History 6350: Research Techniques in Medieval History

Spring 2011
Hist 6350-111 (#13634)
Th 4:00-6:30pm
Room: 2205 Dunbar
http://homepages.wmich.edu/~rberkhof/courses/his635/
and GoWMU E-learning page

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course introduces techniques required by advanced researchers (and thesis writers) to analyze their sources. The course emphasizes the sources, tools, and interpretative strategies used by historians; however, it covers topics of importance to professional medievalists in all fields, including framing research questions, source analysis, and how to conduct archival research. Some attention will also be given to discipline formation of medieval history/medieval studies in the United States and in Europe. Although the class will emphasize Latin Europe, some attention may be given to other regions.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: Students will acquire knowledge of bibliography, research tools, and categories of sources that dominate historical practice. Students will also learn basic and advanced skills necessary for medieval historical research and deploy them in exercises to practice them. Students will prepare a prospectus for a thesis/project (or typology of sources) involving archival research and will gain a better understanding of research realities that will influence their working career.

COURSE FORMAT: The course will be conducted in weekly seminars, which will include extensive discussion, student presentations, and some presentations by the instructor and other medieval faculty at WMU. Discussions will focus on assigned readings and topics for each week. Various written assignments will culminate in a research prospectus (or source typology), chosen by the student in consultation with the instructor. Working knowledge of Latin and another European language (preferably French, German, Spanish, Italian) strongly recommended.

REQUIRED BOOKS (for purchase):
REQUIRED READING (not for purchase; on electronic or two-hour reserve or in reference):


Additional readings including handouts and electronic resources listed below.

RECOMMENDED READING: See weekly recommendations below and end of the syllabus.

GRADE COMPONENTS: Class participation 20%; group project 20%; final prospectus 40%; all other written work 20%. You must complete all elements of the course to receive a passing grade. All late submissions will be penalized, in fairness to students who complete the assignments in a timely fashion. The grade scale is as follows: 93-100 = A, 87-92 = BA, 83-86 = B, 77-82 = CB, 73-76 = C, 67-72 = DC, 60-67 = D, less than 60 = E.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION: Much of your grade will be determined by your efforts in our weekly meetings. Mere attendance during class hours will not receive credit towards participation, which should instead be indicated through vocal outbursts giving evidence of cognition; in other words, you must talk about your ideas, your reflections on the readings, and the comments of others in class. To be an effective participant, you will need to complete all readings and assignments prior to class. A class that only meets once per week cannot be skipped, if you wish to receive a satisfactory grade. Attendance is mandatory; absences must be documented and excused (preferably in advance). More than one absence could result in a lower course grade. Class participation will count for 20% of the final grade.
GROUP PROJECT—Research Guide for National Archives: You will be grouped with other students in the course for a project in which you will create a “research guide” for the archives of a European nation. Cooperation and courtesy will be necessary to complete this assignment. Directions will be provided on the “Group Project—National Archives” sheet.

PROSPECTUS/TYPOLGY: You will construct a prospectus on a topic of your choice in consultation with me and your supervising professor (identifying a potential advisor is part of the exercise). We will meet individually to discuss your progress early in the semester. You will submit a preliminary topic/question, a revised question with working bibliography, and a final version at the end of the course. Students may prepare a source typology as an alternative. Directions will be provided on the “Writing and Prospectus” and “Writing a Typology” sheets.

OTHER WRITTEN WORK: A variety of short exercises, designed to show mastery of citation, bibliography, and familiarity with auxiliary disciplines will be due throughout the term. They are listed in bold below. All such assignments must be typed, in CMS format, and handed in on time for students to participate properly in weekly meetings.

HONOR CODE: Students are expected to uphold the Western Michigan University standards of Academic Conduct. You are responsible for making yourself aware of and understanding the policies and procedures in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs that pertain to Academic Honesty. These policies include cheating, fabrication, falsification and forgery, multiple submission, plagiarism, complicity and computer misuse. [The policies can be found at http://catalog.wmich.edu under Academic Policies, Student Rights and Responsibilities.] If there is reason to believe you have been involved in academic dishonesty, you will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct (osc.wmich.edu). You will be given the opportunity to review the charge(s). If you believe you are not responsible, you will have the opportunity for a hearing. You should consult with Prof. Berkhofer if you are uncertain about an issue of academic honesty prior to the submission of an assignment or test. Even after written assignments are submitted, students are required to maintain an electronic copy and must produce it if asked by Prof. Berkhofer. Student drafts and final papers will be submitted electronically to turnitin.com (an anti-plagiarism clearinghouse).

