

## **History Department Writing Plan**

The purpose of this document is to outline expectations for writing emphasis courses within the history department. It identifies what the department values in effective writing, the types of skills we expect our students to develop, and the types of assignments we tend to use in meeting these desired outcomes.

### **Values**

The department agrees that writing is central to history as a discipline. We thus structure classes so as to teach students the following values in their writing:

- Ability to craft an argument and support that argument by using, synthesizing, interpreting, and explaining evidence
- Ability to interpret primary and secondary source evidence
- Clear structure and organization
- Use of concise, direct prose
- Proper, thorough citation of a variety of sources
- Awareness of audience
- Understanding of field-specific terminology
- Accuracy and professionalism in grammar and syntax, including writing in a formal academic voice
- Demonstration of growth in writing skills over time.

Writing in our disciplines requires the ability to clearly convey carefully researched information, from both primary and secondary sources, to a wide variety of audiences, ranging from academic experts to the general public. Writing is the primary way in which historians communicate their research. Because of this, history coursework strives to teach students to communicate their interpretations of evidence clearly, concisely, and effectively. We believe it is essential that their written documents are well-structured, focused, evidence-based, and engaging.

### **Skill Development**

The history department agrees that writing is an ongoing process which offers opportunities for continued improvement. We work as well, however, to teach students to manage their writing assignments in a timely manner in order to meet deadlines and effectively communicate their findings. To that end, our teaching emphasizes the following skills:

- Revision, including completion of multiple drafts, based on feedback
- Frequent short, reflective writing assignments
- Use of outlines and other pre-drafting strategies
- Peer review
- Evaluation of professional historical writing
- Use of library and other research resources
- Research skills for primary and secondary sources
- Proper, thorough use and formatting of references, using Chicago Manual of Style

## **Types of texts we create**

In our teaching, we work to help students become strong writers per disciplinary standards. To this end, students write many types of prose, including:

- Research Papers
- Research Paper Proposals
- Research Paper Abstracts
- Argumentative Essays
- Book/Film Reviews
- Annotated Bibliographies
- Reading Response Papers
- Examination Essays
- Public History Texts (museum exhibits, historical markers, placards, etc.)
- Conference Presentations
- Oral Presentation Aids (e.g. Powerpoint, Prezzi, handouts)
- Informal Texts (e.g. blogs, e-mails, social-media posts, etc.)
- Grant / Research Proposals

## **Courses focused on Writing**

Because of how central writing is to history as a discipline, students can expect to encounter an emphasis on writing, and explicit teaching in writing, in all courses beyond the introductory surveys. We have thus labeled all courses 200 and above, excluding the Internship, as Writing Emphasis.

- HIS-205 The Historian's Craft
- HIS-217 The American War in Vietnam
- HIS-227 The American Civil War
- HIS-238 Modern France
- HIS-246 History of Modern China
- HIS-247 African American History
- HIS-248 The French Revolution
- HIS-256 History of Modern Japan
- HIS-257 Native American History
- HIS-258 The World at War
- HIS-267 The American West
- HIS-268 Latin America
- HIS-272 History of Medieval Europe
- HIS-275 Ancient Greek History
- HIS-285 History of Ancient Rome
- HIS-286 Modern Middle East
- HIS-288 Renaissance and Reformation
- HIS-292 History of Modern England
- HIS-297 Women in America
- HIS-316 Topics in History: Non-Western Perspectives
- HIS-317 Topics in History: United States Pluralism

- HIS-318 Topics in History: Diverse Western Perspectives
- HIS-325 Recent American History I
- HIS-335 Recent American History II
- HIS-335 19<sup>th</sup> Century Europe
- HIS-365 20<sup>th</sup> Century Europe
- HIS-372 Early Modern Europe
- HIS-387 American Colonial History
- HIS-395 United States Diplomatic History
- HIS-444 Independent Study
- HIS-465 Seminar in Ancient History
- HIS-466 Seminar in Modern East Asian History
- HIS-472 Seminar in American History I
- HIS-473 Seminar in American History II
- HIS-474 Seminar in Modern European History