OVERVIEW: The goal of this class is to make graduate students better writers. We will begin by using short assignments such as book reviews to assess students’ strengths and weaknesses as writers. Then, over the course of the semester, each student will prepare an article manuscript for submission to a refereed journal. This manuscript can either be work begun for another class that will be revised during the semester, or new research undertaken specifically for this class. Over the course of the semester, we'll discuss how to draw readers into your narrative, how to keep them interested, and how to leave them happy at the conclusion of your work. We will also look at very mundane but important things like comma, semi-colon, and hyphen usage, dangling modifiers, the pros and (mostly) cons of discursive footnotes, quotation transitions, and so forth. Students will also learn how to create a list of “reach,” “target,” and “safety” journals to which their manuscripts can be submitted. We will look at real referees’ reports and discuss how to respond to such feedback in a way that makes it most likely that your manuscript will be accepted. We will even learn how to craft the perfect letter to accompany your submission and drafts of these letters will be written by students and critiqued by the instructor before the end of the semester.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: 1) Improve student writing, including prose rhythm, word choice, sophistication, succinctness, paragraph transitions, and quotation transitions; 2) improve student understanding of best practices in historiographic reviews; 3) improve student use of introductory vignettes; 4) improve the concluding sections of students’ article-length writing; and 5) improve student understanding of the article submission, review, and revision process.

REQUIREMENTS: There are no prerequisites for the class. Written work will consist of one 500-word and one 750-word book review plus the submissions and revision of a vignette, a historiographic review, and other parts of a scholarly article, culminating in the submission of an entire article manuscript and a submission cover letter. Papers will be downgraded ONE FULL LETTER-GRADE if late, unless an extension has been granted BEFORE the due date. Please BACKUP your work as you go! All papers must be submitted in class and may not, under any circumstances, be submitted in any other manner unless requested by the instructor. The class includes 110 minutes of direct interaction and at least 340 minutes of independent learning per week.

ATTENDANCE, GRADING, AND DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION: One-fifth of the class grade will be based on the quality of each student’s contribution to the discussions. The remainder will be based as follows: 1) each book review—10%; vignette—10%; historiographic review—10%; completed essay draft—10%; final paper submission—30%. Missing classes will adversely affect one’s discussion grade unless the absence is for documented medical reasons or is conveyed to me the first week of the semester as specified in the GW religious holidays policy. Students with disabilities requiring accommodation should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Rome Hall, Suite 102, to establish eligibility and to coordinate accommodations. For additional information please refer to: https://disabilitysupport.gwu.edu/. Also, changes to this syllabus may be announced in class at any time, and missing class does not excuse not knowing about such changes.
PLAGIARISM AND CITATION: Plagiarism is a serious violation of university rules that can be punished by suspension or expulsion. I prosecute all suspected cases of plagiarism. Borrowing someone else's words without giving them credit is plagiarism. Closely paraphrasing someone else’s work without making substantive changes to the content or method of organization is plagiarism. Handing in a paper written completely or in part by someone else or for another class is academic dishonesty. But these facts do not mean you should footnote every sentence of your papers. Well-known facts (for example, that Lincoln vetoed the Wade-Davis bill) do not need to be cited at all. Nor do you need to cite mundane facts that are not central to your thesis (that he delivered the House Divided Speech in Springfield, Ill. or that the address began at 8 p.m.). But do provide citations if facts are not readily known (that Lincoln was paid the largest legal fee in antebellum U.S. history) or easily verifiable. The most sophisticated papers will have no more than one or two or, at the very most, three footnotes per paragraph. If you are unsure, see me before you hand in your papers or consult GW’s Integrity Code at studentconduct.gwu.edu/code-academic-integrity.

University Policy on Religious Holidays and Emergency Preparedness
Students should notify me during the first week of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance. There is no penalty for such absences. In an emergency, refer to the “ReadyGW” guide at the end of the syllabus.

