

Imperial Valley College

History 280 “Introduction to Historical Writing”
CRN: 20533

Professor: Bradford W. Wright, Ph.D.

Spring 2014

Meeting days/times: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:30-2:55

Class Location: Room 205

Prerequisites: None

Office 301 Hours: Mon. 1:30-2:30
Tues. 3:30-4:30
Wed. 1:30-2:30
Thur. 3:30-4:30

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Course Description and Objectives:

This course will introduce you to how history is researched and written. You will write a substantial paper based on research in primary and secondary sources. This research paper will be the central focus of your work in the course. You will also be introduced to some of the key concepts, trends, theories, and methodologies in the study and writing of history. You will be directed to build, support, and defend a thesis that has substance. A series of exercises and discrete assignments will lead you, step-by-step, through the research and writing stages of this project. This course will also encourage you to consider the very nature of historical knowledge and think critically about your own frame of reference. In short, this course is intended to help you become a better historian.

The history of popular culture in the United States from the Industrial Age (late-19th century) to the present will be the topical focus of the content of this course. While your research paper need not be focused on a topic in U.S. History, it must be on a topic that falls within a broad definition of the history of popular culture. Class-time, however, will be devoted primarily to discussions on selected topics in the history of popular culture in the United States.

Popular culture has been an essential means through which people represent and reflect their changing ideas, values, perceptions, and identities. It has also played an increasingly important role in the American economy, as entertainment industries have worked to shape and respond to the shifting tastes of American consumers. The modern entertainment industry has its roots in the industrial revolution of the late nineteenth century. That is where this course begins as we cover the important developments, individuals, and movements that have shaped the history of American popular culture up to contemporary times. The emphasis of this course, however, will be on the history of popular culture since the 1950s. Among the many topics that we will cover will be the rise of Hollywood, professional sports, jazz, science-fiction, comic books, rock'n'roll, television, video games, and the internet. We will be discussing the ways in which these technologies and forms of expression have reflected and shaped changes in American society and culture.

In addition to completing a term-length research project, you should come out of this course with a deeper understanding of the critical ways in which popular culture has reflected and shaped the history of the United States, as well as a more substantial basis for critiquing, appreciating, and enjoying popular culture

as history. In the process, you will have the opportunity to sharpen your own critical, argumentative, writing, and analytical skills. These will help you in whatever academic, career, or personal goals you may have.

Student Learning Outcomes: Upon course completion, the successful student will have acquired new skills, knowledge, and/or attitudes as demonstrated by being able to: 1) compile a research bibliography of primary and secondary sources on a historical topic; 2) explain different interpretations of a historical topic; and 3) write a research paper on a historical topic.

Required Texts

LeRoy Ashby, *With Amusement for All: A History of American Popular Culture since 1830*.

William Kelleher Storey, *Writing History: A Guide for Students*.

Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*.

Grading

Final grades will be determined according to the following distribution:

Research Proposal:	05%	50 points
Library Exercise:	05%	50 points
Bibliographic Essay:	10%	100 points
Short Paper #1:	10%	100 points
Short Paper #2:	10%	100 points
Research Paper:	40%	400 points
Midterm Exam	10%	100 points
Final Exam:	10%	100 points

Total:	100 %	1000 points

1. Formal Research Proposal: Once you have chosen and received instructor approval for a topic for your research paper, you will write a formal research proposal for your project, following the guidelines that I will give.

2. Library Exercise: For this exercise, you will search for secondary materials that relate to your research topic. Keep very detailed and precise notes about what search terms you used and what databases you explored. Your written assignment is to prepare and submit a list of at least ten sources that your search located. These citations will be in proper bibliographic format, and each will have a brief notation of one or two sentences indicating how you located these specific resources.

3. Bibliographic Essay: This will be an essay of approximately 1500-2000 words that discusses your most important secondary sources, how they contribute to an understanding of your topic, and how they will inform your research into the topic that you have chosen.

4. Short Papers: These will be essays of approximately 1000-1500 words on topics relevant to material covered in the course material

5. Exams: Two in-class exams will be based on short answers (identifications) and essays, which will come from study guides handed out in class.

6. Research Paper: The focus of this course is the major research paper. This will represent the culmination of your term-length research project. It should be a substantial piece of research, based on

primary as well as secondary sources. The text of the paper (excluding title page, endnotes, and bibliography) must be between 15-20 double-spaced pages in length. For this paper, you must use AT LEAST 10 sources, at least two or more of which must be primary source materials. Papers that do not use the minimum required sources will be automatically downgraded.

Begin by picking a topic and drafting a research proposal. I will help you narrow down the range and will give you final instructions. In the meantime, read these directions carefully. To be efficient and not waste time, you will have to work quickly to narrow down the topic before you do much research or writing. The more you refine your topic and the earlier you do so, the easier it will be to research and write your term paper.

