HISTORY 250: HISTORICAL INQUIRY

- Monday & Wednesday 2:10– 3:30PM
- Department of History, Ohio Wesleyan University
- Fall Semester 2007
- Jeremy Baskes, ext. 3638
- Office Hours: Just call or stop by

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**
The objective of this course is to introduce students to historical research, writing, and analysis as well as develop students’ appreciation for the field of history and the craft of the historian. History is not simply the recording of facts. Historians attempt to explain past events and interpret historical trends. Interpretations of the past, however, are inevitably influenced by the historians’ own biases. Is the past knowable at all? Can historians of the twenty-first century ever truly understand the societies of ancient civilizations? Is it possible to reconstruct the life of a slave from the comfort of a library? Over the course of the semester, the student will read and discuss what the "experts" have argued on such issues. In the process, students will learn how to research and construct their own research projects.

**BOOKS TO BE PURCHASED:**

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**
This will be one of the most demanding history courses that you take at Ohio Wesleyan. One of the main purposes of this course is to teach you how to write. There are numerous assignments, and you will be required to submit only very carefully written work. The professor will not accept work that fails to demonstrate a real effort on the part of the author. Rigorous training need not be unpleasant; in general, this will be a fun and rewarding course for the hard working student.

**ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION:**
The size of this class was deliberately kept small to enable you greater opportunity to participate in class and to work directly with the professor. You will be required to participate regularly and frequently in class discussions, and this participation will determine a significant percentage of your final grade.

**MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS:**

**TOPIC PROPOSAL:** Each student will prepare two 750 word topic proposals. One will be the basis for a research paper written during the semester on some topic of the Mexican Revolution. The second will serve to teach students about historiography and preparing of bibliographies. The latter might also become the basis for the student’s senior seminar project. (see Guidelines for further details)

**PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS:** Each student will prepare a critical analysis of a primary source related to the research paper on the Mexican Revolution. (750 words) The paper should comment on the author’s intentions, bias, intended audience, etc. (see Guidelines for further details)

**RESEARCH PAPER:** Each student will write a research paper on a topic related to the Mexican Revolution. Students will select their own narrow paper topics and will submit a topic proposal for approval and a grade. Several drafts of the paper will be due during the course of the semester. Papers should be 2000-2500 words of text plus footnotes and a bibliography. Papers should correspond with the standards set forth in Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*. Second drafts of the papers will be read and critiqued by fellow class members. (see Guidelines for further details)

**CRITIQUES OF PEERS’ PAPERS:** Student research papers will be circulated for class discussion regarding such matters as content, organization, style, grammar, etc.. Not only will this exercise increase students’ appreciation of well written materials, but will be useful to them in revising their own papers. (see Guidelines for further details)
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BIBLIOGRAPHY/ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY: Each student will submit a bibliography of at least 75 titles. The student should select a diverse variety of sources (monograph, journal article, primary source, etc.). Thirty (30) of these should be annotated; students should provide a brief (several sentences) description of the works’ focus, argument and relevance to the selected research project. (see Guidelines for further details)

LATE ASSIGNMENTS: Assignments submitted late will be penalized one full grade per day. (From A to B for example). Assignments are due IN CLASS, and anything handed in after class will be considered late.

GRADES: Final grades will be determined as follows:

- Class preparedness & participation 25 percent
- Research topic proposal #1 5 percent
- Primary source essay 10 percent
- Research paper (1st draft) 15 percent
- Research paper (final draft) 25 percent
- Peer critiques 5 percent
- Annotated bibliography 10 percent
- Research topic proposal #2 5 percent

Daily Assignments:

Aug. 27: Introduction to course & discussion on how to choose a research topic
- No assignments.

Aug. 29: Why study history? Objectivity vs. bias
- Gilderhus, ch. 1 – Discussion.
- Gonzales, pp. 1-91.
- Begin working to select topic.

Sept. 3: Film: Rashomon
- Gonzales, pp. 92-159.
- Consult primary sources on reserve – begin identifying those relevant to your paper topic
- Start identifying & narrowing topic.

Sept. 5: In Class Discussion of Rashomon
- Primary & Secondary: Introduction to the variety of sources.

