

## **HIST 536: Sources and Methods**

Spring 2024

### **Instructor Information**

Dr. Kate Brown

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Office hours: By appointment over zoom.

***Email is the best way to contact me.***

### **Course Description**

This course introduces graduate students to history from a professional standpoint—how do professional historians research and write history? What is historiography? What questions do historians ask of what kind of sources?

The primary purpose of this class is 1) to introduce graduate students to methods for developing a primary source-based historical research project of their own, and 2) to produce a prospectus for an article-length work of original historical research.

### **Course Learning Objectives**

We will aim to achieve three objectives throughout our course:

- 1) Learning fundamental concepts necessary to the historical discipline.
- 2) Preparing for MA-level thesis or other article-length work of original research by formulating a research topic and question; researching/annotating primary source and historiographical bibliographies; understanding historiographical debates; formulating a research project prospectus.

### **Course Materials**

**In addition to course materials made available on Blackboard**, the following texts are required (they can be purchased at the WKU bookstore) and will be discussed throughout the semester:

- Sarah Maza, *Thinking about History*
- Alan Gibson, *Interpreting the Founding*

## **Graded Assignments**

- Discussion Participation (4 forums), 20 points total (20%)
- Identifying Primary Sources/Research Question Assignment, 5 points (5%)
- Annotated Primary Sources, 10 points (10%)
- Annotated Bibliography (Historiography), 15 points (15%)
- GW and Historiographical Schools Assignment, 10 points (10%)
- Draft Prospectus, 10 points (10%)
- Final Prospectus, 20 points (20%)
- Defense, 10 points (10 %)

Your final course grade will be calculated based on adding together the points you earn on each assignment. This sum total of points will be your percentage out of 100%.

## **Grading Requirements and Expectations**

### ***General Expectations***

Late work will not be tolerated. Late assignments or non-preparation for our discussions automatically receives a grade of **ZERO** for the assignment and a severe penalty to your participation grade, unless you have made other arrangements with Dr. Brown **prior** to the due date of the assignment or in-class discussion.

### ***Preparing to Write an Article of Original Historical Research***

The end goal of this course is to put you into the position to write an article-length piece of original historical research. The course is light on reading, but heavy on self-directed research into sources and historiography.

The output you produce for this course, culminating in a thesis/article prospectus, is intended to lay the groundwork for your MA thesis or simply the beginning of a project you develop later. Therefore, most of your assignments comprise pieces of the research, writing, and historiographical foundation needed before you dive into research, formulate your argument, and begin to write your thesis/article.

**Formatting Guidelines:** All assignments must be typed in a standard, 12-point font format. Papers should be double-spaced with one-inch margins (please note that this requirement for double spacing does not apply to annotated bibliographies). Citations must conform to *The Chicago Manual of Style*'s guidelines for the "Notes and

Bibliography” system (not the author-date system). Style and grammar matter, so plan to carefully proofread all of your papers. Finally, all assignments must be submitted via Blackboard.

### ***Discussion Board Conversations:***

Since we will not meet together in a classroom, discussion boards will be used to generate communication among us, and they will be used additionally to assess your engagement with the material.

The expectation is that you will engage in constructive participation and discussion throughout the semester, and that you will always interact with Dr. Brown, as well as other students in the course, with complete respect. You are also expected to complete readings before they are due and to work towards improvement over the course of the class.

### Expectations for the discussion board conversations:

You are graduate students, and as such, I expect that you will actively participate in all discussions, actively posing questions, responding to each other (and to Dr. Brown). I expect you to make a minimum of **3+ substantial posts per week. Dr. Brown will ask questions on the discussion board too and will expect answers.** You are responsible for having substantive and constructive conversations among yourselves, discussing the books we read and the work you produce. You are also responsible for ensuring that you respond to me or to other students who ask you questions.

### **Grade Scale**

*A (roughly 90-100 points) – Exceptional work; pays excellent attention to, and clearly achieves, the goals of the assignment (especially pertaining to the student’s analytical efforts and written work)*

*B (roughly 80-89 points) – Good work; shows a significant achievement of the goals of the assignment*

*C (roughly 70-79 points) – Adequate work; demonstrates a basic effort to achieve the goals of the assignment*

*D (roughly 60-69 points) – Less-than-adequate work, demonstrates inadequate attention to the goals of the assignment*

*F (roughly 50-59 points) -- Unacceptable work; demonstrates an outright failure to meet the goals of the assignment*

### **Notices Relating to Online Formats:**

Make sure you know how to use Blackboard: If you have not used Blackboard before, I highly advise that you contact WKU IT Help Desk to complete a Blackboard Student User Training Module.

