

Theories of History (HIST 4997)

Spring 2024
MC209, MW 3:30-4:50
Office: MC 227
Office Hours: MWF 2:30-3:30 (and by appointment)

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Course overview

This course surveys themes and problems in western historiography from the enlightenment to the present. It examines the history of historical writing and engages in a historical analysis of the theory, presuppositions, and implications of historical practice. On this course you will become familiar with the scholars, texts, and debates in the field as well as the impact of theory on the representation of the past.

Learning outcomes

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

- ◆ demonstrate knowledge of the main topics in western historiography
- ◆ relate within these topics the key historical issues, concepts, dates, figures, evidence, and historiographical debates
- ◆ communicate—verbally and/or in writing—effectively and present work in a manner which conforms to scholarly conventions
- ◆ construct a relevant argument that demonstrates an adequate use of evidence and a selection of historical interpretations
- ◆ locate, gather, sift, and synthesize an adequate body of source material
- ◆ demonstrate the ability to work independently under the constraints imposed by the component of assessment, e.g. word limit, deadlines, time limit

This course is worth [4 credit hours](#). During a week, you should expect to do an average of 600 minutes of work on this course. This may include, but is not limited to, attending classes, reading, doing homework assignments, participating in discussions, and studying for exams. The time to complete these tasks is an average that represents the typical amount of time a student can expect to commit. Times may vary by the student.

This course is [Writing-Enhanced](#), which means that assignments facilitate cognition, writing process, and the written product interacting and mutually reinforcing one another.

- ◆ Cognition—the use of writing as a way of thinking through ideas—is promoted in this course through the inclusion of the following writing-to-think activities for students: writing about what they need to know and need to find before embarking on a project (Need to Know); writing a defense of doing the research they have planned, addressing why the results are important and why is it an important area of research (Project Justification); and writing a plan for the revision of a multi-draft writing project that accounts for external feedback and their own thoughts about revision (Revision Review).
- ◆ Process—the task of helping students think about their writing process—is built into this course by deploying the following models and practices: a multi-stage writing project that incorporates writing-to-think, note-taking, draft-and-revise, and instructor feedback; and encouraging students to start early and break up the work into manageable chunks.

- ◆ Product—writing to communicate ideas to others—is covered in this course through writing-to-communicate activities that require students to engage in a type of writing that has a variety of formal constraints, including specific document, citation, and rhetorical style, and a tight focus on audience and purpose.

Readings

- Budd, Adam, ed. *The Modern Historiography Reader: Western Sources*. New York: Routledge, 2009. ISBN 9780415458870
- Gaddis, John Lewis. *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. ISBN 9780195171570
- Green, Anna, and Kathleen Troup, eds. *The Houses of History: A Critical Reader in Twentieth-Century History and Theory*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016. ISBN 9780719096211
- Wilson, Norman J. *History in Crisis? Recent Directions in Historiography*. 3rd ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2014. ISBN 9780205961146

Prerequisites

Junior standing required to enroll.

Minimum technology requirements

In order to participate fully and effectively in an online course, students should have a reliable broadband connection (Cable Modem, DSL, or Satellite). Students should have a relatively new operating system (Windows 10 or newer; Mac OSX, etc.) and employ a compatible browser such as Chrome or Safari.

This course may include online face-to-face discussions and tutorials. To participate in these sessions you will need a computer equipped with speakers, camera and microphone.

In order to complete your assignments in this course you will need a word processor, such as Microsoft Word or Google Docs.

Minimum technical skills

To be successful in this class you will need to be able to:

- ◆ Access the Internet and be able to comfortably navigate websites using a web browser
- ◆ Use common word processing software to complete writing assignments
- ◆ Know how to use your computer microphone, video camera, and speakers
- ◆ Send and receive email
- ◆ Access and use online library resources, including databases of scholarly articles curated by the library

Technical expectations for completing assignments and exams

To complete this course successfully you will need access to a reliable broadband Internet connection. You should be confident that your connection is sufficiently stable that your access will not be interrupted when taking examinations, participating in video chats, or viewing streaming video or audio. Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) will typically slow your Internet connection and you should be certain the connection is fast enough if you will be relying on such a network. If you are uncertain about a reliable connection, you are advised to not take this

course.

Evaluation criteria

Reading responses	15%
Discussion leader	5%
Thematic Paper (8 pages/2,000 words)	20%
Review Essay (8 pages/2,000 words)	25%
Research Paper (12 pages/3,000 words)	35%

Grading Scale

A	B	C	D	F
100%–90%	89.9%–80%	79.9%–70%	69.9%–60%	59.9%–0%

Reading responses: Post a comment, question, response, or reaction for each daily reading to the discussion board on Brightspace by midnight the day before each class period. 1 pt each, 15 pts total.

