**History 5800 Fall 2018**

**The Historian as Public Intellectual**

**Professor Chris Endy**

Meetings: Tuesdays, 6:00 to 8:45 pm in King Hall D1053

My Office: King Hall 4076A

Email: cendy@calstatela.edu

Office Hours: Tues/Thur: 3:00 to 4:00pm & 5:30 to 5:55pm

*I can also meet at other times; please ask me.*

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**Course Overview:** HIST 5800 revolves around a few broad questions: What is the relationship between academic history and the wider world? How does academic history contribute to (or detract from) historical thinking among non-academic communities? How can academic historians learn from and serve broader society?

HIST 5800 also has a practical element: How can you translate the work you have done in your MA program to professional and civic opportunities after you graduate? This practical element of the course will include career-building activities such as practice interviews, application letters, and statements of purpose. We will develop authentic and meaningful ways to highlight the relevance of graduate study in history to businesses, non-profits, government agencies, K-12 schools, and other groups.

HIST 5800 is a project-based seminar. We will start the semester with some common readings, and then you will propose and undertake your own project for the seminar. For the second part of the semester, we will meet regularly to provide each other with support and feedback on our projects.

**Required Readings:** There are no books to purchase for this seminar, but you may need to obtain books for your project. We will have numerous articles and chapters and other readings available via Canvas, campus databases, and the open internet. You should also subscribe to the History News Network to receive their regular email digests of “historians in the news.” I expect you to read at least 3-4 articles a week that appear on HNN.

**Grades and Assignments:**

Class Participation 12%

Your Project

Proposal 2%

Check-In #1 6%

Check-In #2 6%

Final Submission 25%

Four-Minute Presentation 3%

Feedback on Classmates’ Check-Ins 4%

Reading Responses (x4) 22% 5.5% each

History News Network Presentation 5%

Op-Ed Essay #1 4%

Op-Ed Essay #2 5%

Resumé/CV and Mock Cover Letter 3%

Mock Interview (easy perfect score) 3%

**Reading Responses**

Each week’s set of Reading Responses will contain a “menu” of book chapters and articles that you can choose. Normally, you will select four of those chapters and articles and provide the following for each one:

1. a 50-word summary of the author’s thesis or main point.

2. a brief reflection or comment on what you’ve read. Do not provide summary here. Instead, offer an idea that you developed thanks to the reading or provide a critique of the reading. You could also draw an interesting connection between that reading and another HIST 5800 reading, or develop an interesting connection to your HIST 5800 project.

Your will post each response to Canvas. Once you post your response, you will be able to see other students’ responses to that same reading. We will use these responses as a springboard for in-class discussion.

**History News Network Presentation**

When it is your turn to present, please select two recent articles or op-ed essays that you found via HNN. Prepare an informal three-minute presentation on each one (six minutes total). Your presentation should provide a clear summary of the author’s main point, along with your own commentary on the author’s argument. In other words, you can think of this activity as an “oral-presentation” version of our reading responses.

**Op-Ed Essays**

An op-ed essay should be about 700 words, and you should write it in the brisk, clear style that newspaper and website editors prefer. No big words! No academic jargon! Avoid long sentences. Got it? Good. Let’s move on. Your first op-ed essay should select a graduate-level seminar paper that you have written for another class (e.g. a big paper of ten or more pages) and figure out a way to “translate” your paper’s argument in a form and style that will appeal to audiences outside a college classroom. Your second op-ed essay can also derive from an earlier graduate-level assignment, or you can select a new topic. We will explore general principles of op-ed writing during Week 4.

**Your HIST 5800 Project**

You are welcome to propose and develop any project that fits with our course themes. Because the scope and nature of each project will differ, this syllabus does not provide specific assignment guidelines. To ensure consistency and fairness, here is a basic guideline: a good project should require the same time and intellectual energy required for researching and writing a graduate-level 10-12 page primary-source research paper. When we work on your specific project proposal (due September 9th), we can work together to establish expectations for the length or scope of your project. You may also work together in a small team on a shared project if you want.

Here is a list of possible topics for projects:

-creation of a teaching portfolio: syllabi, lesson plans, statement of teaching philosophy

-theoretical exploration of history education issues (e.g. What is historical thinking? How do we promote it? How do we measure it?)

-theoretical and/or practical analysis of historical archives, museums, oral history programs, websites, documentaries, and historical parks or sites

-analysis of specific historians whose work engages in extra-academic political or community issues (e.g. historians as expert witnesses in court cases, historians’ role in truth and reconciliation processes, historians as social activists, historians as media pundits).