Blackboard Help/WKU IT Help Desk: 270-745-7000

You can also sign up by signing into Blackboard, clicking the IT TRAINING tab (black with white writing, at the top. Look for IT Blackboard Student User Training.

WKU Online Student Resource Center: <https://www.wku.edu/online/srp/index.php>

Other items needed for an online class (in addition to the course materials described above):

- Access to a computer (your own) with a reliable Internet connection
- Microsoft Word in docx, file format
- The ability to watch videos from YouTube and listen to media (links provided).

### **Course Policies**

#### **Technology & Due Dates (Late Work)**

All required work will be completed online. You will submit your work through the use of Blackboard and the Internet.

Use the syllabus and Blackboard announcements/postings to find out when assignments are due (and the details of each assignment). Any work submitted past the stated deadline will not be accepted and will receive a grade of zero. (All time deadlines occur at 11:59pm CDT.)

#### **Announcements**

I will use email and Blackboard announcements as a way of communicating to the entire class during the course. For individual communications, I will use email or comments posted to your discussion posts. Please look out for email and Blackboard communications from me.

## Work Submission

All work will be submitted via our course site on Blackboard. Work must be submitted in the appropriate docx format (or they will not be graded).

## Failure of Technology

It happens. Plan for it in advance. Late work will NOT be accepted, even if it is late because your laptop/internet connection/electricity, etc. malfunctioned. The only exception to this is if the Blackboard platform is inaccessible to WKU users.

If you find that Blackboard is having issues, contact the IT Help Desk at 270-745-7000.

## Civility and Respectful Behavior

You are expected to express your opinions freely, but respectfully and civilly. If you disagree with me or your fellow classmate, you are expected to do so respectfully. Foul language, slurs, name-calling and other discourse deemed by me to be uncivil will not be tolerated and may result in an automatic failure for that assignment, or an automatic failure from the course.

## **On Plagiarism and Academic Honesty and Integrity**

Plagiarism will not be tolerated, and all assignments must be your original work, produced for this course. Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty where a student either intentionally or unintentionally uses the words/wording and/or ideas of another without proper citation (that is, without proper acknowledgement—see Dr. Brown for the proper way to cite information). This improper use of another's words/wording/ideas/information gives a false or misleading impression that the material is original to the student. Plagiarism will result in an automatic **zero** on the plagiarized assignment, and possibly an automatic F in the course. Plagiarism also violates WKU's Student Code of Conduct:

“The Student Code of Conduct educates students about appropriate behavior and fosters a community in which academic success can occur. The following Student Codes of Conduct are the regulations that apply to ALL WKU students, including the satellite campuses: ...

1. **Dishonesty.** Dishonesty, such as cheating, plagiarism, misrepresenting of oneself or an organization, knowingly furnishing false information to the University, or omitting relevant or necessary information to gain a benefit, to injure, or to defraud is prohibited.”

Because plagiarism is a serious offense, please see Dr. Brown with any and all questions you have when in doubt—and, if in doubt, cite! (See the History Department’s Style Sheet available at the [History Department's Style Sheet, at \(https://www.wku.edu/history/writing/writing-citations.php\)](https://www.wku.edu/history/writing/writing-citations.php)).

Note that common oversights **that count as plagiarism include**: using someone else’s words/phrases/sentences precisely—or almost precisely (e.g. copying their quote and changing around a few words) or paraphrasing their thought—counts as plagiarism unless you use quotes (to indicate direct copying of their words) and/or you include a footnote with a citation to the source of the idea/thoughts/words. If the words, thoughts, phrases, ideas, sentences, etc. are not your own then you **MUST** cite the source of those words, thoughts, phrases, ideas, sentences, etc. or you will be plagiarizing.

As a student at WKU, you are expected to adhere to the university’s “Student Life Policies on Student Rights and Responsibilities” in the Student Handbook. This document is available online at <https://www.wku.edu/studentconduct/student-rights-responsibilities.php>

### **Artificial Intelligence (e.g. ChatGPT) Policy**

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are not permitted for any type of work in this class. If you choose to use these tools, your actions will be considered academically dishonest and a violation of the [WKU Student Code of Conduct](#).

