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 II, you will wrap up your research and paper, discuss your work and the work of your fellow students before revising, and present your research.

Course Outcomes:
1. Students will write an article-length paper of original research that includes a historiographical assessment, incorporates primary and secondary sources, and reveals the utilization of research methods and critical reasoning.
2. Students will assess the strengths and weaknesses of their work and of the work of their fellow students through peer evaluation.
3. Students will present their original work clearly and successfully.
4. Students will discuss and be able to identify some of the challenges of writing of history.
5. Students will evaluate their own work as history majors at Westminster College.

Texts:
- Various articles as listed in the course schedule
You will need access to:
Optional:
“The problem with the future is that it 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: 5% (10 points) [Assesses outcome #4.]
- Peer Critique: 10% (20 points) [Assesses outcome #2.]
- Oral Report: 15% (30 points) [Assesses outcome #3.]
- Poster Presentation: 15% (30 points) [Assesses outcome #3.]
- Portfolio: 5% (10 points) [Assesses outcome #5.]
- Final Paper: 50% (100 points) [Assesses outcome #1.]

Grading Scale:
- A+ 200 – 196 points
- A 195 – 186 points
- A- 185 – 180 points
- B+ 179 – 176 points
- B 175 – 166 points
- B- 165 – 160 points
- C+ 159 – 156 points
- C 155 – 146 points
- C- 145 – 140 points
- D+ 139 – 136 points
- D 135 – 126 points
- D- 125 – 120 points
- F 119 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.

Attendance, Class Participation, and Professional Behavior: Regular attendance and active participation, as well as completing assignments and meeting deadlines, are important expectations of the capstone experience. You should try not to miss ANY class sessions or appointments. If you know you will be absent for faith-based holidays, etc., please let me know now. Unless an arrangement has been made with Disability Services, doctor’s appointments, etc. will not be excused. If you know you will be absent for a college-sponsored event, you will need to inform me of that well in advance. Writing history is mostly a solitary endeavor, but the peer process is also a vital part of the discipline. Your relevant, appropriate, meaningful, and constructive participation is therefore required. This grade is worth 5% of your final grade.

Peer Critique: Students will write a 2-3-page (double-spaced) review of a peer’s first draft. The critique should summarize the thesis and main conclusions, evaluate the evidence, comment on the historiography, and assess the strengths and weaknesses of the paper. It should also offer suggestions for improvement. Students will present their critiques when we discuss all capstone projects in class on Tuesday, November 13. Written reviews will also be due on November 13. Upload an electronic copy of your review to D2L by November 13 and send a copy to the author. You can do that by bringing a paper copy to class or by emailing the author an electronic copy of your review. If you email the author, copy me in the message. This assignment will be graded according to how well the review addresses the guidelines, for the sophistication of the analysis, and for grammar and clarity of writing. It is worth a total of 20 points (10%).

Oral Presentations: Your presentations should be between 10 and 15 minutes long, and there will be time for questions following each one. I will cut you off after 15 minutes, so make sure your presentation falls within the timeframe. Read the relevant material in Turabian chapter 13 before beginning. Your presentation should include your research question, your thesis and major conclusions, your evidence, a description of your project’s unique contribution to the scholarship, and commentary on why your research is significant. HOW you present that material is up to you but choose one of the following approaches listed below to guide you.

• Education Approach: Present your research as a lesson (as if you were teaching high school students). Make it engaging and be creative. You are strongly encouraged to use visual aids. [If you are a secondary education minor, you do not have to choose this option. On the flip side, if you are not a secondary education minor, you still may choose this approach.]

• Conference Approach: Present your research as if you were presenting to the general public. Make it engaging and be creative. You are strongly encouraged to use visual aids.

Submit presentation files (Power Point files, outlines, handouts, etc.) to D2L BEFORE you are scheduled to present – on either Tuesday, November 27 or Tuesday, December 4. The order of the presentations will be decided on a first-come-first-served basis. If you have a strong preference, you should request a date at the beginning of the semester.

