

History 5800
Spring 2021
The Historian as Public Intellectual
Professor Chris Endy

Meetings and Contact Information

Class Meeting Times: Tuesdays, 6:00 to 8:45 pm via Zoom

Office Hours: Tuesdays: 1:40 to 2:10 and 5:00 to 5:55pm

Other times: I am very happy to schedule Zoom meetings at other times during the week.

Please send me an email to arrange a time.

Office hours are times that faculty set aside to meet with students to talk about any topic.

You do not need to make an appointment for office hours. You can just pop in unannounced.

If I am meeting with another student, please remain in the Zoom waiting room and I will buzz you in when I'm free.

Email: cendy@calstatela.edu

Website: I have a personal faculty webpage with advice on surviving college and links to some of my favorite things: <http://www.calstatela.edu/faculty/christopher-endy>.

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.

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	3%	
Op-Ed Essay #1	4%	
Op-Ed Essay #2	5%	
Resumé/CV and Mock Cover Letter	5%	
Mock Interview (easy perfect score)	3%	

Reading Responses

Each week's set of Reading Responses will contain a set of book chapters, articles, and/or websites for you to read and analyze. For each reading, you should write:

1. a 50-word summary of the author's thesis or main point.
2. a 100-word reflection or comment on that reading (or website). Do not provide summary. Instead, offer an idea that you developed thanks to the reading or provide a critique. 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.

Post each response to the appropriate Canvas discussion thread before class on the Tuesday evening when we will discuss those readings. 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 Zoom class discussions.

History News Network and HNN Oral Presentations

You are expected to subscribe to the [History News Network](#) to receive their regular email digests of "historians in the news." I recommend that you get in the habit of reading at least three or four articles a week that appear on HNN. In my opinion, the best articles appear in their [Roundup](#) section. When you subscribe for HNN email digests, you will receive a "top 10" Roundup email every Friday morning. If you want to get the most bang for your buck, I recommend that you focus on the articles listed in that Friday email. HNN also provides a Monday morning email listing new articles, which is also useful. Warning: The articles that appear on the regular HNN webpage often vary in quality. The "Roundup" articles for HNN are more consistently of high quality, which is why I recommend starting there.

How to subscribe to HNN

Head to [HNN](#) and click on the "Subscribe" button in the top-right corner. Enter your email and your first name. Don't worry about the other lines; you can leave them blank.

History News Network Oral Presentation

When it is your turn to present, select a recent article or op-ed essay that you found via HNN. By 5pm on the Sunday before your class presentation, post the web link for your selected article or essay to our HNN Discussion Thread on Canvas. All students should read the article before class on Tuesday. When it is your week to present, prepare an informal three-minute presentation on the article. In those three minutes, provide a brief summary of the author's main argument, along with your own analysis. To develop your analysis, consider these questions:

- How persuasive do you find the author's argument?
- Did the author do a good job using history to make a point about the present?
 - If yes, how did the author do it so well?
 - If not, what went wrong?
- How does this article connect to other readings or topics we've discussed in class?

You do not need to answer all of these questions. These are just for brainstorming. You can also address other questions, as you see fit.

Op-Ed Essays

Each op-ed essay should be about 700 words long. Write using 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.

First Op-Ed Essay:

For your first op-ed essay, select a research paper or graduate-level seminar paper that you wrote for another history class (e.g. a big paper of ten or more pages). Then "translate" your paper's argument in a form and style that will appeal to audiences outside a college classroom. Explain how knowledge of this history can help us think better about the present or future. We will explore general principles of op-ed writing before the first due date.

Second Op-Ed Essay:

Your second op-ed can also derive from a pre-existing paper, or you can start from scratch with a new topic. Just make sure that your essay draws on historical thinking or expertise.

Alternative Assignment for the Second Op-Ed Essay:

You have the option of doing a "rewrite and submit" of your first op-ed to earn credit for this second op-ed essay. With this option, you will do a major rewrite of your first essay and then submit it to a real-life public venue (e.g. a website or newspaper) in hopes of getting it published. Please make sure that you really re-write your first essay. Do not simply make cosmetic changes, and do not merely respond to whatever specific suggestions I provided on your first draft. Give the piece a major reworking. Move around sentences. Eliminate weak sections and replace them with better ideas or examples. Pay attention to sentence structure so that the essay buzzes with energy. For submission credit, provide me with proof of actual submission within seven days of the due date. You are also welcome to show me in advance your email "sales pitch" and "author bio" that you will probably want to include with your submission. I'm happy to provide feedback on those before you submit your essay to a real-life editor.

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 February 14th), 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 versions of history, video game versions of 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 three-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 89. The same paper turned in two weeks late will receive an 86. Papers received more than an hour after the stated deadline will be treated as a week late. Late projects are strongly discouraged. Also note that late reading responses may affect your class participation grade.

The Free Late: On two occasions, you can submit an assignment a week after the due date with no penalty. Simply write "Free Late" near the top or as a Canvas submission comment when you submit your work. 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.