If Dr. Brown suspects you of using ChatGPT or any other artificial intelligence on any assignment, then there are three possible outcomes:

- 1) You receive a zero on the assignment (with possible escalation, see academic integrity policy, below.
- 2) You receive a zero on the assignment until you can prove to Dr. Brown that the work submitted is original (for example, producing multiple, time-stamped drafts from MS Word or a Google Document demonstrating that you produced the work and revised it).
- 3) You receive a zero on the assignment, but Dr. Brown allows you to submit another assignment in its place for substitute credit.

### **A Statement on Title IX Policy**

Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to supporting faculty, staff and students by upholding WKU's Title IX Sexual Misconduct/Assault Policy (#0.2070) and Discrimination and Harassment Policy (#0.2040). Under these policies, discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator, Andrea Anderson, 270-745-5398 or Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe, 270-745-5429 or Joshua Hayes, 270-745-5121. Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, WKU faculty are "Responsible Employees" of the University and MUST report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator. If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's [Counseling and Testing Center](https://www.wku.edu/heretohelp/) (<https://www.wku.edu/heretohelp/>) at 270-745-3159.

### **A Statement on Student Disability Services and the ADA**

In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, 1074. SARC can be reached by phone number at 270-745-5004 [270-745-3030 TTY] or via email at [sarc.connect@wku.edu](mailto:sarc.connect@wku.edu). Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a faculty notification letter (FNL) from The Student Accessibility Resource Center.

See [Syllabus Info](https://www.wku.edu/syllabusinfo/) (<https://www.wku.edu/syllabusinfo/>) for other helpful links and information.

### **A Note on the Syllabus...**

Dr. Brown reserves the right to add to, subtract from, and otherwise modify this syllabus at any time.

## Course Schedule

NOTE: Assigned readings are DUE on the day they appear on the syllabus.

### **Week 1** **Begins Tuesday January 16**

<b>Weekly/Topical Learning Objective</b>	<b>Activities and Assessments</b>	<b>Activities &amp; Assessment Due Dates</b>
Welcome to the course!  Please introduce yourself!  As we get settled into the new semester, be sure to have your two course books purchased and begin reading Maza's <i>Thinking about History</i> .	Read: Begin reading <i>Thinking about History</i>  Participate in: "Introduce Yourself" forum	Reading due next week.  Complete "Introduce Yourself" forum <b>DUE Friday January 19</b>

### **Week 2: Begins Monday January 22**

<b>Weekly/Topical Learning Objective</b>	<b>Activities and Assessments</b>	<b>Activities &amp; Assessment Due Dates</b>
This week we think about the Who, Where, and When of history.	Read: <i>Thinking about History</i> , pgs. 1-117  Participate in: Discussion forum #1	<i>Thinking about History</i> , <b>DUE Thursday January 25</b>  Discussion Forum #1 conversation <b>DUE Sunday January 28</b>

**Week 3: Begins Monday January 29**

<b>Weekly/Topical Learning Objective</b>	<b>Activities and Assessments</b>	<b>Activities &amp; Assessment Due Dates</b>
Develop MA thesis/article topic. Give feedback on other students' topics.	Write: 500 words topic proposal; think carefully—this historical topic should be interesting to you, not too broad (the final article, when you eventually write it, will only be about 10,000 words in length), not too narrow. Pick a topic that you sense is accessible to you (e.g. don't select a topic where sources will be in a language you don't read).  Participate in: Discussion forum #2.	Proposal: <b>Due Thursday February 1</b>  Discussion Forum #2 conversation <b>DUE Sunday February 4</b>

**Week 4: Begins Monday February 5**

<b>Weekly/Topical Learning Objective</b>	<b>Activities and Assessments</b>	<b>Activities &amp; Assessment Due Dates</b>
Thinking about how history is produced—the sources historians engage with, the techniques they use, and the debates—ongoing, scholarly, revisionist—that frame historical work.	Read: <i>Thinking about History</i> , pgs 118-156  Assignment: Find and submit 7 primary sources that are accessible to you for your proposed project.	<i>Thinking about History</i> <b>DUE Thursday February 8</b>  Assignment <b>DUE Sunday February 11</b>

**Week 5: Monday February 12**

<b>Weekly/Topical Learning Objective</b>	<b>Activities and Assessments</b>	<b>Activities &amp; Assessment Due Dates</b>
Production of annotated bibliography of primary sources and a research question to ask of those sources.	Assignment #1: Submit annotation of your selected primary sources (around 100 word annotation for each source). Be sure to describe not only what the source is/what it says but how it will be useful to you.  Assignment #2: Submit the research question you would like to ask of your sources. The answer (whatever it is, you can't know now without doing the research!) will eventually be your thesis/article's argument.	Assignment #1: <b>Due Sunday February 18</b>  Assignment #2: <b>Due Sunday February 18</b>

