HIST 601: Capstone I
T 2:00-3:30
PH 207

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Image: Pierre Mignard’s Clio (1689)

The capstone is meant to be a culmination of what you have learned about the discipline of history at Westminster. You will produce your own original scholarship after asking questions about the past and exploring the relevant historiography and primary sources that will help you answer those questions. In addition to revising your own work, you will also critique your fellow students’ scholarship. Finally, you will present your work to the class and to the campus community. Capstone will give you the opportunity to engage the past as a historian, producing a piece that interests you, contributes to the scholarly conversation about your topic, and makes you, your fellow students, your family and friends, your professors, and the College proud. In Capstone I, we will review and discuss some of the challenges and joys of writing history, and you will identify a capstone project, write a historiography, and develop a research plan.

Course Outcomes:
1. Students will identify and discuss some of the challenges and common fallacies found in the writing of history.
2. Students will select a capstone project and develop a research plan.
3. Students will write a historiographical assessment that analyzes what other scholars have written about their topic.

Texts:
  You will need access to:
- Optional:
  - Kate Turabian, A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, 8th ed. (University of Chicago Press, 2010).

“The problem with the future is that is isn’t as clear as the past. That’s why the writing of history generally – and the writing of biography particularly – requires empathy, which is not the same as sympathy. Is asks a very simple question: What exactly would I, knowing what they knew then, have done differently?” – John Lewis Gaddis, George F. Kennan
Evaluation:

- Attendance, Participation, and Professional Behavior: 10% (25 points) [Assesses outcome #1.]
- Assignments: 10% (25 points) [Assesses outcome #1.]
- Research Design: 30% (75 points) [Assesses outcome #2.]
- Research Plan: 10% (25 points) [Assesses outcome #2.]
- Historiography: 40% (100 points) [Assesses outcome #3.]

Grading Scale:

- A+ 250 – 245 points
- A 244 – 232 points
- A- 231 – 225 points
- B+ 224 – 220 points
- B 219 – 207 points
- B- 206 – 200 points
- C+ 199 – 195 points
- C 194 – 183 points
- C- 182 – 175 points
- D+ 174 – 170 points
- D 169 – 157 points
- D- 156 – 150 points
- F 149 and below

Accessibility Statement:

Students with documented or suspected disabilities that prevent full access to course resources and/or facilities should contact Faith Craig, Disability Resources Director. Find the Disability Resource Office in 209 Thompson-Clark Hall or call 724-946-7192 for more information and assistance.

Learning and Writing Services:

If you are having trouble in class, you are always welcome to contact me for additional help. Learning and Writing Services is another helpful resource. See https://www.westminster.edu/academics/learning-writing-services.cfm.

Academic Integrity:

An explanation of the Academic Integrity Policy is listed in your Westminster Catalog. You must submit your own work and properly acknowledge anyone else’s work you use. If I determine that a student has violated this policy, they will – at a minimum – fail the assignment. (You should know that I, like most college instructors, am pretty good at detecting cheating or plagiarism. I do make use of “Turn It In.”) In addition, the following might result:

“After reviewing the instructor’s explanation of the violation and penalty, as well as the student’s record of previous offenses, the VPAA (Vice President for Academic Affairs) will take the following additional action:

‘a. FOR A FIRST OFFENSE, the VPAA may supplement the instructor’s penalty with further action, up to and including suspension and permanent dismissal. . .
‘b. FOR A SECOND OFFENSE, the VPAA will impose a one-semester suspension. . .
‘c. FOR A THIRD OFFENSE, the VPAA will impose a penalty of permanent dismissal from the College.”

Classroom Etiquette and Professional Behavior:

Since the peer evaluation process is central to capstone, the guidelines below revolve around respecting others’ thoughts and ideas. Violations will result in grade penalties.