FOOTNOTE STYLE: You must use footnotes (not endnotes) to explain where your information comes from. Historians almost always use “Chicago Style I” footnote formatting:

1 Kerby Miller, Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 166-167. (Note the first cite gives all information!)
2 Miller, Emigrants and Exiles, 179. (Second cite has only last name, short title, and page #.)
3 Oliver MacDonagh, "The Irish Famine Emigration to the United States," Perspectives in American History 10 (1976): 370-371. (The journal title is in italics, but the article title is not.)
4 MacDonagh, "Irish Famine Emigration," 361-366. (short second cite)


CLASS SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS:

JANUARY 18: Introduction
What we will do in this class. What makes good history writing? **What are our strengths and weaknesses as a writer?** Making a profile of the class’s writing strengths and weaknesses. Importance of consciously reading good writing. Importance of allowing enough time to write. Importance of scheduling time to write. Importance of eliminating distractions. Importance of editing.

Book Reviews: What must they include? 1) Summary of the content and basic argument of the book; 2) placement of the work in historiographic context; 3) assessment of its strengths and weaknesses (what do you do if you are not nearly as expert on the book’s subject as the author?); 4) quotations from the book, in particular to document weaknesses and convey its thesis; 5) an appropriate conclusion. Reviews should avoid: 1) predicting the audience for the book; 2) commenting on the book’s length unless as a criticism (in particular avoid “this slim volume”); 3) criticism suggesting that the author should have written a “different book.” It is fair to say that the author should have made use of the President X Papers in the Y archives, but it is not appropriate to assert that the author should have included an additional chapter on President X; 4) speculating on the author’s intentions; 5) discussing the author’s political beliefs or associations; 6) criticizing things that are not within the control of the author; 7) quoting or critiquing anything not definitely written by the author (dust-jacket text, editors’ introductions, etc.). Do you have to read every word of a book to review it? The Anbinder method for generating ideas for book reviews. Do book reviews have footnotes?

Read and discuss sample book reviews in class.

Do you have to be an expert on the subject of a book to review it? Discussion of what is off limits (no books you have reviewed for other classes; no submitting substantially the same material you wrote for a historiographic essay). Books you have already read, however, are allowed.

**Choose book review book assignments.**

Discuss article subjects students might pursue for final project. What makes a good article subject—original research, self-evidently interesting, significance easy to perceive, well written. **Make list of projected final projects. Explain research materials I have readily available.**

JANUARY 25: Style, Rhythm, Transitions
500-word book review due at beginning of class
Revise list of projected final projects. Discuss what students should be doing on them now.
For new projects—reviewing historiography, identifying research questions, insuring access to and adequacy of primary sources.
For revision projects—making list of revisions needed: additional research, writing improvements, changes to organizational structure, and making it “publication ready.”

**Style:** Clarity, concision (EVERY reader gets tired of reading your writing [and mine], **NEVER** write for a word count; cut words from each sentence; sentences from each “graf,” etc. **EVERYTHING YOU WRITE CAN BE CUT BY A QUARTER AND probably COULD BE CUT BY HALF**), word choice, word variety, sentence rhythm (variety of length and of
structure), sophisticated vocabulary, avoiding jargon, paragraph introductory sentences (must clearly explain point of paragraph), paragraph transitions, paragraph concluding sentences. Avoiding use of “this” and “that” as pronouns. Importance of consciously (in two senses) reading good writing. Keep a writing log. It should include date, time started, goal for each writing session, what was accomplished, time ended. How to improve your vocabulary? Try vocabulary.com.

Make appointments to meet to go over book reviews and writing samples. Come to meeting with written list of self-identified writing weaknesses and strengths.

FEBRUARY 1: Quotation, Punctuation, Editing

Quotations (transitions, blocking, ellipses, brackets, capitalization changing for old usages and for first letters of a quote; how many per paragraph; which punctuation goes inside and outside quotation marks); beginning scholarly works with quotations; commas; comma splices; “however” splices; colons and semicolons; hyphens (as separators and as adjectival phrase connectors); contractions; their vs. his and her; keeping related words together; dangling modifiers; proper footnote formatting; capitalization of foreign titles; proper citation detail. Always cite only what you actually see. Check the original source whenever possible, especially on matters central to your topic (never trust another scholar); quote other scholars VERY sparingly.
How to edit; how much time to devote to editing; on screen vs. on paper; how to force oneself to edit more. Edit for content separately from editing for style. Who should edit early drafts (friends or family), middle drafts (colleagues), final drafts (experts). Importance of reading your text out loud to someone else. How do we make time for all these drafts? Join or start a writing group! If time: note-taking strategies.

