

****Disclaimer****

This syllabus is to be used as a guideline only. The information provided is a summary of topics to be covered in the class. Information contained in this document such as assignments, grading scales, due dates, office hours, required books and materials may be from a previous semester and are subject to change. Please refer to your instructor for the most recent version of the syllabus.

Professor Matt Garcia

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Office hours: Wednesday, all day, by appointment

On History Writing HST 580 Credits: 3

The ability to write is a necessity of mastering History and, yet, many of us struggle with it. It does not matter if you are a beginning graduate student or a full professor—we have all experienced frustration. For me, the challenges run the gamut, from how to start, to word choice, to working with unwieldy sources. Something as simple as how to organize your time can derail an essay, a semester, a career. This course is designed to help you get beyond those impediments so that you can enjoy the exhilaration of finding your voice in print. In the course, I expose you to the most recognized authorities on the art of writing, from the very best fiction writers, to social scientists, to historians. Ultimately, the goal is to impart tools and approaches to writing that will make you an effective writer for this program and for life.

Required Reading:

Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say/I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*. W. W. Norton & Company; 3rd Edition. 2014.

Matt Garcia. *From the Jaws of Victory: The Triumph and Tragedy of Cesar Chavez and the Farm Workers Movement*. University of California Press. 2012.

Stephen King. *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*. Pocket Books, 2001.

Jill LePore. *The Whites of Their Eyes: The Tea Party's Revolution and the Battle over American History*. Princeton University Press. 2001.

Miriam Pawel. *The Crusades of Cesar Chavez: A Biography*. Bloomsbury Press. 2014.

Paul Silvia. *How To Write A Lot*. American Psychological Association. 2007.

Requirements

Everyone is responsible for finishing all reading by Wednesday of each assigned week. You are expected to check in with Blackboard daily and be engaged with your peers and Prof. Garcia on discussion boards and in email. There will be times where

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you will be expected to use electronic media to communicate with Prof. Garcia and your peers.

There will be three components to your grade: Discussion of readings and tasks, making and conveying a writing log, and writing and sharing a historical essay. The majority of the grade will be in the execution of the essay. Please make note of it, and prepare accordingly. Each requirement is described below:

Discussion Board 20%

I expect students to participate in our blackboard discussion of the primary readings. Discussions will be driven by my prompt of a question or questions that I expect each one of you to respond to. All responses should be public—i.e. accessible to your peers in the class. You should feel welcome to respond to each other after the initial post, which is *due every Wednesday*. I require *at least a paragraph* for each of my prompts (roughly 150-250 words). In some cases, I will ask you to complete an exercise and report back to the discussion board. The discussion board is where we will personalize the lessons learned from readings, and engage your peers. It is a critical component of the class.

Writing Log 30%

Paul Silvia conveys the following advice: “To write a lot, you need to take a cold, accurate look at your writing by monitoring your writing progress.” (39) In this assignment, you are required to do *two things*: 1) give me an ideal schedule for writing over 7 days, including in it, the hours during the day you plan to write; 2) an honest log of when you wrote and what you did with the time that you allotted to write. For guidance, you may consult Silvia’s chart on page 41; however, you may also use any computer calendar system (e.g. Outlook) and take a snap shot of it to report to me at the end of the week. The purpose of this exercise is to get you accustomed to making time to write, and having you account for your progress (with me, and with yourself).

Essay 50%

You are responsible for writing an essay that resembles the op-eds and short online articles you will be exposed to in this class. A good example of what I expect is my article, “Field of Screens,” at Future Tense on Slate.com:

http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/future_tense/2015/05/how_technology_could_improve_life_for_farm_workers.html

The article must be at least 1200 words and no more than 1500 words. This requirement is critical to developing your capacity to write according to the typical protocols found in publications of this nature. I expect the following

The schedule for completing the Essay will break down in the following manner:

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- **Week Two:** Share your paper topic with Prof. Garcia
- **Week Three:** one-page abstract (250 words) shared with a peer and Prof. Garcia
- **Week Four:** Prof. Garcia will identify your peer.
- **Week Five:** One half of the class shares a draft of her/his essay with a peer. Peer must be in contact to share her/his review with her/his peer.
- **Week Six:** Second half of the class shares a draft of her/his essay with a peer. Peer must be in contact to share her/his review with her/his peer.
- **December 5.** The final paper is due. Word count for final papers should be approximately 1500 words.

Grading Rubric:

The following rubric will be followed for grading your essay:

RUBRIC FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS					
CRITERIA	A	B	C	D	E
THESIS (20%)	Clear, relevant thesis in intro paragraph, cogently addresses core questions and frames the discussion. (If required, thesis contains a reflective element.)	Relevant thesis in intro paragraph addresses the core questions, but does not offer a framework for the discussion. (If required, thesis contains a reflective element.)	Thesis is unclear and/or doesn't occur in intro paragraph and doesn't frame the discussion. (If required, thesis lacks clear reflective element.)	Thesis is unclear, hard to find, and/or irrelevant. (If required, thesis lacks reflective element.)	Essay lacks thesis. (If required, thesis lacks reflective element.)
CRITICAL THINKING (20%)	Consistently, critically, and effectively engages multiple content sources.	Consistently engages content sources; some evidence of critical thinking.	Inconsistently engages content sources; some evidence of critical thinking.	Little engagement of relevant content sources; little evidence of critical thinking.	No evidence of critical thinking about relevant content sources.
EVIDENCE (20%)	Systematically constructs a well-reasoned argument from relevant evidence provided in the module. (If required, integrates discussion thread into essay.)	Constructs an argument from relevant evidence provided in the module. (If required, integrates discussion thread into essay.)	Constructs an argument, but fails to consistently ground the argument in evidence; often relies on unsubstantiated opinion. (If required, mentions discussion thread. Lacks integration.)	Fails to construct an evidence-based argument; emphasis on unsubstantiated opinion and/or a misuse of evidence. (If required, no mention of discussion thread.)	References no evidence. (If required, no mention of discussion thread.)
WRITING (20%)	Writing is clear; free of typographical and grammatical error. Sentences cogently convey information.	Writing is mostly clear; contains few typographical and grammatical errors. Sentences are complete.	Writing is occasionally clear; contains multiple typographical and grammatical errors.	Writing is often unclear; contains numerous typographical and grammatical errors.	Writing is unclear and fraught with errors. Sentences are often incomplete and incomprehensible. Clear lack of proofreading.
ORGANIZATION (20%)	Information is organized, integrated and flows from point to point. Clear, effective, relevant topic sentences frame paragraphs. Cogent introductory and concluding paragraphs frame essay.	Information is organized and integrated. Paragraphs contain relevant topic sentences. Contains an introductory paragraph.	Information is occasionally disorganized or choppy. Paragraphs are often choppy and lack topic sentences. Lacks an introductory and/or concluding paragraphs.	Information is often incoherent, choppy, and lacking in organization. Paragraphs lack topic sentences. No introductory or concluding paragraphs.	Information is disorganized and incoherent, lacking a clear progression between concepts.
TOTAL 100%					