Your research paper will be a thesis paper; the thesis is the most critical part of the paper. The earlier you have your thesis the more efficient you will be in both the research and writing phases of the paper. You should be doing preliminary research and developing your thesis as soon as possible.

The citation system for this paper must be the endnote system. Do not place notes at the bottom of the page or in parentheses inside the text. The endnotes should be titled "Endnotes," and they do not count as part of the required length of the paper.

Kate Turabian's A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations both contain detailed explanations of how to create endnotes.

Class Policies and Procedures:

Attendance:

Regular class attendance is expected. If you should miss a class meeting for any reason, you are still responsible for any material and/or class announcements discussed in your absence. Excessive absences (over three) will hurt your class participation grade and effectively cancel any possibility of rounding up your final grade in borderline instances.

You are also expected to arrive at class on time and remain for the duration of the class.

Failure to do so will be considered the same as an absence. It is also simply rude. If you must leave early for a valid reason, I simply ask that you let me know ahead of time. Please be courteous.

Classroom Courtesy:

I ask you to respect the rights of your colleagues to learn in a productive, respectful, and disciplined classroom environment and to respect the job that I do to ensure such an environment as I teach. Behavior such as arriving late, leaving early, answering cell phones, text-messaging, listening to iPods, and carrying on personal conversations disrupts the class, interferes with my teaching mission, and deprives your colleagues of their right to learn. Please use common sense and take responsibility for your behavior. **Be courteous and considerate. Don't be rude.** That is all I ask.

Accommodation for Students:

I am happy to work with all students so that each can achieve his/her educational objectives. Any student with a documented disability who may need educational accommodations should notify me and the Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSP&S) office as soon as possible (DSP&S), Health Sciences Bldg. 2100, 355-6312).

Dropping the Course:

If for any reason you decide not to complete the course, remember that it is your responsibility to drop the class. If you simply stop coming to class and do not log on to the WebSTAR and officially withdraw from the course, you will receive an "F" as a final grade.

Academic Honesty:

The college and I take the issues of student dishonesty, cheating, and/or plagiarism very seriously. There are severe penalties arising from acts of academic dishonesty and student misconduct, up to and including dismissal from the college. For a complete discussion of disciplinary procedures for academic dishonesty or other student misconduct, please refer to the current IVC General School Catalogue. I trust my students to do their work honestly. Please do not betray the trust that I have placed in you.

Course Schedule and Reading Assignments:

Jan. 21: Introduction

Jan. 23: Researching Popular Culture
Storey, 3-16

Jan. 28: Choosing Topics; Finding Sources
Storey, 17-59
Ashby, 107-152

Introductions: "Popular Culture and Me" Due

Jan. 30: The Rise of Sports Culture, 1879-1929
Ashby, 152-186

Feb. 4: The Rise of Hollywood, 1900-1934
Ashby, 186-218

Feb. 6: Classic Hollywood: Myth-Making in the Era of the Studio System
Ashby, 218-262

Feb. 11: Classic Hollywood, part 2

Feb. 13: Popular Music: Tin-Pan Alley, Jazz, and Pop, 1900-1955

Feb. 18: Popular Music: Blues, Folk, and Country, 1920-1955
Storey, 61-79

Research Proposals Due

Feb. 20: Alternative Worlds: Horror, Science-Fiction, the Pulps, and Comic Books, 1914-1939

Feb. 25: Shaping the Consensus: Popular Culture in Wartime, 1939-1955
Ashby, 263-301

Library Exercise Due

Feb. 27: TV Land: Consumer Culture in the Post-War Era, 1945-1960
Ashby, 302-334

March 4: Dissent in the Shadows: Rebellion in Fifties Popular Culture
Short Paper #1 Due

March 6: The Rise of Rock'n'Roll
Ashby, 334-347

March 11: Beatlemania!
Ashby, 348-372
Storey, 81-111

March 13: The Revolution in Rock
Ashby, 372-393

March 18: Midterm Exam

March 20: Popular Culture and the Sixties Youth Revolt

March 25: Popular Culture and the Identity Revolution, 1965-1974
Ashby, 394-420

Bibliographic Essay Due

March 27: Seventies Kids: Children and Popular Culture, 1969-1980

April 1: The New Hollywood, pt. 1
Ashby, 420-440

April 3: The New Hollywood, pt. 2

Rough Drafts (First 5 pages) due

April 8: A Culture of Narcissism?

April 10: The MTV Era

Ashby, 441-475

April 15: The New Geek Culture

April 17: The Angry Generation: Punk, Metal, and Rap

Ashby, 475-494

Short Paper #2 Due

April 21-25: SPRING BREAK!

April 29: Cultural Democracy or Cultural Imperialism?

Ashby, 495-517

May 1: A Popular Culture Society

May 6: Popular Culture in the Digital Age

Research Papers Due

May 8: Final Thoughts

May 12-16: Final Exam Week