Sept. 10: Research Workshop: Primary Sources
- 5 minute presentation of your assigned volume of Hanrahan primary sources (see guidelines)
- In-class exercises

Sept. 12: Research Workshop: Library Skills
- Research Librarian Paul Burnam
- Class Meets today in Corns 109!!!
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**Sept. 17:** Research Workshop: The Thesis & Historiography
- Work on topic proposal (see guidelines)
- In-class exercises

**Sept. 19:** Individual Conferences with Professor
- 500 word Mexican Revolution research topic proposal due (see guidelines)
- Discuss topic with Professor

**Sept. 24:** Class Presentations of Topic Proposals
- 5 minute formal class presentation of Mexican Revolution topic.
- Topic Proposal due in class

**Sept. 26:** Research Workshop: Note Taking & plagiarism
- In-class exercises (no push-ups!)
- Work on Mexican Revolution Research paper

**Oct. 1:** Primary Source Analysis
- 750 word primary source essay due (see guidelines)
- Formal presentation of your essay

**Oct. 3:** TBA

**Oct. 8:** Research Workshop: Bibliographies & footnotes
- In-class exercises
- Bring your copy of Turabian, *A Manual for Writers.*

**Oct. 10:** Research Workshop: Editing
- Begin identifying 2nd research topic
- Bring copies of research paper introduction (first 2-3 paragraphs) for each classmate & Prof.

**Oct. 15:** No class – Mid-semester break

**Oct. 17:** Draft #1 of Mexican Revolution Research Paper due in class

**Oct. 22:** Individual Conference with Professor – Group A
- work on narrowing 2nd research topic
- work on 2nd draft for peer review

**Oct. 24:** Individual Conference with Professor – Group B
- identify 2nd research topic
- work on 2nd draft for peer review

**Oct. 29:** Individual Conference with Professor – Group C
- Group A’s revised papers due – enough copies for each classmate due in office by 1PM
- All students – pick-up Group A papers after 1 PM
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Oct. 31: Peer Critiques – Group A
- All students read & prepare to discuss Group A’s papers.
- Designated critics submit written comments (2 copies).
- Group B’s second drafts due - enough copies for each classmate due in class

Nov. 5: Peer Critiques – Group B
- All students read & prepare to discuss Group B’s papers.
- Designated critics submit written comments (2 copies).
- Group C’s second drafts due - enough copies for each classmate due in class

Nov. 7: Peer Critiques – Group C
- All students read & prepare to discuss Group C’s papers.
- Designated critics submit written comments (2 copies).

Nov. 12: Historiography: Historical Consciousness
- Discussion of Gilderhus, chapters 2-3. (read carefully)

Nov. 14: No Class – do final revisions of research paper

FRIDAY - Nov. 16: Final draft of Mexican Revolution Paper due by 1 PM

Thanksgiving Break!!!!

Nov. 26: Historiography: Philosophy of History
- Discussion of Gilderhus ch. 4-5. (read carefully)

Nov. 28: Historiography today
- Discuss Gilderhus, ch. 6-7.

Dec. 3: Bibliography (75 sources) due in class (see guidelines)
- Film: “The Official Story”

Dec. 5: Annotated Bibliography (30 sources) due in class (see guidelines)
- TBA

Dec. 10: Second Research Topic Proposal Due
- Class presentations

Dec. 12: Pizza Party???

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Presentation of Your Assigned Volume of Hanrahan Primary Sources (on reserve)

In this oral presentation, students will discuss a volume of Hanrahan's primary sources (previously assigned by professor) relating to the Mexican Revolution. Using the secondary work by Michael Gonzales and any other secondary source deemed useful, students will provide context for the sources contained in the particular volume. Some issues to consider:

1. From what period of the revolution are the sources?

2. Who penned the pieces? (no just their names, but their social and class origins)

3. What were the overriding themes of the pieces contained? Provide textual examples.

4. What are the major historical events related in these sources?

5. What paper topics might be well suited to take advantage of these sources?

6. Any other salient issues?
Guidelines for Topic Proposal

The purpose of a topic proposal is to advise the professor of your intended research focus. This paper (500 words) should summarize the proposed research topic, stating clearly the intended focus and organization of the paper. The topic proposal should identify the central question that the research paper will address (but not in the interrogatory) and make clear how existing evidence might shed light on the question. A tentative thesis (i.e. the answer to the question) should be proposed.

Please attach a bibliography with at least fifteen related sources, including five or more primary sources.
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Guidelines for Primary Source Essay

This assignment requires that you examine, assess, and analyze a primary document related to your Mexican Revolution research paper. By now you should have located numerous documents critically related to your paper. You are asked to write 750 word paper discussing how one of these document fits into your broader research and to comment on such issues as bias, perspective, motivation, intended audience, etc. of the document.