Students with Disabilities: You should register your disability with Disabled Student Resources and Services (269-387-2116 or www.dsrs.wmich.edu). You should discuss any accommodation with them and they will give you a card listing the approved accommodation, which you should show to Prof. Berkhofer. This process should be completed by the second week of class.

Late Work: Make-up exams will be given only for valid, university-approved written excuses at the instructor's discretion. Make-up exams must be taken as soon as possible after the original test, preferably the day the student returns to class. Unexcused late papers will be penalized two full letter grades per day they are late (e.g., a "B" paper will become a "D" paper).

Email/IP Policy: Western Michigan requires that all email correspondence between instructors and students be conducted using wmich.edu accounts. Students may not reproduce any portion of course materials (including notes on lecture) without the instructor’s express written permission.
READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

UNIT I: Medieval History—Approaches to the Discipline

Week 1 (Jan 13)

History as a discipline
Tools of the Trade
Medieval Graduate Study at WMU
Writing a Prospectus/Typology


In-Class Reading: “Writing a Prospectus,” “Writing a Typology.”


Recommended Reading: Bloch, The Historians’ Craft and see end of syllabus.

Week 2 (Jan 20)

Discipline formation I: Medieval Scholarship in Europe
Discipline formation II: History and Medieval Studies in the US
Group Project—National Archives

Summary biography due today at start of class.
National Working Groups organized and begin preparing research guide

Required Reading: Marcus Bull Thinking Medieval (entire); John H. Arnold, What is Medieval History?, preface and part 1 “Framing the Middle Ages,” 1-22. One biography in Aurell i Cardona, et al., Rewriting the Middle Ages in the Twentieth Century (on reserve). You should also examine monographs/articles of your chosen medievalist and check Damico and Zavadil, Medieval Scholarship: Biographical Studies on the Formation of a Discipline to see if your chosen medievalist is listed.

In-Class Reading: “Group Project—National Archives”

You should meet with your group outside of class before the next class to plan your project.

Unit II: Finding and Framing the Sources

Week 3 (Jan 27)

Types of Sources
Historical Methods and Theory
Bibliographies I: retrospective and serial

Preliminary Topic Statement (or Source type) and Research Question due

Required Reading: Howell and Prevenier, From Reliable Sources, Intro and Parts I-III, pp. 1-87, and “Research Bibliography,” John H. Arnold, What is Medieval History part 2 “Tracing the Middle Ages,” 23-56. Powell, Medieval Studies, prefacing and contributors. Mantello and Rigg, Medieval Latin, “Introduction.” Bring all of four books to class so that we can refer to them during discussion. In particular, examine the bibliographies with care.

Recommended Reading: Examine the Typologie des sources du Moyen Age (Rare Books and Waldo reference Z6203 .T95 fasc. 1-current) to see what and how source “types” are described.

Week 4 (Feb 3)

Finding Aids/Catalogues; Bibliographies II: electronic resources
Libraries and Archives: Modern
Great Source Collections I

Field Trip #1: Waldo Library, Special Collections and Medieval Studies Library
Meet at Waldo Library, 3rd Floor, Special Collections at 4pm sharp

GUEST SPEAKER: Dr. Susan Steuer, Head of Library Special Collections


Become familiar with the following electronic resources before class:
1) WMU research guide for electronic sources in “Medieval Studies” at http://www.wmich.edu/library/sg/31/112/
2) The following Brepols databases (available via WMU Library)
   a. eMGH (Monumenta Germaniae Historica)
   b. Library of Latin Texts Series A and B
   c. International Medieval Bibliography
3) Patrologia Latina (available via WMU Library)
4) Acta Sanctorum

Recommended Reading: Examine Van Caenegem, Introduction aux sources de l’histoire medieval. Guyotjeannin, Les sources de l’histoire médiévale. Examine the physical copies of the electronic versions of the series listed above to get some sense of how they work.
Week 5 (Feb 10)

History and Other Disciplines
Latin Language and Literature
Auxiliary Disciplines

National Working Groups turn in preliminary bibliography of catalogues, finding aids

1 chapter of Medieval Latin, Part Two most closely related to your prospectus/typology
1 chapter of Medieval Latin, Part Three most closely related to your prospectus/typology

Recommended Reading: Walter Ullman, Ancient Writing and Its Influence (Toronto, 1980).

