be worth ten points (i.e., ten percent of your final grade): your first draft, your second draft, and your two presentations to the class. Failure to complete the other written assignments (i.e., the topic statement, annotated bibliography, citation exercises, et cetera) will result in a reduction of your grade. (40 percent of final grade)

3. Research Paper. Drawing on both primary and secondary sources, you will be required to write a 25-page research paper. The paper must examine a historical issue, and it must situate itself within the extant historical literature. This will of course mean familiarizing yourself with the literature – the secondary sources – on the topic about which you are writing. The paper must draw on and engage at least ten primary sources (archival documents or documents in published collections, memoirs, interviews or oral histories, et cetera) and eight scholarly secondary sources (academic books, journal articles, or conference papers, but NOT encyclopedia entries or book reviews). As such, you will need to choose a topic for which sufficient source material is available. In the paper you must clearly identify your thesis and support it with citation to credible evidence. The paper must have a title that gives some indication of its topic, be paginated, and, as its citation method, use Chicago-style endnotes, not footnotes. (The page[s] of endnotes will not count toward the 25-page requirement.) It must also use 12-point Times or Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins. The paper will be the culmination of your semester of research and writing. Papers are due in class on December 12. Late papers will not be accepted. (60 percent of final grade)

### Students with Disabilities

It is the policy and practice of the University of Minnesota, Duluth, to create inclusive learning environments for all students, including students with disabilities. If there are aspects of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or your ability to meet course requirements – such as time-limited exams, inaccessible web content, or the use of non-captioned videos – please notify me as soon as possible. You should also contact the Office of Disability Resources to discuss and arrange reasonable accommodations. Please call 218-726-6130 or visit the Disability Resources website at <[www.d.umn.edu/access](http://www.d.umn.edu/access)> for more information.

### Grading Policy

The following criteria will be used to determine students' grades:

- A ... Achievement outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
- B ... Achievement significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
- C ... Achievement meeting the basic course requirements in every respect.
- D ... Achievement worthy of credit even though it does not fully meet the basic course requirements in every respect.
- F ... Performance failing to meet the basic course requirements.

Grades are based on a one hundred-point scale. The final paper, which comprises sixty percent of your grade, is worth sixty points, for example. I use the following scale in calculating grades:

A ... 94 to 100  
 A- ... 90 to 93.95  
 B+ ... 87 to 89.95  
 B ... 83 to 86.95  
 B- ... 80 to 82.95  
 C+ ... 77 to 79.95  
 C ... 73 to 76.95  
 C- ... 70 to 72.95  
 D ... 67 to 69.95  
 F ... 0 to 66.95

Students who engage in academic dishonesty will be given an “F” in this course and will be reported to the appropriate university authorities for further disciplinary action. According to the *New Student Guide* [<http://www.d.umn.edu/~clasa/cla1001/SA/academicdishonesty.htm>] of the College of Liberal Arts, academic dishonesty includes plagiarism, fabrication, cheating, and academic misconduct. The college defines plagiarism as follows:

Plagiarism is the inclusion of someone else’s product, words, ideas, or data as one’s own work. When a student submits work for credit that includes the product, words, ideas, or data of others, the source must be acknowledged by the use of complete, accurate, and specific references. By placing one’s name on work submitted for credit, the student certifies the originality of all work not otherwise identified by appropriate acknowledgements. On written assignments, if verbatim statements are included, the statements must be enclosed by quotation marks or set off from regular text as indented extracts.

A student will avoid being charged with plagiarism if there is an acknowledgement of indebtedness. Indebtedness must be acknowledged whenever:

1. one quotes another person’s actual words or replicates all or part of another’s product;
2. one uses another person’s ideas, opinions, work, data, or theories, even if they are completely paraphrased in one’s own words;
3. one borrows facts, statistics, or other illustrative materials – unless the information is common knowledge.

Unauthorized collaboration with others on papers or projects can inadvertently lead to a charge of plagiarism. In addition, it is plagiarism to submit as your own any academic exercise (for example, written work, printing, computer program, art or design work, musical composition, and choreography) prepared totally or in part by another.

Plagiarism also includes submitting work in which portions were substantially produced by someone acting as a tutor or editor.

It is your responsibility to thoroughly familiarize yourself with the meaning of the other forms of academic dishonesty – which are defined at the CLA website cited above – and to avoid engaging in these practices at all costs.

### **Classroom Conduct**

Students are expected to follow, and I will enforce, the University’s Student Conduct Code (<http://www.d.umn.edu/assl/conduct/code>). Appropriate classroom conduct promotes an environment of academic achievement and integrity. Disruptive classroom behavior that

interrupts either my ability to teach or the ability of your peers to learn is prohibited. Such behavior includes, but is not limited to, reading the newspaper or books for other courses, talking to your classmates, and inappropriate use of technology in the classroom – from ringing cell phones and text-messaging to watching videos, playing computer games, doing email, or using the Internet instead of note-taking or other instructor-sanctioned activities.

### Reading and Assignment Schedule

*Note: Reading and writing assignments must be completed by the class session next to which they appear. For example, the statement summarizing your proposed topic is due in class on September 12.*

DATE	ACTIVITY	READING/WRITING
September 5	Introduction and Overview	
September 12	Selection of Research Topics / Introduction to Library Research	MacMillan, <i>Dangerous Games</i> , ix-xi, 3-49  Write several paragraphs on your proposed topic, potential sources you might consult, and why you wish to write about the topic.
September 19	Historiography, or What is the Literature and How Do I Situate Myself Within It?	MacMillan, <i>Dangerous Games</i> , 53-109  Read and prepare to discuss questions on J. Samuel Walker, "Recent Literature on Truman's Atomic Bomb Decision: A Search for Middle Ground," <i>Diplomatic History</i> 29:2 (April 2005): 311-334.
September 26	Primary Sources: What Are They? Where Do I Find Them?	MacMillan, <i>Dangerous Games</i> , 113-170
October 3	Individual Meetings	
October 10	Citations and Bibliographies	Complete an annotated bibliography with a minimum of five secondary sources.
October 17	Progress Reports / Assignment of Small Groups for Peer Reviews	Give a ten-minute presentation on your research and writing.
October 24	FIRST DRAFTS DUE	Turn in two copies of your first draft: one for your peer reviewer and one for me. The draft must be at least 10 pages.

October 31	Peer Reviews	Read and critique your peer's first draft.
November 7	Individual Meetings	
November 14	Individual Meetings	
November 21	REVISED DRAFTS DUE	Turn in two copies of your revised draft: one for your peer reviewer and one for me. The revised draft should be at least 20 pages.
November 28	Peer Reviews	Read and critique your peer's second draft.
December 5	Research Presentations	Give a ten-minute presentation on your research findings.
December 12	FINAL PAPERS DUE	Turn in one copy of your final paper.

NOTE: I retain the right to revise or alter the syllabus at any time. I will notify you in class if changes are made.