- Please respect everyone’s right to participate in class.
- Do not pack up your things before class is over.
- Try to arrive on time. If you know you will be habitually late, please let me know.
- Please turn off your cell phones and keep them out of your reach. Do not engage in text-messaging during class.
- Walking in and out of the room during class is disruptive. Avoid it.
- Please avoid making appointments (etc.) that will require you to leave class early.
- Use common sense. If you disrupt class repeatedly, your grade will be impacted.
- Feedback on another student’s work should be honest and constructive, reflecting a respectful desire to help a peer improve. Do not disparage another student or engage in ad hominem attacks.
- **Plagiarism**, using another’s words or ideas without acknowledging them, is unacceptable. It could result in a failing grade for an assignment or for the class. See the section on academic integrity above.
Components one through five should be organized into a coherent essay that should be AT LEAST two pages long. It should be double-spaced. Use margins of one inch and ten to twelve-point type in Times New Roman font. If you cite sources, use footnotes or endnotes according to CMS guidelines. Use arabic numerals to number your pages. Place those page numbers in the upper right corner. As mentioned above, your bibliography should reflect CMS standards precisely. Single-space each bibliographic entry and use CMS! (See additional guidelines in the following paragraph.)

Assignments: I will ask you to submit several small assignments intended to help you advance your research and writing. The instructions and due dates for each assignment are found in the course schedule. Please make sure to read ALL the instructions. Collectively, these assignments are worth 10% of your final grade. I will assign up to 10 points to each of these assignments and average them at the end of the semester to determine your assignment grade. [All D2L posts, collectively, will receive one ten-point score.]
hanging indents.* Include one space between each entry and alphabetize them by authors’ last names. Separate the primary and secondary source entries and use subect. (Your subtitles should be “Primary Sources” and “Secondary Sources.” Don’t include the quotation marks in your bibliography, though. List primary sources first.) Handouts with CMS examples will be available on D2L. Upload an electronic copy of your paper to the “Dropbox” on the D2L course page by the due date, Tuesday, February 20. You do not need to turn in a paper copy.

Your research design will be graded on how well it communicates a narrowed topic, its major historiographical questions, a historical question, and an anticipated methodology. Your grade will also assess the content and format of your bibliography and the quality of the writing. Your research design is worth 75 points.

*To include hanging indents in Word, highlight your entries, got to the “Layout” tab and select the small arrow pointing to the bottom right under “Spacing.” In the pop-up box, find the “Special” drop-down box under “Indentation” and select “Hanging.”

Historiography:
You will write a 6-8-page paper analyzing the secondary sources that you listed in your research design. Describe those sources and their arguments, compare and contrast them, assess their strengths and weaknesses, and identify their publication dates. At some point in your essay, you will need to incorporate references to at least two schools that you learned about in Historiography. You will also need to identify the historical approaches (political, diplomatic, military, economic, social, intellectual, cultural, etc.) of at least three of the sources. Avoid simply including a paragraph on each source in your bibliography without connecting them in some way to one another. Instead, identify relevant historiographical trends, point out common approaches, and provide historical context to explain analytical paradigms found in your secondary sources if necessary. Organize your discussion in a way that makes the most sense for your project, whether that means presenting the arguments of your secondary sources chronologically, by approach, or some other way. Be sure to identify authors’ perspectives and biases if relevant. Finally, explain how your project fits into the scholarship. Does it address a question that has largely been ignored? Does it consider primary sources not previously explored? Does it counter an argument made by your secondary sources?

Your paper should be double-spaced and 6-8 pages long. Use margins of one inch and ten to twelve-point type in Times New Roman font. Use footnotes or endnotes to cite your sources, and you must follow CMS guidelines. Single-spaced block quotations should be indented. Endnotes and bibliographic entries should also be single-spaced with blank lines between them (use hanging indents for bibliographic entries). Use Arabic numerals to number your pages. Place those page numbers in the upper right corner. See CMS and Turabian for help with your notes and bibliography. Handouts with CMS examples will be available on D2L. Upload an electronic copy of your paper to the “Dropbox” on the D2L course page by the due date, Tuesday, April 17. You do not need to turn in a paper copy.