I might make these presentations open, so please dress professionally. This is your opportunity to show off what you have been working hard on all semester; your presentation should reflect your commitment and pride. You will be graded on how well you present your thesis, evidence, and conclusion. Your grade will also assess your creativity and how well you have captured your audience’s attention. A rubric is posted on D2L. Finally, you will be scored on how well you field questions. Students who ask thoughtful questions of other presenters will be rewarded. Your oral presentation grade is worth a total of 30 points (15%).

Poster Presentations: As it has become somewhat of a tradition, you will prepare a poster to present on Friday, December 7.

Detailed guidelines and instructions on how to submit your poster will come later in the semester. You will be required to include AT LEAST a title, a thesis statement or abstract, three images, a list of four (in total) of your most important sources (both primary and secondary), and an explanation about the significance of your work. Read the following article for suggestions and tips: https://wp.nyu.edu/archivesandpublichistory/2014/05/13/poster-tips-for-humanities-conference-posters/. I will also post an electronic template and examples to help get you started. Your completed poster template should be turned in NO LATER than Thursday, November 29. Your poster and your presentation of your poster are worth 30 points (15%). The assignment will be graded on how well you have conveyed your major conclusions, on how well you have presented the evidence and told your topic’s story, on design, on grammar and the absence of typos and errors, and on the professionalism and clarity of your presentation. Please come to the presentation in appropriate attire (professional dress/business casual) and remember to invite your friends and family!
**Portfolios:** You will complete a portfolio of your work as a history major. Include the following in your portfolio: 1.) a title page and table of contents; 2.) a résumé; 3.) a 2-3-page reflection paper; 4.) a copy of your final capstone paper; 5.) a copy of your presentation (slides or outline); 7.) unmarked copies of your work in other history classes (arranged in logical order). Please make sure that your reflection paper is properly edited. When composing that statement, consider the following:

- What you have learned about the discipline of history (Provide specific examples.)
- What you have learned about thinking critically within the discipline of history (Provide specific examples.)
- What you have learned about asking questions, researching, and writing (Provide specific examples.)
- How you have improved (Provide specific examples.)
- Your strengths and weaknesses as a historian
- How what you have learned will help prepare you for the future.

To submit your portfolio, combine all files into one pdf document. I can help you do this if you need it. Submit that file to D2L by **Monday, December 10 at 6:00 p.m.** Your portfolio (including the quality of your reflection paper) is worth 10 points (5%). A student who does not complete a portfolio will receive an incomplete until it is finished.

**Capstone Paper:**
Your capstone paper will be based on your analysis of primary and secondary historical sources, but your original interpretation of your primary sources is especially important. Your project will include a historiographical section (completed in History 601) that describes how your research fits into what other historians have written. My evaluation of your paper will reflect how well you have placed your research within the historical literature; the insightfulness of your research question, thesis, and analysis; your skill in using your primary sources; and the quality and clarity of your organization and prose. Your grade will also take into account your performance in planning and revising your project over the course of the semester. The paper is worth a total of 100 points (50% of your grade) and a rubric is posted on D2L. You will lose points if you do not submit on time your draft and the other related assignments underlined below.

Your paper should be double-spaced and 25-30 pages long (not counting your bibliography). Use margins of one-inch and ten to twelve-point type in Times New Roman font. It should have a title page with the title, date, name of the institution, and your name. (A template is posted on D2L.) You may use footnotes or endnotes to cite your sources. (Your notes should be arabic numerals. Do not use roman numerals.) Single-spaced block quotations should be indented. Bibliographic entries should also be single-spaced with blank lines between them. Separate your primary and secondary sources in your bibliography. Use arabic numerals to number every page but your title page. Place those page numbers in the upper right corner. See CMS and Turabian for help with your notes, bibliography, and any other format questions. **Your final paper is due by noon (sharp) on Wednesday, December 12.**

**Introduction and Revised Historiography:** Submit on D2L by **Tuesday, Sept. 11.** A sample introduction is posted on the course page. Your final paper will be penalized if you do not submit this assignment on time.

**Outline:** Submit on D2L by **Tuesday, Sept. 18.** An outline template is posted on the course page. Your final paper will be penalized if you do not submit this assignment on time.