-relationships between academic knowledge and indigenous knowledge or community knowledge

-politics and process of historical preservation (e.g. designating historical landmarks)

-relationship between academic historiography and “best-selling” history (e.g. "great man" biography, Zinn's People's History series, Bill O’Reilly’s book series, counterfactual history, Hollywood history, and conspiracy theory history).

Note: This is just a partial list. Feel free to propose any idea that relates to our class themes.

**Late Policy:** Out of fairness to other students, late assignments during the semester will be marked down in four-point steps for each week late. For instance, a 92 (A-) paper that is turned in a week after the due date will receive an 88. The same paper turned in two weeks late will receive an 84. Papers received more than an hour after the stated deadline will be treated as a week late. Late finals are strongly discouraged and can result in a failing grade for the class. Also note that late reading notes may affect your class participation grade.

The Free Late: On two occasions, you can submit reading notes or an essay a week after the due date with no penalty. Simply write “Free Late” near the top when you submit it. You may only take advantage of this option twice; use it wisely. For instance, if you use your free late for reading responses twice early in the semester, you cannot use it later.

**What Should I Do If I Start to Fall Behind?:** Sometimes work, health, or family can make it hard to attend class or meet deadlines. If you see a problem approaching, please stop by office hours or send me an email to keep me posted. When an unexpected problem arises, please let me know as soon as possible. If a real hardship arises and you let me know what’s going on at an early stage, I will do my best to work with you and help you do well in the class.

**Plagiarism**: Plagiarism refers to the use of another author’s words or ideas without acknowledgement of this use. This includes copying from texts or web pages as well as submitting work done by somebody else. Other forms of plagiarism include altering a few words or the sentence structure of someone else’s writing and presenting it as your own writing (that is, without quotation marks or footnotes). Violators will receive at minimum a zero on the assignment and will be reported to University authorities.

**Disabilities:** As your professor, I want all students to succeed in this class. If you have a disability or any other issue that affects your learning, please let me know at any time. Also take note of the resources at the Office for Students with Disabilities (Student Affairs Building Room 115, 323-343-3140). If you have a verified accommodations form, please show it to me by Week Two.

**Change:** I reserve the right to make reasonable changes to the syllabus when needed.

**CLASS PARTICIPATION**

Your participation grade will reflect both your attendance and your participation in activities. **What is good class participation?** Good class participation comes in many forms. It does *not* mean talking as often as possible in class. Here are different ways that you can achieve good class participation:

-**Read** carefully before class. Come to class with paper copies of the readings and good reading notes. Use the core class question on page 1 of the syllabus to guide your note-taking on the readings. Be prepared to point to specific page references in class. This is one of the most important steps you can take for good class participation.

-**Help** members of your small group. Receive help with enthusiasm.

-Raise your hand often and **share** ideas on a regular basis.

-**Ask** questions, no matter how broad or small.

-Get to know your classmates. Start a casual **conversation** while waiting for class to start, or right after class ends.

-Frame your comments in **response** to what classmates have said. If a classmate says something that strikes you as smart, funny, or provocative, let us know.

-Be a **leader**. Be aware of what the group or class needs at any given moment to keep our energy and focus on track. That could mean sharing a question, a reading passage, a joke, etc. It could mean keeping a small group on task. It could mean letting a constructive silence continue.

-Be aware if you are speaking too much. For students with a tendency to speak all the time, good class participation can mean stepping back and seeing what you and others can learn by ***listening*** to classmates for a while.

-Pay attention to **emotions**—yours and others. An honest examination of history requires us to explore the role of racism, sexism, and other forms of prejudice in both the past and the present. Discussing these topics can sometimes be disturbing or upsetting, but this discomfort is often an essential part of the learning process. Hopefully, you will find yourself provoked, intrigued, at times amused, but above all enlightened during this class. You can help in this effort by respecting the views of your classmates and by being eager to listen to what classmates and historical sources have to say.

-Visit my **office hours**. This counts as class participation.

-Send me an **email**. This also counts as class participation

-**Attend** class. This is big. If you have responsibilities outside your academic studies, make sure that you can prioritize attending class.

-One final rule: To promote classroom cohesiveness, all laptops, tablets, cell phones, or other **electronic devices** should be turned off and hidden in the classroom.

**BRIEF WRITING GUIDE**

**If you *practice* these seven tips, you can learn to write strong essays.**

**Tip 1. Write with a concise introduction and thesis statement**. Start the essay with a half-page intro. The intro needs to include a thesis statement that clearly answers the assigned question. Avoid details and evidence in the intro, but let readers know the basic reasoning behind your thesis.

