

History 506:401 Section 6
Undergraduate Seminar
VIEWS OF THE AMERICAS FROM THE OUTSIDE
FALL 2015
Monday 6:10-9:00 p.m.
Scott Hall 215

This is the syllabus for the seminar on "Views of the Americas from the Outside" from Fall 2015. Specific assignments, readings or topics may be different in Fall 2018; but the general structure of the course will be very similar.

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Office Hours:
Tues. 4:30-5:30 & Wed., 3:00-4:00
or by appointment

Core curriculum requirements met by seminar

Cognitive Skills & Processes: Writing and Communication [WC]

- Communicate complex ideas effectively, in standard written English, to a general audience.
- Respond effectively to editorial feedback from peers, instructors, and/or supervisors through successive drafts and revision. [WCr]
- Communicate effectively in modes appropriate to a discipline or area of inquiry. [WCd]
- Evaluate and critically assess sources and use the conventions of attribution and citation correctly.
- Analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights.

Travelers from outside the region often documented their travels to the America. These travelers included a wide variety of individuals: conquerors, government administrators, Church officials, wealth seekers, adventurers (& adventuresses), scientists, military people, migrants, and weirdoes. What they found, and what they wrote about their experiences, reveals much about life in various American settings; it also reveals much about the worlds from which the writers came.

For this history seminar, you will be doing what professional historians do: researching a question about the human past and presenting your results to other interested readers. We use the original writings of travelers to the Americas (North or South or Caribbean) from the early Colonial era through the middle of the twentieth century to explore the perceptions of outsiders to the region. I have broken down the individual steps that historians undertake while we research and present our ideas about the past. The final research paper is only the end result of solid research and writing. To reach that goal, you need a serious commitment to your project. However, I also assume that you have not had a class of this nature before. I hope and expect to work with each student individually. My goal is to make the activity of undertaking research more manageable and more fun.

Readings

Available at Rutgers Bookstore, and at the Undergraduate Reserve Reading desk

- Erauso, Catalina de; *Lieutenant Nun: A Memoir of a Basque Transvestite in the New World*
- Storey, William *Writing History*

Readings available electronically

- [Cabeza de Vaca, A.N. *Adventures in the Unknown Interior of America*](#) Introduction & Ch. 15-26 (page through the file to get to Chapters 15-26.)
- [The Journal of Conrad Weiser, Esqr., Indian Interpreter, To the Ohio \(1748\)](#)

Course Requirements and Grading (please read carefully):

1. Attendance at all scheduled class meetings. This class requires that you complete all assignments prior to class, and participate in all class activities. The participation component of your grade will reflect the quantity and quality of your contributions to class discussions. (Attendance, without contribution to discussion does not count as participation.) Class participation will account for 20% of your grade for the class.
2. Three short papers (each about 3-5 pages) based on the assigned readings. Paper topics are on the schedule of class session. These are broad topics; you should discuss them from the perspective that seems most relevant or interesting to you. (Each paper will be 5% of your course grade; but failure to submit a paper will lower your final grade for the class by ½ grade.) **You need to underline your thesis statement in every paper you submit.**
3. Interim steps towards your final paper:
 - a. A formal research proposal, with statement of topic and preliminary bibliography.
 - b. Interim progress reports on the work that you have done on your project during the previous week (dates for progress reports are noted with the class sessions)
 - c. Outline of paper, with initial thesis statement underlined.
 - d. Rough draft of paper (defined as complete draft, including all topics your paper will cover, footnotes and bibliography), with thesis statement underlined.
 - e. A 10-15 minute presentation to the class of your final paper.
4. A 20-30 page paper which cogently discusses your topic, sources, methodology and findings, and with thesis statement underlined. (The paper, including the interim steps above, will contribute towards 65% of your final grade.)