**Research Journal:** If you have demonstrated that you made significant progress toward reaching the research goals you set in HIS 601 during the summer, you do not have to complete this assignment. A file has been posted on the course page that you will use to record the time you have spent reading, analyzing, and taking notes on your primary sources since the beginning of the semester. Your journal should record AT LEAST five one-hour sessions. Include the date, time, and tasks accomplished when recording. This assignment should be submitted on D2L by **Tuesday, Sept. 18,** and your final paper will be penalized if you do not submit it on time.

**First 12 Pages:** Submit on D2L by **Tuesday, Oct. 2.** Your final paper will be penalized if you do not submit this assignment on time.

**First 18 Pages:** Submit on D2L by **Tuesday, Oct. 16.** Your final paper will be penalized if you do not submit this assignment on time.

**First Draft:** Submit on D2L by **Tuesday, Nov. 6.** Before submitting, re-read the paper guidelines above. Include page numbers, your bibliography, properly formatted footnotes, and a title page. IMPORTANT: If you do not submit a completed draft, I will apply a letter grade penalty to your final paper (on top of any other penalties accrued).
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 “Discussions.”) 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!

“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**

*We will not meet as a class on days marked with an asterisk. Check for individual conferences and/or assignment due dates. Some writing workshops marked with an asterisk are optional. I will be there, and you may come and use the time to write (and ask questions) if you so choose.*

**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, Aug. 28** – Course Introduction and Summer Research Update

**Tuesday, Sept. 4** – Historical Research and Its Challenges


*Tuesday, Sept. 11* – Scheduled Individual Conferences

**Due: Introduction and Revised Historiography**

**Tuesday, Sept. 18** – Writing Workshop - Abstracts [Bring your laptops, notes, books, headphones, etc.]

**Due: Outline and Research Journal [only the outline if you completed your summer research goals]**

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**Writing**

“Writing is a long process of introspection; it is a voyage toward the darkest caverns of consciousness, a long, slow meditation. I write feeling my way in silence, and along the way discover particles of truth, small crystals that fit in the palm of one hand and justify my passage through this world.” – Isabel Allende, *Paula*

*Tuesday, Sept. 25* – Scheduled Individual Conferences

**Tuesday, Oct. 2** – Writing Workshop [Bring your laptops, notes, books, headphones, etc.]

**Due: First 12 pages (including a section on historical context)**

**Tuesday, Oct. 9** – Career Day [Bring an updated resume with you.]

*Tuesday, Oct. 16* – Optional Writing Workshop [Bring your laptops, notes, books, headphones, etc.]

**Due: First 18 pages**

*Tuesday, Oct. 23* – Scheduled Individual Conferences

**Tuesday, Oct. 30** – No Class (Midterm Break)

*Tuesday, Nov. 6* – Optional Writing Workshop [Bring your laptops, notes, books, headphones, etc.]

**First Draft Due (upload to D2L by midnight)** [Please note that I will be meeting with you individually on Thursday, November 15 to discuss your drafts.]

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**Evaluating and Revising**

“The process of revision should be constant and endless; don’t think I’m satisfied with what I’ve done!” – Salman Rushdie, *Midnight’s Children*

**Tuesday, Nov. 13** – Informal Presentations, Peer Critiques, and Abstract Revisions [Bring your laptops.]

**Due: Peer Review [Upload a copy to D2L and send a copy to the author.]**

*Thursday, Nov. 15* – Scheduled Individual Conferences
Presenting

“History no longer shall be a dull book. It shall walk incarnate in every just and wise man. You shall not tell me by languages and titles a catalogue of the volumes you have read. You shall make me feel what periods you have lived.” – Ralph Waldo Emerson, “History”

Tuesday, Nov. 20 – Poster Workshop [Bring your laptops.]

Tuesday, Nov. 27 – Presentations

*Thursday, Nov. 29 – Poster Files Due

Tuesday, Dec. 4 – Presentations

Friday, Dec. 7 – Poster Session
Details TBA

Finals Period Details TBA (since they conflict with PA History) – The Celebration: Portfolios Due by Monday, Dec. 10 at 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday, Dec. 12 – Final Papers Due by Noon!