Week 6 (Feb 17): Attend Lecture of Prof. Simon Doubleday in the Meader Room, Special Collections, Waldo Library, 4pm.

Revised Topic/Research Question and Annotated Bibliography of Prospectus/Typology due electronically by NOON today (submit file by email to Prof. Berkhofer)

UNIT III: Reading/Analyzing the Sources

Week 7 (Feb 24):

Codicology
Physical Forms of Sources
Libraries and Archives II: Medieval

Field Trip #2: Waldo Library, 3rd Floor, Special Collections at 4pm sharp

GUEST SPEAKER: Dr. Susan Steuer, Head of Library Special Collections

Required Reading: Bernard Bischoff, Latin Paleography, Section A “Codicology” (4-48) and Section C “The Manuscript in Cultural History” (179-238).


SPRING BREAK
Week 8 (Mar 10)

Paleography I
Dictionaries, Lexicons, Abbreviations
How to Read and Transcribe


Handout: Manuscript page to be transcribed

Become familiar with these resources for this week’s class:
2) Brepols Database of Latin Dictionaries (available via WMU Library)
4) Perseus Latin Dictionary (based on Lewis and Short) http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/

Recommended Reading: Brown, Michelle P., Guide to Western Historical Scripts from Antiquity to 1600 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

Week 9 (Mar 17)

Diplomatic
Cartularies
Status Reports of National Working Groups

Transcription exercise due today at start of class.


Recommended Reading: Olivier Guyotjeannin, Diplomatique médiévale (Turnhout: Brepols, 1993), Michael Clanchy, From Memory to Written Record, 81-113, ch. 3, “Types of Records.”

Week 10 (Mar 24)

Material Source Typologies
Art and Archeology
Visual Literacy

Charter exercise due today at start of class.

In-Class “Reading”: Various Visual Sources


Week 11 (Mar 31)
*Chronicles and Narrative Sources*
*Hagiography: Sources, Genres, Interpretations*
*Great Source Collections II: National and Religious Projects*


Week 12 (Apr 7)
*Institutional Records, Notarial Records*
*Social and Economic Records*
*Great Source Collections III: Laws*


**UNIT IV: Medieval History Research in Theory and Practice**

Week 13 (Apr 14)
*National Working Groups Student Presentations I*
*Libraries and Archives III: Europe*

**Group Project—National Archives final report due at start of class.**


Week 14 (Apr 21)
- *National Working Groups Student Presentations II (if needed)*
- *Future Directions of Medieval Studies in the US*

**Prospectus/Typology due at start of class.**

Required Reading: Either Smith or Freedman/Spiegel listed under “Recommended Reading” for week two. Reconsider arguments of Bull and Arnold from week two.
RECOMMENDED READING
The following works are useful supplements to the weekly recommended readings on the syllabus; however, some may suit your situation better than others. The annotations are intended to suggest which ones might prove most useful to you. Most of them are available in Waldo Library, but they are not on reserve because they should be available for reference for all working medievalists at WMU. Be conscientious in your use and do not remove them from the shelf for lengthy periods.

Bentley, Michael. Companion to Historiography. London: Routledge, 2002. (Useful historiographic essays in sections II and III, the medieval and early modern world.)

Bloch, Marc. The Historians’ Craft, tr. P. Putnam. New York: Vintage, 1984 (orig. pub. 1953). (Novice historians: The classic work that every non-medieval historian has read and it is embarrassing not to know about.)


Deliyannis, Deborah Mauskopf. Historiography in the Middle Ages Leiden: Brill, 2004. (For those interested in production of historical writing in Middle Ages.)

Guyotjeannin, Olivier. Les sources de l’histoire médiévale (Paris: Livre de poche, 1998) (A brilliant short work covering the same material as the course in a different way.)


Partner, Nancy, ed. Writing Medieval History. New York: Bloomsbury, 2005. (Useful introduction to theoretical issues about history in and of the Middle Ages.)


Van Engen, John, ed. The Past and Future of Medieval Studies. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994. (All medievalists: Though the future it describes has arrived, still useful to get some sense of the development of the inter-disciplinary field.)