The following are some questions to address in both your paper and oral presentation:

1) What was the purpose of the document? What does the document argue?

2) What is the bias of the author? What accounts for this bias?

3) Who is the author? What is his/her position in society or his/her employment? How might this have influenced the document’s content? What is his/her perspective? Cultural bias?

4) Why was the document written? What was the author’s motivation or objectives? How did this influence the document’s content?

5) For whom was the document intended? Who was the target audience? How might this have shaped the content of the document?

6) How does this document fit into your project? What are the implications for your thesis?

7) Provide any other analysis you find useful.
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Guidelines for Bibliography/Annotated Bibliography

A bibliography is a critical component of any research project, whether a monograph, a scholarly article or an unpublished student paper. There are several different types of bibliographies. Some list only those works cited in the body of the research project. Other bibliographies provide a comprehensive listing of all works related to the subject of the study. This semester, you will also prepare a third type, an annotated bibliography.

Bibliography: Students will prepare a bibliography of 75 sources related to their proposed second research topic. Be sure to include a wide variety of different source types (perhaps 30 monographs, 30 journal articles and 15 primary sources). Bibliographies must follow the format stipulated in Turabian. Please divide primary and secondary sources into separate sections. Sources should be alphabetized.

Annotated Bibliography: In addition to the standard bibliographical information, an annotated bibliography provides a brief synopsis of each entry, explaining the precise focus of the study, the particular slant or methodology of the work and its usefulness to a given topic.

Your annotated bibliography should consist of the 30 most important and useful sources for your research project. Be sure to select a variety of source types (perhaps 12 monographs, 11 journal articles and 7 primary sources). The annotated bibliography should also be divided into separate sections for primary and secondary sources. All citations should conform to Turabian.

These thirty sources should be accompanied by a brief (2-3 sentence) description of each work’s central focus, thesis and usefulness. The following is an example:


This monograph examines the evolving Cold War policies of anti-communism of the Truman and Eisenhower administrations. It argues that in 1954 the CIA helped overthrow Jacobo Arbenz, President of Guatemala, because the US was blindly (and wrongly) fearful of Communist influences in Arbenz’s administration. This diplomatic history is useful to demonstrate the negative influences of US foreign policy towards Latin America during the Cold War.
Guidelines for Research Paper

The major assignment of the semester is a research paper (2000 to 2500 words) focusing on some aspect of the Mexican Revolution and based heavily on primary sources. All students will familiarize themselves with the historical background of the Revolution by reading Michael Gonzales’ survey titled *The Mexican Revolution, 1910-40*. This book will be read in the first two weeks of the semester during which time students will begin to identify a topic for their research paper. The Mexican Revolution has been chosen as the focus of the research for two reasons. First, the Mexican Revolution is arguably the seminal event in Latin America’s twentieth century. Second, Ohio Wesleyan is fortunate to possess an excellent collection of English language primary sources relevant to aspects of the Revolution. In selecting their topics, students will ensure that relevant primary sources are available.

A substantial collection of primary sources have been placed on 2-hour reserve at Beeghly Library. These are intended to serve as a major source for student papers. It is expected that students will incorporate at least 7 to 10 primary sources into their research papers. In addition, another dozen secondary works have been reserved for student consultation. Students will supplement these sources with additional, more directly focused secondary works, both monographs and journal articles.

The following table summarizes in very general terms the nine volume collection of primary sources available on reserve.

**Microfilms at OWU: Records of the Department of State relating to internal affairs of Mexico, 1910-1929 [microform]** Imprint Washington : The National Archives, National Archives and Records Services, General Services Administration, 1959