I will assess your paper according to how well you comprehend and communicate the sources’ conclusions; how well your paper reflects an understanding of various historical approaches and schools; how well your paper analyzes, organizes, compares, and contrasts the literature; and how well you have explained your own research’s place within the scholarship. The quality of your writing (including grammar, syntax, adherence to CMS, organization, etc.) will also impact your grade. This paper is worth 100 points.

Research Plan:
Your research plan will both identify personal capstone goals through September 2018 and set up at least one file you can use to assess your primary sources.

1. Identify and Describe Your Research Goals: Write a brief summary (no more than two pages) that identifies and describes at least three research goals you wish to accomplish by the end of September 2018, keeping in mind that you will (more than likely) be asked to begin writing by October at the latest. The nature of these goals will depend on your topic, but you will probably want to include setting deadlines for reading and analyzing your primary sources. [Example: I would like to have finished reading and taking notes on all newspaper articles by the end of June and all my other primary sources by the end of the summer. I will spend the month of September analyzing and drawing conclusions about my primary sources. By October 1, I will have completed my primary source analysis and a tentative paper outline.] This summary should also note any potential roadblocks to reaching your goals and how you might account for them. [Example: My summer work and internship schedule will take up much of my time, and I tend to procrastinate. To account for that, I will attempt to devote at least four hours a week (depending on my schedule) to these goals.] The conclusion of your summary should explain what you will need to do in the first few weeks of the fall semester if you do not meet your summer goals.

You should know that we will revisit these plans and the progress you have (or haven’t) made at the beginning of the fall semester. At that time, I will ask you to adjust your objectives, so that you can begin writing sooner rather than later. I plan on asking you to keep a research journal in September that records your progress in detail. I am considering waiving or reducing this assignment for any student who has successfully met his or her goals.
2. **Create a Notetaking File:** Put together at least one file you can use to keep track of the notes you take on your primary sources (and your secondary sources if relevant). This could take many forms, but most students will probably find Excel useful. An example is posted on D2L, but you should design something that is most useful for you. You will want to include a brief description of how you will use this file (or files) in your summary. Post both your summary and your notetaking file to D2L by 6:00 p.m. on **Thursday, May 10.** This assignment is worth 25 points. It will be assessed according to how well you have followed the instructions, on the level of appropriateness and detail of your plan and notetaking file, and (as always) on the quality of your writing.

**Creating a Community:** Students are encouraged to utilize the advice and wisdom of their professors and fellow students at any (or all) stages of the process. There will be a place to post questions and ask for advice on D2L. (I have titled it “History Capstone Posts” under “Forums.”) Please check these posts frequently (ideally once a day) and respond in kind. The participation grades of the students who make use of this tool will improve. While the research for your project should be your own, you are also encouraged to consult other faculty with expertise on your topic. This includes faculty in other departments as well as librarians. Please set up scheduled appointments with them if you choose to utilize this valuable resource. Come and see me with specific questions or problems at any time.

**Other Items of Note:**
- In addition to regularly keeping up with the assignments in the course schedule, please check your email every day for possible updates and/or announcements.
- Due dates and assignments might be changed if weather interferes or other (unforeseen) events require alterations in the schedule.
- Electronic submissions will be graded in the order in which they were submitted. Please regularly monitor D2L so that you may access your grade and feedback in a timely manner. Read the feedback carefully. I expect to see changes in your writing that reflect careful attention to comments on previous assignments. Students who demonstrate that they have done this will be rewarded. The grades of students who do not do this may be negatively affected. Please note that electronic submissions to D2L are automatically evaluated by TurnItIn.com.
- I would really like to help you make capstone a rewarding (even enjoyable) experience. Much of this depends on you, though. I have tried to design the course so that if you keep up with the assignments and faithfully do your research, you can successfully meet challenges. I look forward to reading your work!
- I have posted an addendum to the syllabus on D2L. This includes the paper guidelines you will be expected to follow in Capstone II. While you will not need these to complete any assignments in History 601, since 601 and 602 are closely related, I have posted them for your information.

