

SYLLABUS: HISTORY 440
SENIOR RESEARCH PROJECT

1. Course description: HIST 440 Senior Research Project. (1) An historical inquiry culminating in a capstone project that demonstrates command of historical research methods, prepared under the supervision of a faculty member. Required of all option 1 and Option 3 majors. Prerequisite: senior standing and permissions from the departmental chairperson and instructor.

2. Course objectives

A. Knowledge objectives.

The student will acquire better understanding of subject matter previously dealt with in an advanced course.

B. Skill objectives.

1. critical thinking and writing skills.
2. Study and research skills.

The student will demonstrate the capacity to investigate, collate and disseminate historical information and analysis.

3. Course rationale.

Students need a common academic experience at the conclusion of their careers. HIST 440 will provide that opportunity, ensuring maximum flexibility for students and mentors while simultaneously providing a rigorous intellectual challenge. Students need to engage in such additional research to learn how to carry a project to fruition, improving their critical thinking, writing, and research skills thereby. The individual supervision of a faculty member provides opportunities for tutorials that are beneficial to both the faculty member and the student.

4. Course content and format.

Course content will vary. It is envisioned that one type of capstone experience will be the revision of a research paper previously completed in an advanced course, providing the rare opportunity for the student to continue revisions until they "get it right." The students will do considerable additional reading and engage in an ongoing mutual interchange with their professor about subject matter and historiography: a "professionalizing" glimpse of how academia operates. Possible experiences also include original research resulting in written and video presentations.

Reading about research methods may include reference to:

Jules R. Benjamin, A Student's Guide to History, New York: St. Martin's, 1991.

Mark Hellstern, Gregory Scott, and Stephen Garrison, The History Student Writers' Manual, Upper Saddle River, NJ: PrenticeHall, 1998.

Richard Marius, A Short Guide to Writing About History, New York: HarperCollins, 1995

5. Methods of evaluating student performance.

Evaluation will be based (in the case of revisions of previously completed research papers) upon student completion of the professor's directives as to proper revision of original work, following upon discussions and additional reading.

6. Evaluation of the course.

Regular evaluation procedures are not useful for courses involving one-to-one contact, so the course may be evaluated by any of the following: by instructor and student in their discussions, by faculty learning from previous individual supervision of capstone experiences, through peer evaluation of course materials and faculty-student interaction, and through faculty discussion of cumulative departmental management of previous capstone experiences.