Choose book for second, 750-word book review assignment due in class Feb. 8. First draft due by e-mail Monday Feb. 6 at midnight. Final draft in both clean and track changes form due in class. Also clean and track changes version of first book review due in class Feb. 8.

FEBRUARY 8: Structure
750-word book review due at the beginning of class. Revision of first book review due also with visible track changes.
Discuss lessons learned between writing first and second book reviews. Narrative arc; chronological clarity; transparent organizational logic; balance of content; maintaining focus on stated topic; anticipating readers’ questions. Introductory sections: vignette, scope, thesis, significance, historiography, transition. Length of introductory section? Background? Footnote drill.
FEBRUARY 15: Historiographic Reviews


The differences between a historiographic essay and a literature review for a research-focused article; do research-focused articles need historiographic reviews (in class, read historiographic reviews in article by Ekirch, Hershberg, Hodes, Masur, and Zimmerman [JCWE]); what are the goals of the lit. review section of a research-focused article; when should specific authors be mentioned in your lit. reviews and when should their names be relegated to footnotes; what is the right length for historiographic sections; which authors merit being mentioned; what should be the focus of the lit. review; how long should the footnotes be in such sections; avoiding fights and controversy in the historiographic review. Don’t exaggerate (straw men)—clarify what is lacking.

Historiographic essays: what is their purpose; who publishes them; how many are published; the two main types: those with a thesis and those suggesting future areas for research (both types must offer insight into trends in past scholarship); which scholarly works get mentioned and which do not; how much space to devote to each author; how much to summarize, how much to criticize, how much to contextualize; options for creating a narrative arc in a historiographic paper (chronological; thematic; interpretative). The focus of the analysis for each section: the most important contributions the author makes to the study of his or her subject; critiquing the methodology, selection of sources, or interpretations of the author; analyzing how the author's work changed the direction of research in his/her field; comparing the author’s work to that of others in the field (especially works already mentioned in your essay). The where-do-we-go-from-here section: most important contribution; often requires research—always requires examples; MUST also describe what we might expect to find if we head in the direction you propose. Footnote drill.

FEBRUARY 22: Ancillary Materials, Conclusions, More Editing

Due at the beginning of class: Historiographic section for all students; most (or all) of introductory section for students revising a paper originally submitted for another class.

Illustrations and captions; graphs and charts (logic to organization; clarity; source citation); writing numbers; conclusions—recap, significance, broader implications; bibliographies.

How to edit. How much time to devote to editing.

How much research is enough research? How to organize notes. How to outline. The debate over whether or not to outline—the argument against says that you can’t start with outlining because ideas cannot be generated in an organized manner. I agree that outlining must come after idea generation. The anti-outliners favor writing out your ideas in prose and then trying to organize them after they are already written, but this strategy does not work well for history, which is so narrative focused. Why and when to reverse outline—a last resort when writing has gone astray.

What is the proper length for a research paper, article manuscript, or dissertation chapter? Footnote drill; Return book reviews
MARCH 1: Vignettes and Titles


Are opening vignette’s necessary; what makes a good opening vignette; what must it have; what should it avoid; what is the right length. In class, read vignettes by Norton (“The Chicken or the Iegue”), Ekirch (“Sleep We Have Lost”), Masur (“Contraband”), Silverman (“Curse of God”), and Anbinder (“Irish Origins”).

Titles: Importance of a “working title”; what makes a good title; quotation or no quotation; colon or no colon.

MARCH 8: Research Librarian Presentation to Class

Due at the beginning of class: vignettes (with perfect footnotes) for all; entire introductory section for paper revisers.

