

## **HIS270: Research Methods Fall 2015**

**Instructor:** William Wood

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**Hours:** Generally, between 2:30 and 5:00, M-F (or anytime you can catch me)

### **Course Objectives and Outcomes**

This course is an introduction to historical methods and the skills necessary for upper division work in history. While writing several short papers and one major research paper, students practice a wide range of research skills such as analyzing primary and secondary texts, working in archives and libraries, editing and revising, note taking, and documentation. In addition, class readings on contemporary historiography acquaint students with the wide range of approaches to history, with a special focus on exploring a Christian perspective of the discipline. Students also visit local libraries, archives, and museums, and are encouraged to investigate the opportunities available for internships and career development during their student years.

Traditionally, each year of HIS270 has had a theme topic to help students focus their research early as well as to be able to assist one another in the process of producing a final research paper. This semester our theme will be the “Cold War” broadly defined. We will use the vast primary and secondary sources available on this significant era in recent world history to practice the various steps involved in historical research. The final outcome will be a polished research paper on a Cold War theme.

### **Required Texts**

Fea, John. *Why Study History? Reflecting on the Importance of the Past*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013.

Trueman, Carl R. *Histories and Fallacies: Problems Faced in the Writing of History*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010.

Storey, William Kelleher. *Writing History: A Guide for Students*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.

*Recommended:* Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 8<sup>th</sup> Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.

Available here: [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)

### **Assignments and Expectations**

1. Regular attendance and participation at every class session is required. As usual, no electronic devices are allowed in my classroom unless authorized by me.
2. Numerous short written assignments will be submitted throughout the semester, covering both assigned readings and practical exercises to enhance your research skills. These will be due at the beginning of class.
3. Research Topic Overview (Prospectus): a 4-5 page summary of your research topic including: working hypothesis/thesis, your methodology or approach, a preliminary bibliography (both

primary and secondary sources), and a preliminary outline of the major sections of your research paper.

4. Journal article abstract: a short (1-2 pages) summary of an academic research article related to your topic.

5. Book Review: again, a relatively short (2-3 pages) review of one of the secondary sources that you are using for your research paper.

6. Analytical Research Paper: approximately 10-15 pages in length, delivered in several stages:

a) first submitted draft of polished historical writing in progress (minimum 5 pages).

b) you will also summarize your research in an oral presentation to the class.

c) a near-final draft of the entire completed paper to be reviewed by one of your peers.

d) the final, stunning piece of historical research. Approximately 10-15 pages in length and due during exam week.

### Grading

Participation (includes short class assignments and your presentation) 20%

Research Assignments (prospectus, journal abstract, book review, and peer review) 30%

Final Research Paper 50%

### Course Calendar

(Note: This is a best guess only. You will be held responsible for any changes made and announced in class, including handouts and additional readings).

<u>DAY</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>READINGS</u>
R	SEP 3	Introduction (to course and theme)	
T	8	Why Study History?	Fea, chap. 1-2
R	10	Choosing a Subject	Storey, chap. 1
T	15	(cont.)	
R	17	<b>Ryan Library visit</b>	Storey, chap. 2
T	22	Uses and abuses of history	Trueman, chap. 1
R	24	(cont.)	
T	29	Historiography	Trueman, chap. 2
R	OCT 1	<b>Journal Abstract due</b>	
T	6	The Past is a Foreign Country	Fea, chap. 3; Trueman, ch. 3
R	8	<b>Prospectus due</b>	
T	13	Christianity and History	Fea, chap. 4-5
R	15	(cont.)	

T		20	What can history do to you?	Fea, chap. 6-7
R		22	(cont.)	
T		27	Bad History: Plagiarism and Fallacies	Trueman, chap. 4
R		29	<b>Book Review due</b>	
T	NOV	3	What to do with a History degree	Fea, ch. 8; Truemen, Conc.
R		5	(cont.)	
T		10	Writing History	Storey, chap. 3-9
R		12	(cont.)	
T		17	Research	
R		19	<b>Paper due to Peer Reviewer</b>	
T		24	Review with peer	
R		26	<b>Thanksgiving</b>	
T	DEC	1	Research/presentations	
R		3	Research/presentations	
T		8	Research/presentations	
R		10	Research/presentations	

**Thursday, December 17: Final Draft of Research Paper Due by 5:00 p.m.**