“Contingency – the idea that what happens in the world is often a result of the unexpected combination of quite particular circumstances – is the mark of history as a discipline, and, for me at least, the deep common ground of good history is that things did not have to be this way. To say that choices are not limitless, that we always act within constraints imposed by the past, is not the same thing as saying that there were, or are, no choices. . . . [W]e need to think about what did not happen in order to think historically. Considering only what happened is ahistorical, because the past once contained larger possibilities, and part of the historian’s job is to make those possibilities visible; otherwise all that is left for historians to do is to explain the inevitability of the present. The inevitability of the present violates the contingency of the past, which involves alternative choices and outcomes that could have produced alternative presents. To deny the contingency of the past deprives us of alternative futures, for the present is the future’s past. Contingency, in turn, demands hypotheticals about what might have happened. They are fictions, but necessary fictions. It is only by conceiving of alternative worlds that people in the past themselves imagined that we can begin to think historically, to escape the inevitability of the present, and get another perspective on issues that concern us still.” – Richard White, *Railroaded*
Course Schedule

Tuesday, Jan. 16 – Course Introduction

Stage One: Investigation, Research, and Preparing to Write
“Every important new discovery about the past changes how we think about the present and what we expect of the future; on the other hand every change in the conditions of the present and in the expectations for the future revises our perceptions of the past.” – Ernst Breisach, Historiography: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern

Tuesday, Jan. 23 – Know Thyself: History and Autobiography
Read: Trueman Introduction
Assignment: After reading the assignment but before coming to class, post a comment on the History 601 course site on D2L about your own interests and background. How have those influenced you as a historian? What topics and questions interest you? Why? Be prepared to share this in class. If you have already chosen a research topic, consider why you have selected that topic. If you have not yet chosen a topic or are uncertain, make a list of topics, events, individuals, time periods, etc. that you have studied in other classes or have read about on your own and that interest you. What is it that drives your curiosity about the topics on your list?

Assignment: Start gathering sources and putting together a bibliography, even if you haven’t yet nailed down a topic. Consult Turabian (chapter 3) to help you. Begin reading your secondary sources for background, for ideas on how to fine-tune and further focus your research questions if necessary, and for additional primary and secondary sources. Take good notes as you read. See Turabian (chapter 4).

Tuesday, Jan. 30 – Relativism, Objectivity, and Neutrality
Read: Trueman Chapter 1
Assignment: Post a brief response to the following on D2L (before class): Why does Trueman call Holocaust Denial “an extreme modern example of history that is really no history at all. . . . [It is] nonsense”?
Assignment: Turn in a 1-2-page (double-spaced) topic statement (in paragraph form) introducing your topic and explaining briefly why you chose it. You should also outline tentative research questions that will allow you to appropriately narrow your topic but will also allow you to contribute meaningfully to the historical scholarship. Include a description of the probable primary sources you will be consulting and identify a few of the major secondary sources that address your topic. Finally, explain any potential problems you might face and clarify how you plan to address them. Consult Turabian (chapter 2) to help you. There is no need to turn in a paper copy if you successfully upload this assignment electronically.

Tuesday, February 6 – Scheduled Individual Meetings

Tuesday, February 13 – Causal Analysis
Read: Hoffer Chapter 4 (posted on D2L)
Assignment: Post one question relevant to your topic that addresses causation on D2L (before class).
Assignment: Continue reading and taking notes on your primary and secondary sources. Read over papers you have written in your other history classes. Do you find any patterns of strengths or weaknesses? Choose one or two to bring to class. Be ready to comment on your self-evaluation of that (or those) paper(s). You will share what you did very well as well as the weaknesses of your work. What areas for improvement can you identify?