Attendance

Key features of this course revolve around learning that we do together in the Zoom classroom. If you miss class, you will miss the heart of this course. Please make attending *each* class session your top priority. Please arrive on time and stay until the end. If an unexpected emergency arises, send me an email as soon as possible. Missing one or two classes during the semester will not hurt your grade, but further absences will. These absences will also result in a lower class participation score. **Students will automatically fail the course if they miss five or more class sessions.**

Plagiarism

Plagiarism refers to the use of another author's words or ideas without acknowledgement of this use. This includes copying from texts or webpages 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). If you commit plagiarism, you can receive a zero on the assignment and I may report you to University authorities.

How Can I Avoid Plagiarism? As a professor, I've noticed that students often resort to plagiarism when they run out of time or don't understand how to do an assignment. If you find yourself drifting toward plagiarism, visit my office hours or send me an email. I can help you get through the assignment or calculate the (modest) late penalty. You will be much better off taking a small late penalty than committing plagiarism.

The best way to avoid plagiarism is to learn the rules of how and when to cite and quote. Here are two good websites:

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/plagiarism/>

and

<http://calstatela.libguides.com/content.php?pid=669390&sid=5542610>

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](#). 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—WHAT IS IT?

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 and **take notes** on those readings. Use the course overview at the start of the syllabus to determine what's important in 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 casual **conversations** and post to our Canvas discussion threads.

-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 and society requires us to explore 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.

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 Writing 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. For more writing tips, see [this handout](#) I made for my faculty [web page](#)
3. 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>
4. 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 via Canvas by the start of class, unless otherwise noted.

Week 1: January 26th

Class Introduction—No Assignments

Week 2: February 2nd – Community Ties: Historians and the “Public”

Reading Responses #1 Due. Write summaries and analysis for all five of the items below.

Post your work for each author (Dickey, Banner, Abrego, Wineburg, and Roffman) in the appropriate Canvas discussion thread. All readings also appear on Canvas.

Readings (listed in suggested order of reading):

Jennifer Dickey, “Public History and The Big Tent Theory.” *The Public Historian* 40 (November 2018): 37-41.

James M. Banner, Jr. *Being a Historian: An Introduction to the Professional World of History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Just read pages 144-49 (on public history vs. academic history) and pages 157-67 (on public intellectuals). These pages come from his chapter, “History Outside the Academy.”

Leisy J. Abrego, “On Silences: Salvadoran Refugees Then and Now,” *Latino Studies*, 15 (April 2017): 73-85.

Sam Wineburg, Mark Smith, and Joel Breakstone, “What is Learned in College History Classes?,” *Journal of American History* 104 (2018): 983-993.

Karin Roffman, *John Ashbery’s Nest* (<http://vr.ashberyhouse.yale.edu>). Spend about 15-20 minutes exploring this website. Be sure to click on the top-right menu and read the “About” section. For your 50-word summary of the author’s thesis, focus on project director Karin Roffman. What do you think her main thesis or purpose is with this project?

Week 3: February 9th – Scholarship on Teaching and Learning (SoTL)

Reading Responses #2 due by 6:00pm

Readings to be determined by the end of January.

Week 4: February 14th (SUNDAY)

Project Proposal Due by 11:59pm

Week 4: February 16th – The Op-Ed Genre // Developing your Project

Workshop on Project Proposals

Short readings on how to prepare an op-ed essay. See Canvas for details.

Guest speaker: Journalist Marc Haefele

Week 5: February 23rd – Museums, Archives, and Digital History

Reading Responses #3 due by 6:00pm

Readings to be determined by early February.

Guest speaker: Professor and Digital History Expert Sharon Block (UC Irvine)

Week 6: March 2nd

Op-Ed Essay #1 due by 6:00pm

Week 7: March 9th

Workshop in Classroom on Your Project—No Assignments

Week 8: March 14th (SUNDAY)

Check-In #1 due by 6:00pm

Week 8: March 16th

Feedback on Classmates' Check-Ins due by 6:00pm

Week 9: March 23rd – Theme to be determined

Reading Responses #4 due by 6:00pm

Readings to be determined.

Guest speakers on teaching history in community colleges

Spring Break—No Class on March 30th

Week 10: April 6th

Op-Ed Essay #2 (or revised version of first op-ed if you are submitting it) due by 6:00pm

Week 11: April 13th

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

Week 12: April 18th (SUNDAY)

Check-In #2 due by 6:00pm

Week 12: April 20th

Feedback on Classmates' Check-Ins due by 6:00pm

Resumé, CV, and Mock Cover Letter due by 6:00pm

Mock Interviews, Round 1 of 3

Week 13: April 27th

Workshop in Classroom on Your Project

Mock Interviews, Round 2 of 3

Week 14: May 4th

Workshop in Classroom on Your Project

Mock Interviews, Round 3 of 3

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: May 11th

Workshop in Classroom on Your Project

Four-Minute Project Presentations, Round 1 of 2

Finals Week: May 18th at 6:00pm

Four-Minute Project Presentations, Round 2 of 2

Finals Week: May 21st (FRIDAY)

Final Project due by 11:59pm