**Tip 2. Topic sentence** **arguments (TSA’s) are crucial to good argumentative essays, but they rarely emerge in first drafts**. A topic sentence is the first sentence of a paragraph in the body of an essay. Each topic sentence should have a TSA (mini-thesis statement) that conveys the main argument of that paragraph. When you start body paragraphs with a clear and interesting TSA, you can show to your readers (and yourself) that you know the main point of that paragraph. Most first drafts (including my own) have weak TSA’s and bury the main idea at the end of the paragraph. The best time to work on good TSA’s is after you complete your first draft. At that point, you know the main point of each paragraph and you can better summarize that point in the opening TSA.

**Tip 3. Write with clear paragraphs.** In the body of your essay, a paragraph should offer just one basic point. Paragraphs should rarely run more than 1/2 or 2/3 of a page (typed, double-spaced). If a draft paragraph grows longer, break it in two and give each new paragraph a good TSA.

**Tip 4. Use lots of short quotations, and provide adequate context for each one.** Explain who wrote or said the words you are quoting. When useful, convey how that person’s position in

**Tip 5. Write in the active voice.** The active voice stands in contrast to the passive voice. Passive voice hides key information from your readers. When faced with passive-voice sentences, your audience cannot tell who took the action (or held the viewpoint) that your sentence describes. Historians care deeply about cause and effect. For this reason, active-voice sentences do a better job than the passive voice in conveying causality.

PASSIVE VOICE: The union was accused of being communist.

ACTIVE: Truman accused the union of being communist.

PASSIVE: By 1942, the unemployment problem was solved.

ACTIVE: By 1942, military spending solved the unemployment problem.

**Tip 6. Save time to revise your drafts.** Good writing takes time. You can only achieve clear TSA’s and concise prose if you have time to revise your draft at least two times.

**Tip 7. Seek advice and ask questions.** I am very happy to work with you individually to improve your writing skills. Please visit office hours to talk more. If you cannot make my office hours, I am very happy to schedule another time to meet.

**How Can I Get Help?**

1. Talk to me! See Tip 7 above. Helping students write argumentative essays is part of my job, and I enjoy working with students on their writing.

2. Visit the University Writing Center. The UWC can provide free tutoring help. Find the UWC in JFK Library, Palmer Wing, room 1039A. Stop by, call (323-343-5350), or visit their website:

http://www.calstatela.edu/uwc

3. A great online resource comes from the Writing Center at the University of North Carolina. Visit the website below and you can find “handouts” offering advice on grammar issues (e.g. run-ons, passive-voice, quotation set-ups) and on “big picture” issues (e.g. thesis statements and how to avoid procrastination):

http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

*All assignments due by the start of class, unless otherwise noted.*

# Week 1: August 21st

Class Introduction—No Assignments

**Week 2: August 28th**

Reading Responses #1 Due

**Week 3: September 4th**

Reading Responses #2 Due

**Week 4: September 9th (SUNDAY)**

Project Proposal Due by 11:59pm (electronic submission)

**Week 4: September 11th**

Workshop in Classroom on Project Proposals

Short readings on how to prepare an op-ed essay (TBA)

**Week 5: September 18th**

Reading Responses #3 Due

**Week 6: September 25th**

Op-Ed Essay #1 Due

**Week 7: October 2nd**

Workshop in Classroom on Your Project—No Assignments

**Week 8: October 7th (SUNDAY)**

Check-In #1 Due by 5pm (electronic submission)

**Week 8: October 9th**

Feedback on Classmates’ Check-Ins Due

**Week 9: October 16th**

Reading Responses #4 Due

**Week 10: October 23rd**

Op-Ed Essay #2 Due

**Week 11: October 30th**

Short readings on cover letters, cv’s, and interviews

**Week 12: November 4th (SUNDAY)**

Check-In #2 Due by 5pm (electronic submission)

**Week 12: November 6th**

Feedback on Classmates’ Check-Ins Due

Resumé/CV and Mock Cover Letter Due

Mock Interviews, Round 1 of 2

**Week 13: November 13th**

Workshop in Classroom on Your Project

Mock Interviews, Round 2 of 2

**THANKSGIVING BREAK (No Class on Nov. 20th)**

**Week 14: November 27th**

Workshop in Classroom on Your Project

Zachary Shore, “How to Speak,” in Shore, *Grad School Essentials: A Crash Course in Scholarly Skills* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016), 78-96.

\*\*Note: Your four-minute project presentation should demonstrate oral presentation principles discussed by Shore.

**Week 15: December 4th**

Workshop in Classroom on Your Project

Four-Minute Project Presentations, Round 1 of 2

**Finals Week: December 11th (Tuesday from 5 to 7pm)**

Final Project due by 5:00 pm

Four-Minute Project Presentations, Round 2 of 2

Potluck party to celebrate!