Class discussion leader: For each class period, one student will sign up to lead the discussion, including organizing the reading responses posted to the Brightspace discussion board into a logical flow. Sign up to lead discussion at https://docs.google.com/document/d/1orq_GnVkef97uQ2eXF7qI7WZhbJnUrNoftFcQNOXdS4/edit?usp=sharing. 5 pts.

Class participation

Class discussions will be based upon the set reading for each class (see course schedule) and student presentations.

Address the following questions when reading essays in Budd's *Modern Historiography Reader* and Green and Troup's *Houses of History*:

- ◆ What debates are addressed and what is the main argument?
- ◆ In what ways does the author's perspective and methodology represent a departure from previous approaches to history?
- ◆ What new possibilities are opened up by the author's conceptual and methodological innovations?
- ◆ What are the possible drawbacks of the author's approach to history?

Identify examples to illustrate your observations.

Address the following questions when reading chapters in Gaddis's *Landscape of History* and Wilson's *History in Crisis*:

- ◆ What are the main historiographical trends identified?
- ◆ How have these historiographical trends influenced representations of the past?
- ◆ How are the main issues and debates connected to trends in other fields of scholarship?
- ◆ What is the main argument?
- ◆ What are the chapter's strengths and weaknesses?

Identify examples to illustrate your observations.

General Rubric for Grading Participation

Class participation will be graded according to the following criteria: (1) preparation, (2) participation, (3) contribution to dialogue on assigned material, and (4) interaction with peers. This rubric is provided for you as a guide to gauge your participation throughout the semester. Please remember that not all items listed are applicable to all students and it is not always necessary to exhibit each characteristic in order to earn the associated grade.

A Arrives fully prepared at every session. Plays an active role in discussions. Comments advance the level and depth of the dialogue. Actively supports, engages and listens to peers.

B Arrives mostly, if not fully, prepared. Participates constructively in discussions. Makes relevant comments based on the assigned material. Makes a sincere effort to interact with peers.

C Preparation is inconsistent. Level of participation is inconsistent. When prepared, participates constructively in discussions and makes relevant comments based on the assigned material. Limited interaction with peers.

D Rarely prepared. Rarely participates. Comments are generally vague or drawn from outside of the assigned material. Virtually no interaction with peers.

F Never prepared. Never participates. Comments demonstrate a noticeable lack of familiarity with the material. No interaction with peers.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is required at all sessions. Sanctioned absences will be defined and handled according to Truman's [Sanctioned Absence Policy and the Definition of Sanctioned Absences](#). Sanctioned absences may account for no more than 6.67 percent of class time.

Thematic paper

Drawing from the readings in Budd's *Modern Historiography Reader* and Green and Troup's *Houses of History*, analyze historiographical developments in the treatment of **one** of the following historical issues:

- ◆ causation
- ◆ periodization
- ◆ objectivity
- ◆ human agency

Compare the perspectives and contributions of **at least three** individual historians and/or historical schools. Focus on the origins of the various interpretations examined and on their ramifications for historians' approaches to and representations of the past. The finished paper must be submitted by **March 25, 2024**.

Review essay

Evaluate the arguments presented in Gaddis's *Landscape of History* and Wilson's *History in Crisis* on how the historical profession should respond to the theoretical and methodological

challenges confronting it at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The finished paper must be submitted by **April 15, 2024**.

Research paper

Examine a major historian or historical school of your choice. Your evaluation must: (1) demonstrate an awareness of the context of the historian's/historical school's work; (2) identify the main assumptions and theory/theories informing the historian's/historical school's work; and (3) advance a clear argument regarding how these assumptions and theories influenced the historian's/historical school's representation of the past. An outline of your proposed project must be submitted by **February 28, 2024** and then discussed in class the following week. A more detailed and formal presentation of your research project must be delivered to the class during one of the sessions reserved for this purpose in April (you will be allocated a specific presentation slot by the course instructor). The finished research paper must be submitted by **May 6, 2024**.

Style and Presentation

The historiographical paper must conform to the following rules on style and presentation:

- ◆ double line spacing is used throughout
- ◆ 1-inch margins on all edges of the page (left, right, top and bottom)
- ◆ the text is written in Times New Roman font face (no bold or italics except when required by Chicago style guide), and the font size is no smaller or larger than 12 points
- ◆ each page of the assignment is numbered
- ◆ an accurate word count of the assignment text (excluding footnotes and other extraneous material) is provided
- ◆ short quotations (under forty words) are typed in plain text and contained within quotation marks, longer quotes are blocked (indented and set apart from the essay body by a single line space above and below) but not contained within quotation marks
- ◆ footnotes are numbered in Arabic numerals, not lower-case Roman numerals

For more guidance on style and presentation, as well as on how to locate, evaluate, and cite secondary sources, see the relevant sections of Turabian, *Manual for Writers of Research Papers*.