Due dates are noted in class schedule below. Each assignment is due in the Sakai Assignment Box by midnight on their due dates (the day before class meets.) The research proposal, outline and rough draft are ungraded. However, any one of these (including progress reports) not submitted on schedule will result lowering your final grade by ½ grade

CLASS SESSIONS

- 8 Sept. **Note unusual meeting day (University change of class scheduling)**
Introduction
- 14 Sept. Issues in research
- Choosing a topic
- Read [Cabeza de Vaca, A.N. *Adventures in the Unknown Interior of America*](#)
Introduction & Ch. 15-26 (page through the file to get to Chapters 15-26.)
Writing History, Ch. 1
- Due Cabeza de Vaca spent years as a shipwreck survivor, wandering from what is now Florida to what is now Mexico City. During these years, he came across many different groups of native Americans and engaged in many different types of interactions with them. Based on the chapters that you have read, write a 3 to 5 page paper on Cabeza de Vaca's views of native Americans: What were his views about them? How did his views vary according to circumstance? Did his views reflect a predisposed opinion? You should develop a cohesive argument focused on a specific theme or idea that you find most important. (Underline your thesis statement.)
- 21 Sept. Library session – search strategies in research [tentative]
Issues in research
- What is a project proposal?
 - Working with “primary sources”
- Read *Writing History*, Chs. 2 and 3
- Meet with me during week of 14-21 Sept. (after class on 14 or 21 Sept., during office hours, or by appointment) to discuss your first ideas for a project topic.
- 28 Sept. Issues in research
- What is a progress report?
- Read Erauso, Catalina de; *Lieutenant Nun: A Memoir of a Basque Transvestite in the New World*
Writing History, Chs. 2 and 3
- Due Project proposal – with initial primary sources indicated.
3-5 page paper on: What are the circumstances that bring Catalina de Erauso to Peru, and how do they affect her perceptions of the society she finds?
(Underline your thesis statement.)
- 5 Oct. Due First progress report
Bring to class: ONE of the primary sources for your project.
Be prepared to discuss your primary source: What is it? What do you expect it to provide for your project?

CLASS SESSIONS

- 12 Oct. Issues in research
Read [The Journal of Conrad Weiser, Esqr., Indian Interpreter, To the Ohio \(1748\)](#)
Writing History, Ch. 4 and 6
Due Although set in very different times, places and situations, the three primary sources that we have read include portrayals of how outsiders interacted with and understood native Americans. Write a 3-5 page paper that identifies the most important commonalities and differences among the three travellers (Cabeza de Vaca, Catalina de Arauso and Conrad Weiser) in their understandings of the native Americans that they came in contact with.
Progress report
- 19 Oct. No class meeting*
Due Progress report
- 26 Oct. Issues in research
Read *Writing History* Ch. 5
Due Outline – with initial thesis statement and current bibliography
- 2 Nov. Issues in research
Read *Writing History*, Chs. 7 and 10
Due Progress report
Draft of one section of the body of your paper (3-5 pages; not from the introduction or conclusion) – and if drafting this section has changed your mind about your thesis, included your re-stated thesis.
Include at the beginning of your paper your topic and current thesis (if necessary, re-stated from earlier versions.)
You will send the draft section to one of your classmates the day before class meets, and you will receive somebody else's draft section the day before class meets. Be prepared to discuss the section that you receive in class.
- 9 Nov. No class meeting*
Due Progress report
- 16 Nov. Problems in research
Read *Writing History*, Ch. 9
Due Progress report
- 23 Nov. Due 1st full draft of paper (with current version of thesis statement underlined)
You will send the draft section to one of your classmates the day before class meets, and you will receive somebody else's draft section the day before class meets. Be prepared to discuss the section that you receive in class.
- 30 Nov. Presentations
7 Dec. Presentations
Final papers due (again, underline your thesis.)

* On dates when class does not meet, but assignments and/or progress reports are due into the

CLASS SESSIONS

appropriate Sakai assignment box ("Machine problems" are not an excuse for late work.) On dates when we do not meet, feel free to meet with me individually to talk about your project.