**Week 6: Monday February 19**

<b>Weekly/Topical Learning Objective</b>	<b>Activities and Assessments</b>	<b>Activities &amp; Assessment Due Dates</b>
Consider tricky questions surrounding the production of history: when sources are silent, do historians write fiction? To what extent does history examine causes or meanings of past events?	Read: <i>Thinking about History</i> , pgs 157-238  Participate in: Discussion forum #3	<i>Thinking about History</i> <b>DUE Thursday February 22</b>  Discussion Forum #3 conversation <b>DUE Sunday February 25</b>

**Week 7: Monday February 26**

<b>Weekly/Topical Learning Objective</b>	<b>Activities and Assessments</b>	<b>Activities &amp; Assessment Due Dates</b>
Engaging with your project's historiography.	Assignment: Assemble and submit an annotated bibliography of the most important secondary scholarship (historiography) for your research project. (Around 100 word annotation for each source; be sure to describe what the source argues, the historiographical debates it weighs in on, and its relevance to your project idea.)	Assignment <b>DUE Sunday March 3</b>

**Week 8: Monday March 4**

<b>Weekly/Topical Learning Objective</b>	<b>Activities and Assessments</b>	<b>Activities &amp; Assessment Due Dates</b>
Explore historiographical schools—including their development over time—with a narrative history that is familiar to us: the historiography of the American founding.	Read: Gibson's <i>Interpreting the Founding</i> (complete)	Finish <i>Interpreting the Founding</i> <b>DUE Sunday March 10</b>

**Week 9: Monday March 11**

<b>Weekly/Topical Learning Objective</b>	<b>Activities and Assessments</b>	<b>Activities &amp; Assessment Due Dates</b>
Apply historiographical approaches featured in <i>Interpreting the Founding</i>	Assignment: Offer interpretations of George Washington's life/actions by applying the interpretations offered by historiographical schools described in Gibson's book	Assignment <b>DUE Sunday March 17</b>

**Week 10: Monday March 18**

<b>Weekly/Topical Learning Objective</b>	<b>Activities and Assessments</b>	<b>Activities &amp; Assessment Due Dates</b>
Spring Break!	Nothing due...but you may want to get started on your draft prospectus.	Nothing due this week.

**Week 11: Monday March 26**

<b>Weekly/Topical Learning Objective</b>	<b>Activities and Assessments</b>	<b>Activities &amp; Assessment Due Dates</b>
Write your draft prospectus and submit for Dr. Brown's feedback.	Assignment: Write draft prospectus.	Draft prospectus <b>DUE Sunday March 31</b>

**Week 12: Monday April 1**

<b>Weekly/Topical Learning Objective</b>	<b>Activities and Assessments</b>	<b>Activities &amp; Assessment Due Dates</b>
Schedule a meeting with Dr Brown to discuss feedback on your prospectus.	Schedule meeting, work on revisions.	We'll do our best to schedule all meetings this week!

**Week 13: Monday April 8**

<b>Weekly/Topical Learning Objective</b>	<b>Activities and Assessments</b>	<b>Activities &amp; Assessment Due Dates</b>
Offering feedback to other students.	Discussion Forum #4: Write and post 500-750 word summary of your project...then,  Offer constructive feedback (not just “oh, how interesting!”) and questions for <u>every other student in the course</u>	<b>Initial post of summary DUE Monday April 8</b>  Discussion Forum #4 DUE <b>Sunday April 14</b>

**Week 14: Begins Monday April 15**

<b>Weekly/Topical Learning Objective</b>	<b>Activities and Assessments</b>	<b>Activities &amp; Assessment Due Dates</b>
Finishing your prospectus.	Incorporate feedback into your prospectus, revise, polish, finalize and submit.	Final prospectus DUE <b>Sunday April 21</b>

***Week 15: Begins Monday April 22***

<b>Weekly/Topical Learning Objective</b>	<b>Activities and Assessments</b>	<b>Activities &amp; Assessment Due Dates</b>
Defense and discussion of research project and prospectus.	Schedule defense with Dr. Brown.	<b>Defense must be scheduled April 22-26 or April 29-May 1.</b>