General Rubric for Grading Papers

Papers will be graded according to the following criteria: (1) depth and breadth of research; (2) factual knowledge and accuracy; (3) awareness and understanding of historiography; (4) structure and argument; (5) selection and synthesis of evidence; (6) critical engagement in theoretical debates; (7) originality in approach, argument or content; (8) grammar, spelling, punctuation and presentation; (9) source citation; and (10) word limit. This rubric indicates the grades associated with the various levels of performance in each of these criteria. However, it is not necessary for an individual paper to exhibit each characteristic in order to earn the associated grade.

A Demonstrates depth and breadth of reading, including highly relevant journal articles, monographs and primary sources. Displays highly detailed knowledge of the topic. Shows

superior awareness and understanding of the historiography, including critical insight into different interpretations. Has a sophisticated structure and argument. Is clearly analytical approach, including critical engagement in theoretical debates. Highly relevant evidence is selected and skillfully deployed in support of the argument. Contains many original ideas and applications of methodology. There are no grammar, spelling, punctuation or presentation errors. The citation of sources is full and correct. Meets the permitted word limit.

B Demonstrates depth and breadth of reading, including relevant journal articles and monographs. Displays detailed knowledge of the topic. Shows keen awareness and understanding of historiography. Has an orderly structure and coherent line of argument. Is predominantly analytical, including a balanced application of theory. Relevant evidence is selected and mostly deployed in support of the argument. Contains some original ideas and applications of methodology. There are very few grammar, spelling, punctuation or presentation errors. The citation of sources is nearly full and correct. Marginally falls short of or exceeds the permitted word limit.

C Demonstrates reasonable coverage of the relevant literature, but not very broad or deep. Displays accurate knowledge of the topic. Shows reasonable awareness of historiography, but limited understanding of it. Has an orderly structure and some development of an argument. Has a reasonable amount of analysis, but is possibly lacking in depth and balance. Sufficient relevant evidence is provided, but it is not always deployed in support of the argument. Contains few original ideas and applications of methodology. The prose is basically sound, but there are more than a few grammar, spelling, punctuation or presentation errors. The citation of sources is satisfactory but not always correct. Noticeably falls short of or exceeds the permitted word limit.

D Demonstrates basic coverage of the literature and may include some irrelevant sources. Displays basic knowledge of the topic, but may include some factual errors. Shows basic awareness of historiography. Has a rudimentary structure, but limited development of an argument. Has some analysis, but may tend towards description. Some evidence is provided, but it is not always relevant or in context. Is derivative and pedestrian. The prose is basically sound, but there are many grammar, spelling, punctuation or presentation errors. The citation of sources is nearly limited and often incorrect. Significantly falls short of or exceeds the permitted word limit.

F Demonstrates minimal coverage of the literature and may include mostly irrelevant sources. Displays little knowledge of the topic and may include many factual errors. Shows little awareness of historiography. Is disorderly, discursive, and possibly lacks a clear argument. Has a minimal amount of analysis and may be highly descriptive. Is very generalized and makes minimal utilization of relevant evidence. Is highly derivative and pedestrian. The grammar, spelling, punctuation and presentation are very poor. The citation of sources is nonexistent or minimal and mostly incorrect. Falls short of or exceeds the permitted word limit to an unacceptable degree.

Course etiquette

Behavior that persistently or flagrantly interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior. Such behavior inhibits other students' ability to learn and an instructor's

ability to teach. A student responsible for disruptive behavior may be subject to disciplinary action, which may include temporary or permanent expulsion from the class.

Students' and instructor's expectations

My Expectations of Students

I expect students to: thoroughly read the required materials and complete assigned activities prior to engaging in discussion boards; complete their assigned work in a timely manner, according to the schedule outlined in this syllabus; engage in active conversation with peers; engage in polite and respectful discourse with their peers; ask questions whenever they have difficulty understanding material or course requirements; express concerns about the course at any time.

What Students Should Expect of Me as Their Instructor

Students should expect me to: provide timely feedback on questions, activities, and assessments (replies to emails within 48 hours and feedback on assignments within one week); make regular announcements about the course—particularly when changes to the posted schedule are made; engage their conversations on course content in discussion boards; provide thorough responses to questions and concerns raised throughout the course; respect diverse arguments from a variety of perspectives on the subject matter; make them aware of concerns I have with their performance or ability to succeed in the course; be available to them as a source of support in their learning. If at any time I am forced to step away from the course for more than 24 hours, such as in the case of illness or personal emergency, I will notify the class as soon as possible and provide an additional point of contact for further information.

