

HISTORY 299H UR Research: History and Your Project

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Meeting Time: TR 8:15-9:30 AM
Meeting Location: Rush Rhees 456
Office hours: By appointment



Course Description

This seminar introduces students to grant-writing techniques, primary source identification, and prospectus preparation in History. HIST 299H is mandatory for students interested in completing the History Honors program next year (Please note: completing this course does not guarantee admission to Honors). Students who are planning on developing an independent study or a self-initiated project separate from Honors are also welcome. Throughout the course, we will analyze select readings on questions of memory, power, archives, and our motivations as writers. All specializations, time periods, and historical research interests are welcome.

Your course objective will be to produce a grant proposal and a prospectus for a larger research project of your choice. Whether you are interested in researching Soviet Gulags, the 1950s Chilean workers' movement, the struggle for women's suffrage in France, race relations in South African football or anything else, your prospectus will serve as a guiding document to future research. What has already been written about your topic? What kinds of sources have historians used to craft these narratives? How have certain methods, archives and voices shaped the topic you hope to investigate? And, most importantly, how will you advance the field?

This is a discussion-intensive course that will require considerable engagement with your peers' proposed projects and vantage points. You are expected to contribute productively to their research ideas. This is largely a course on constructive criticism. You will be required to reflect critically and adapt to the feedback that others will offer on your research abstract, grant proposal, and prospectus. Your participation in the course is worth a full 25% of your research grade for the semester. The remainder of your grade will be awarded to three prospectus submissions (see grading structure below).

The course is also meant to amplify your access to research funding and to a community of researchers and scholars in and outside of the University of Rochester. As a result, we will also prepare proposals for undergraduate conferences and the Discover Grant program. The former will allow you to meet students and faculty at neighboring institutions of higher education and to receive feedback and suggestions on the current state of your research. This year, the Discover Grant Program for Undergraduate Summer Research will award \$5,000 for individual research projects. Students in HIST 299H are uniquely positioned to compete for this funding given that this is a course on research practices and preparation. Whether or not your proposals are accepted, the practice of preparing materials for a wider readership is integral to our work as researchers and historians. If you are competing or thinking of applying for a different opportunity, please let me know as soon as possible so I can support your project or point you to other resources.

Course Requirements

Required Texts

Sarah Maza, *Thinking about History* (University of Chicago Press, 2017)

All other readings will be posted on the course website in PDF format.

Course Policies

Method of Instruction

This course meets Tuesdays and Thursdays for discussion (8:15-9:30 AM in Rush Rhees 456). I will engage in regular and substantive interaction with students through the facilitation of group discussion and assessment and feedback on student work.

Grading

A. Participation: Students are expected to complete the readings and participate in discussion.

B. Prospectus First Section: Students will submit the first half of their proposal (Times New Roman Font 12, double-spaced, 5 pages), which includes introduction and historiography sections.

C. Prospectus Second Section: Students will submit the second half of their proposal (Times New Roman Font 12, double-spaced, 5 pages), which includes research methods, work plan, and conclusion sections.

D. Final Prospectus: Students will revise and submit a final prospectus (Times New Roman Font 12, double-spaced, 10 pages) and full bibliography of their research project.

Participation	25%
Prospectus First Section	25%
Prospectus Second Section	25%
Final Prospectus	25%

Grading Scale

A	93–100%
A-	90–92.9%
B+	87–89.9%
B	83–86.9%
B-	80–82.9%
C+	77–79.9%
C	73–76.9%
C-	70–72.9%
D	60–69.9%
E	Below 59.9%

A Note on Leading Discussion

Our discussions will mostly take place on Tuesdays. In this course, you and a partner will be assigned as discussion leaders once, although you will actively participate every session. Leading discussion is a crucial component of your participation grade for the course. To begin class, you will present a ten-minute summary for that day's assigned readings. At a minimum, you will establish the author's key arguments and methods. You must also situate the book or article in relation to the author's intellectual trajectory (current academic institution, previous studies, current or future projects, etc.).

After your 10-minute presentation, you and your partner will lead discussion. To do this, you must produce a list of 10 questions to stimulate class discussion. You are welcome to praise the author's methods, advance your own criticisms of the text, identify sections that could have been

approached differently or that left you uncertain of the author's intent. Ultimately, however, your task is to encourage scholarly dialogue with your peers.