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call no.</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F1234.D738 v. 2 pt. 1-2</td>
<td>Gene Hanrahan</td>
<td>The Madero Revolution as reported in the confidential despatches of U.S. Ambassador Henry Lane Wilson and the Embassy in Mexico City, June 1910 to June 1911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1234.D738 v. 3 pt. 1-2</td>
<td>Gene Hanrahan</td>
<td>The election of Madero and the rise of Emiliano Zapata and the Reyes plot in Texas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1234.D738 v. 4</td>
<td>Gene Hanrahan</td>
<td>The murder of Madero and role played by U.S. Ambassador Henry Land Wilson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1234.D738 v. 5</td>
<td>Gene Hanrahan</td>
<td>Blood below the border; American eyewitness accounts of the Mexican Revolution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1234.D738 v. 6</td>
<td>Gene Hanrahan</td>
<td>Abajo el Gringo!: anti-American sentiment during the Mexican Revolution</td>
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<td>F1234.D738 v. 7</td>
<td>Gene Hanrahan</td>
<td>Counter-revolution along the border</td>
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<tr>
<td>F1234.D738 v. 8</td>
<td>Gene Hanrahan</td>
<td>The rebellion of Felix Diaz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1234.D738 v. 9</td>
<td>Gene Hanrahan</td>
<td>The bad Yankee - el peligro Yankee. American entrepreneurs and financiers in Mexico.</td>
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GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH PAPER CRITIQUES

In the final weeks of the course, you will be asked to critique the papers of your fellow students. This important assignment will not only represent an important percentage of your grade but will also help others to improve their final drafts. There are two parts of a critique: the first focuses on the content of the paper and the second concentrates on style. Each paper will have two critics, one dealing with content and the other with style. Below are some issues you should consider in your critiques. Your content critique should be around 10 minutes in length. Style critiques should be 5 to 10 minutes.

CONTENT OF THE PAPER – Content Critique

1) **Topic** - How well does the author define his/her topic? Is it clear "what the paper is about" from the beginning? Does the author deviate from the subject and provide seemingly irrelevant information? Does the author explain why this topic is important in general and in the history of the issue or region?

2) **Thesis** - What is the author arguing? Is the argument/thesis clearly and explicitly stated? Does the evidence presented support the thesis? Does the thesis "get lost" during the paper or does the author keep the reader focused on the argument? How well argued is the thesis? Is it logical? Can you think of alternative conclusions not considered?

3) **Historiography** - How well does the author present the historiography on the subject? Is it clear what other historians have investigated on the subject and the ways in which they have approached the topic? Does the reader learn why this paper is important and how it fits into and contributes to the historiography?

4) **Framework & Analysis** - Does the paper analyze the topic and sources or does it merely present a narrative of the facts (i.e. "what happened")? How does the author approach the subject? Does she/he use certain types of analysis? What are the major conceptual approaches? (Class? Gender? Race? Economic? etc?) What intellectual influences can you find in the paper? Can you suggest alternative ways of approaching the topic? How might these influence the paper's findings?

5) **Organization** - Is the paper organized in a logical manner? Does the organization help support the argument? Would the thesis be better supported if the paper were organized differently? Does the paper have sensible and logical divisions or does the paper ramble aimlessly? How could organization be improved?

6) **Evidence** - What points does the author make in support of the thesis and conclusions? What evidence is presented? What type of evidence does the author employ? (economic, political, etc.) Does the type of evidence influence the conclusions? Can you suggest alternative types of evidence that might strengthen or refute the thesis? Is something missing from the paper?
7) **Logic** - Assess the internal logic of the paper's arguments. One need not know much about a subject to critique the logic used by an author. Do the conclusions make sense? Does the evidence really show what the author claims? Does the paper employ faulty logic? Does the author exaggerate the significance of small points? Does he/she "make a mountain out of a mole hill?" Can you think of any logical conclusions not considered by the author?

9) **Sources** - Did author have good variety of sources? (Reference books, monographs, journal articles, etc.) Were there many primary sources? Can you think of any sources that might have been available yet were not used?

10) **Conclusions** - Is it a "great" paper? Was it informative? Do you agree with the thesis? Were you convinced by the arguments? If the paper was "good," why? Be sure to emphasize both the strengths and weaknesses of the paper.

**STYLE OF THE PAPER – Style Critique**

1) **Grammar and spelling** - Did the paper have grammatical deficiencies? Spelling errors? Punctuation mistakes?

2) **Organization** - Was paper well organized with easily identifiable sections? Was introduction effective? Did paper have clear concluding paragraphs?

3) **Bibliography and footnotes** - Were these in correct format? Did author follow Kate Turabian as required? Were footnotes used effectively for non-crucial information?

4) **Quotations** - Were quotations effectively used? Were they integrated into text with good grammar? Were they helpful? Did they present the point in a unique way, one which could not have been made as well without the quotation? Were they too long?

5) **Writing style** - How well written was the paper? Was it a "pleasure to read?" Was it choppy or vague? Was the language too colloquial? Were the paragraphs well designed? (Was "1st sentence" supported by following sentences within paragraph)