Late policy

With the exception of emergencies, formative and summative assignments submitted after the submission deadline will not be accepted or graded without an accommodation being previously agreed with the course instructor.

Academic honesty

You are expected to do your own academic work. In academic writing, it is plagiarism to use the words or ideas of another person and pass them off as your own. If you cheat on an assessed component, such as a paper or examination, you will be subject to disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion from the class, your academic program, or the University. On this course, the punishment for cheating may include the reduction or elimination of your score for an affected assignment, the lowering of your grade for the entire class (including the assignment of an “F” or “zero” grade), or your expulsion from the class, academic program or university.

The University policy on academic dishonesty as published in the Student Conduct Code and General/Graduate Catalog can be found at

http://catalog.truman.edu/content.php?catoid=15&navoid=801#Academic_Dishonesty.

FERPA

Education records are protected by the Family Education Right to Privacy Act (FERPA). As a result, course grades, assignments, advising records, etc. cannot be released to third parties without your permission. There are, however, several exceptions about which you should be

aware. For example, education records can be disclosed to employees or offices at Truman who have an “educational need to know”. These employees and offices may include your academic advisor, the Institutional Compliance Officer, the Registrar’s Office, or Student Affairs depending on the type of information. For more information about FERPA, see <http://www.truman.edu/registrar/ferpa/>.

Emergency procedures, disability services, discrimination and Title IX

Information on Emergency Procedures, Disability Services, Discrimination and Title IX, or the Office of Institutional Compliance is available at this link: <https://wp-internal.truman.edu/provost/syllabus-resources-for-students/>.

Substantive interaction and administrative drop policy

[Truman policy](#) and federal regulations require that students demonstrate that they are academically engaged in the courses they take. You must meet this requirement within the first calendar week of the semester. Failure to do so or to provide an explanation of an extenuating circumstance by that date and time will result in your removal from the course. Under certain circumstances, removal could impact your scholarship eligibility or financial aid. For the purposes of this course, establishing academic engagement requires, at a minimum, attending class at least once during the first week of the semester.

Schedule of meetings, readings and assignments

Jan. 17 Introduction

Jan. 22 History and Historians/Terminology
Reading: Budd, 1-53, 508-25; Green & Troup, 1-12

Jan. 24 Enlightenment
Reading: Budd, 55-83, 85-119

Jan. 29 Romanticism
Reading: Budd, 121-58

Jan. 31 Historicism
Reading: Budd, 159-98; Green & Troup, 13-46

Feb. 5 Social Sciences and Cliometrics
Reading: Budd, 199-231; Green & Troup, 165-97

Feb. 7 Early Twentieth-Century Challenges to Positivism
Reading: Budd, 233-65; Green & Troup, 106-164

Feb. 12 Marxism
Reading: Budd, 267-310; Green & Troup, 47-71

Feb. 14 Memory and Psychohistory

Reading: Budd, 311-42; Green & Troup, 72-105, 374-403, 403-36

Feb. 19 Postmodernism

Reading: Budd, 343-78; Green & Troup, 233-61, 289-319

Feb. 21 Gender and Sexuality

Reading: Budd, 379-420; Green & Troup, 262-88

Feb. 26 Postcolonialism

Reading: Budd, 421-65; Green & Troup, 198-232, 320-41

Feb. 28 Wilson's *History in Crisis?*

Reading: Wilson, ix-111

Research paper outline due (February 28, 2024)

Mar. 4 Wilson's *History in Crisis?*

Reading: Wilson, 112-165

Mar. 6 Gaddis's *Landscape of History*

Reading: Gaddis, ix-89

Mar. 18 Gaddis's *Landscape of History*

Reading: Gaddis, 91-151

Mar. 20 Individual Tutorials

Thematic paper due (March 25)

Mar. 25 Individual Tutorials

Mar. 27 Individual Tutorials

Apr. 1 Individual Tutorials

Apr. 3 Individual Tutorials

Apr. 8 Individual Tutorials

Apr. 10 Individual Tutorials

Review essay due (April 15)

Apr. 15 Individual Tutorials

Apr. 17 Research Paper Presentations

Apr. 22 Research Paper Presentations

Apr. 24 Research Paper Presentations

Apr. 29 Research Paper Presentations

May 1 Research Paper Presentations

Research paper due (May 6)

Final exam: Monday May 6 (3:30-5:20 p.m.)