Writing and Speaking Center

The [Writing and Speaking Center](#) supports effective academic communication across all disciplines by offering free writing and speaking tutoring to all members of the University of Rochester community. The center is staffed by professional, graduate, and undergraduate writing and speaking tutors from the humanities, social sciences, and natural and applied sciences. These tutors provide individualized feedback and assistance on all types of academic writing and speaking. To work with a tutor, sign-up for an in-person or online appointment using their scheduling system or visit drop-in hours.

The Kelly Family History Book Fund

In 2022, the History Department received an endowed fund to purchase class textbooks for undergraduate students enrolled in a history course. If you need help acquiring your books, you may apply for funds through this link <https://forms.gle/c2WArDa5g696oKeU6>. Preference will be given to history majors, but any student may apply.

University of Rochester Policies

Academic Honesty

Students and faculty at the University must agree to adhere to high standards of academic honesty in all the work that we do. You are encouraged to discuss course readings and assignments with your fellow students. However, all written work must be done independently and not in collaboration with another. To make appropriate help available for your essays, I encourage you to consult with me and with the [College Writing, Speaking, and Argument Program](#). The College Board on Academic Honesty website gives further information on our policies and procedures: rochester.edu/college/honesty.

Nondiscrimination Policy Statement

The University of Rochester values [diversity](#) and is committed to equal opportunity for persons regardless of age, color, disability, ethnicity, gender identity or expression, genetic information, marital status, military/veteran status, national origin, race, religion/creed, sex, sexual orientation, or any other status protected by law. Further, the University complies with all applicable non-discrimination laws in the administration of its policies, admissions, employment, and access to and treatment in University programs and activities.

Inclusion Statement

The University of Rochester, this course, and I are committed to inclusion, and welcome students of all backgrounds and abilities. Services and reasonable accommodations are available to students with temporary and permanent disabilities, to students with DACA or undocumented status, to students facing mental health issues, other personal situations, and to students with other kinds of learning needs. Please feel free to let me know if there are circumstances affecting your ability to participate in class or your full participation in this course.

Some resources that might be of use include:

- Office of Disability Resources rochester.edu/college/disability

- Undocumented/DACA Student Support Contacts
rochester.edu/college/ccas/undergraduate/daca/index.html
- University of Rochester CARE Network rochester.edu/care/

Disability Resources

The University of Rochester respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities. In the event you encounter any barrier(s) to full participation in this course due to the impact of a disability, please contact the [Office of Disability Resources](#). The access coordinators in the Office of Disability Resources can meet with you to discuss the barriers you are experiencing and explain the eligibility process for establishing academic accommodations.

Course Schedule

MODULE I

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION

- T Introduction
- R 500-word statement on two possible research projects
- What intrigues you about them? What is missing? What can be done?
 - Print two copies, bring to class.

WEEK 2: THE ARCHIVE

- T Arlette Farge, *The Allure of the Archives*
- R Footnotes exercise

WEEK 3: PAPER, POWER, AND SILENCES

- T Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*
- R **PROSPECTUS FIRST SECTION DUE**
Print two copies, bring to class.

MODULE II

WEEK 4: POSITIONING YOUR PROJECT

- T Sarah Maza, *Thinking about History* (pp. 1-117)
- R Print and bring two hard copies of your Discover Grant draft

** Meet with potential faculty advisors and schedule office hours visits **BEFORE** the end of Module II. This is especially important for students considering Honors applications.*

WEEK 5: POSITIONING YOUR PROJECT

T Sarah Maza, *Thinking about History* (pp. 118-238)

R **PROSPECTUS SECOND SECTION DUE**

Print two copies, bring to class.

MODULE III

WEEK 6: POSTCOLONIALISM

T Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe* (pp. 1-96)

R Contact librarians at the Library of Congress and create a list of ten possible sources

DISCOVER GRANT DUE MARCH 2

WEEK 7: THEORIES OF POWER

T Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (pp. 170-228)

Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* (pp. 17-49)

R **PRESENTATIONS AND FINAL PROSPECTUS DUE**

Print and bring hard copy to class.

WEEK 8: SPRING BREAK

WASHINGTON, DC RESEARCH TRIP, MARCH 8-12

After HIST 299H ends...

Honors application: deadline Friday, March 21, send to thomas.fleischman@rochester.edu

- 1500-word research statement and work plan
- Preliminary bibliography (excluded from word count) with separate primary and secondary source listings.

Mandatory attendance for Honors Colloquium and Banquet, details TBD

* Conduct your summer research! Ask questions, read books, immerse yourself in the project

* Honors Program in History begins Fall 2025 (HIST 389H) and continues in Spring 2026 (HIST 393H and HIST 399H)