Discussion: How to identify the best ways to gain access to primary sources

MARCH 22: The Journal Submission Process


How to choose “reach,” “target,” and “safety” journals to which you can submit your work; how to identify journals that specifically publish student research; how to read journal submission guidelines; word limits; best times to submit; how to format the submission; what to put in (and not put in) the cover letter; the long wait (and what to do during it); the review process (the roles of the editor and the editorial board; will your piece make it to reviewers; how reviewers are chosen); what anonymous reviews look like; possible answers from the editor (and how to read between the lines); what to do if your piece is rejected; what to do if you get a “revise and resubmit”; how to write the response to the editor; how to resubmit (including the new cover letter); what will happen next; what to do if you are asked to revise a second time; the in-house editing process; rights and permissions; time to celebrate!

MARCH 29: Writing About Numbers

Due at the beginning of class: the first ten pages of your final paper (with perfect footnotes).

In-class: exercises that will teach students how to analyze numbers knowledgeably and write about them clearly. In class read excerpts from Thomas Holt, Bernard Bailyn, etc.

APRIL 5: Before You Submit: Citation Checking; Soliciting Manuscript Critiques

Bring to class: A hard copy of however much of your paper is written to date and all secondary sources cited in it; a highlighter pen and a regular pen; your laptop computer. Most of class will be devoted to checking/critiquing the footnotes of our classmates.
From whom should we solicit pre-submission critiques of our work; how to write to strangers to solicit feedback; when is NOT the time to ask for feedback; what to do with their feedback (especially if you disagree with it).

APRIL 12: No Class Meeting

But, your final, completed paper is due in two forms at class time: 1) a hard copy in my mailbox by 5:10 p.m. and an electronic Word version (not pdf) as an attachment (not a shared file) is due to me by e-mail at the same time. These e-mailed versions will be distributed to the rest of the class, and each student will be responsible for providing a written critique to the author on April 19. Each commenter will spend five minutes presenting their critique to the class on that date as well, to be followed by the instructor’s critique.

APRIL 19: Referees’ reports

Due at the beginning of class: Students will bring to class two copies of their written critique of a classmate’s work. One copy goes to the author and the other to the instructor. Each commenter will spend five minutes presenting their critique to the class, to be followed by the instructor’s critique of the same paper.

Discussion: Conference presentations as a means of soliciting feedback on one’s work before submitting to a journal. Advantages: conference application process provides incentive to complete research projects; provides feedback. Disadvantages: commentators often lack relevant expertise.

APRIL 26: Poster Sessions

Each student will present a ten-minute (strictly timed) presentation, with visual aids, on his or her research project. The presentation must explain the research question, the historiographic context, the findings, and the significance of the findings.

STYLE CHECKLIST

Title--descriptive and sophisticated
Opening vignette--well written and relevant to thesis
Introductory paragraphs clearly convey thesis and explain paper's significance
Historiographic section--explains what is lacking in existing scholarship w/o exag.
Historiography: proper length
Avoids overuse of irrelevant "background" material and repetitiveness
Sophisticated analysis & argument
Paper based mostly on primary sources
Paper focuses on thesis
Organizational logic and chronological clarity
Writing is clear
Writing is succinct
Paragraphs well organized and not too long or short
Variety in writing rhythm
Variety in word choice
Variety in sentence structure
Proper footnote format
Excellent transition sentences
Stylish transitions into quotations
Variety in quotation transitions
Balance of content appropriate for topic
Anticipates reader's questions
Paper has appropriate number of illustrations
Conclusion has sufficient recap
Conclusion explains significance
Conclusion addresses broader implications of topic
End of paper edited as well as the beginning
Does paper say “in this paper”? (except perhaps when talking about historians)
Does paper say “in conclusion”?
Does paper ALWAYS use past tense (except perhaps when talking about historians)
Does paper have colloquialisms?
Does paper have contractions?
Does paper use “this” or “that” as a pronoun?
Does paper have block quotations?
Does paper use italics properly for titles in both notes and text?
Does paper use ellipses and brackets properly?
Is all appropriate punctuation inside quotation marks?

Examples of Good and Not-So-Good Quotation Transitions

**Good:**
“The landlady of Almacks's thrives,” Dickens declared, describing her as “a buxom fat mulatto woman, with sparkling eyes, whose head is daintily ornamented with a handkerchief of many colours.”

Dickens wrote that “the landlady of Almacks's thrives…. [She is] a buxom fat mulatto woman, with sparkling eyes, whose head is daintily ornamented with a handkerchief of many colours.”