Tuesday, February 20 – Scheduled Individual Meetings
Due: Research Designs (Post your design BEFORE coming to see me so that we can go over it together.)

Tuesday, February 27 – Imaginative Reconstruction and Historical Narrative
Read: Hoffer Chapter 5 (posted on D2L)
Assignment: Using the reading to guide you (especially pages 96-97), use what Hoffer calls “novelistic history” to narrate a “scene” relevant to your topic. Write it down and be prepared to read it in class.
Assignment: Continue reading and researching your sources. Begin work on an annotated bibliography.

Tuesday, March 6 – No Class - Break
Tuesday, March 13 – **Avoiding the Procrustean Bed**  
**Read:** Trueman Chapter 2  
**Assignment:** Post a brief response to the following on D2L (before class): According to Trueman, how can “grand interpretative schemes” such as Marxism be helpful for historians? When do they lead to bad history? How can historians guard against that?  
**Assignment:** Continue working on your annotated bibliography.

Tuesday, March 20 – **The Anachronism Temptation**  
**Read:** Trueman Chapter 3  
**Assignment:** Post a brief response to the following on D2L (before class): Come up with a term, idea, etc. that could be misused as an anachronism. (You might consider something relevant to your own topic.)  
**Assignment:** Turn in an annotated bibliography of your secondary sources. Consult Turabian (section 16.2) and CMS for help. Please make sure your entries are properly formatted. After each entry, write a few sentences that explains the topic and argument of the source. Explain how it will help you write your paper. You should use the bibliography that you turned in as part of your research design, but it doesn’t have to be the same if your topic has evolved since then and you have discovered more sources or found that some of your original sources are not as helpful as you first thought. As you expand your research over the course of the semester, you should continue to add to your bibliography as you go. Continue reading your secondary sources. There is no need to turn in a paper copy if you successfully upload this assignment electronically.

Tuesday, March 27 – **A Fistful of Fallacies**  
**Read:** Trueman Chapter 4  
**Assignment:** Post a brief response to the following on D2L (before class): Of the fallacies mentioned in Trueman’s book, to which one (or ones) do you see yourself as most susceptible? What is your plan to avoid falling into the trap?  
**Assignment:** Continue reading your secondary sources. Begin examining your primary sources.

Tuesday, April 3 – **No Class – Monday Classes Meet**

Tuesday, April 10 – **Film: Labyrinth of Lies** [Most likely, but this is subject to change.]  
**Assignment:** Begin writing your historiography.

Tuesday, April 17 – **Finish Labyrinth of Lies**  
**Due:** Historiography

Tuesday, April 24 – **The “Secret” to Becoming a Better Historian**  
**Read:** Trueman Concluding Historical Postscript  
**Assignment:** Post a brief response to the following on D2L (before class): What part of Trueman’s formula for becoming a better historian do you believe to be most helpful? Why? Would you add anything to his formula?  
**Assignment:** Continue reading your primary and secondary sources. Read over the papers you have written in your other history classes. Do you find any patterns of strengths or weaknesses? Choose one or two to bring to class. Be ready to comment on your self-evaluation of that (or those) paper(s). You will share what you did very well as well as the weaknesses of your work. What areas for improvement can you identify?

Tuesday, May 1 – **Presentations on a Secondary Source**  
**Assignment:** Prepare and give a 5-10-minute presentation on one of your secondary sources. Identify the author, the author’s credentials, the topic, the thesis, and the method and sources used. Explain how the source fits into the historiography. Summarize its strengths and weaknesses and discuss how it will help you complete your capstone project. Be ready to ask questions when other students present.

Thursday, May 10 (11:30-2:00) – **Presentations on a Primary Source**  
**Assignment:** Prepare and give a 5-10-minute presentation on one of your primary sources. Analyze the source in your presentation by explaining the historical context, authorship, main points, perspective and biases, and significance to your project. Every student will also be expected to offer feedback on their fellow students’ presentations.  
**Due:** Research Plan