Dickens wrote: “The landlady of Almack's thrives…. [She is] a buxom fat mulatto woman, with sparkling eyes, whose head is daintily ornamented with a handkerchief of many colours.”

The streets of the Lower East Side, Howe notes, were “lined with an endless array of pushcarts and peddlers selling every variety of product imaginable.”

**Not So Good:**
Dickens wrote, “the landlady of Almack's thrives…”

Dickens wrote “The landlady of Almack's thrives…”

Dickens wrote about Almack’s very vividly, “The landlady of Almack's thrives…”

Howe says that Lower East Side streets were, “lined with an endless array of pushcarts and peddlers selling every variety of product imaginable.”
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS INFORMATION – SYLLABUS INSERT

Instructor: Anbinder
Course: HIST 6001.10
Building/Room #: Rome 663

EMERGENCY NUMBERS
Foggy Bottom (GWPD) 202-994-6111
Mount Vernon (GWPD) 202-242-6111
VSTC (Loudoun County) 911
Other Locations 911

NON-EMERGENCY NUMBERS
Foggy Bottom (GWPD) 202-994-6110
Mount Vernon (GWPD) 202-242-6110
GW Information Line 202-994-5050
VSTC Information Line 571-553-8333

Fire
☐ Pull fire alarm
☐ Leave building immediately using closest emergency exit, closing doors behind you
☐ Call GWPD (202-994-6111) or 911 when safe to do so
☐ Assemble in a designated area
☐ Re-enter building only when instructed by emergency officials
  • Do not assume an alarm is false
  • USE STAIRS, do not use elevators
  • If unable to exit building, go to nearest exit stairwell or safe area of refuge and call GWPD (202-994-6111) or 911 to report your location
  • If trained, use a fire extinguisher if fire is small and contained and room is not fill with smoke

Two emergency exits are located: center of building
H Street end of building
Primary meeting area (near): outside main entrance lobby
Secondary meeting area (far): outside H Street entrance

Severe Weather
Thunderstorms are most common type of severe weather in Washington, DC metropolitan area. However, winter storms, extreme hot/cold temperatures, flooding, tornadoes and hurricanes can occur. Check CampusAdvisories.gwu.edu for up-to-date weather advisories and information.

Shelter-in-place for severe weather events:
☐ Seek shelter indoors in a low part of building
☐ Move to a windowless interior room away from hazardous materials
☐ Take cover under a sturdy object or against an interior wall
☐ Monitor Campus Advisories and local media
☐ Wait for all clear before leaving your safe space

Violence/Active Shooter
If an active shooter is in your vicinity, call GWPD (202-994-6111) or 911 when it is safe to do so and provide information, including the location and number of shooter(s), description of shooter(s), weapons used and number of potential victims.

Evacuate: If there is an accessible escape path, attempt to evacuate the premises
  • Have an escape route and plan in mind; leave your belongings behind; follow instructions of police officers

Hide Out: If evacuation is not possible, find a place to hide where the active shooter is less likely to find you
  • Hide in an area out of the shooter’s view; provide protection; lock the doors; block entry to your hiding place;
  • Silence your phone; wait for law enforcement

Take Action: As a last resort and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the shooter by:
  • Acting as aggressively as possible against him/her; yelling; throwing items and improvising weapons; and commit to your actions

Emergency Communications
CampusAdvisories.gwu.edu: GW’s primary website for incident-related information (including class cancellations).

GW Alert: Notification system that sends emergency alerts to email addresses and mobile devices. Students, faculty and staff are requested to maintain current contact information and campus location information by logging into GWeb Information System (banweb.gwu.edu). In emergency situations, alerts may also appear at the top of university webpages.

GW PAL (Personal Alarm Locator): Download this app to your iOS or Android smartphone. This mobile safety app allows users to quickly communicate with GWPD (when on campus) or 911 (when off campus); users can send crime tips to GWPD; app also has a flashlight feature and dial list for local taxi companies. More information go to safety.gwu.edu

Health & Emergency Management Services, in collaboration with the Office of the Provost, Academic Year 2016-2017. This document and other resources are available at safety.gwu.edu