Honors 674: Honors Research II – Peter McMaster
T 11:00-12:30 and Additional Meetings as Arranged
PH 207 and PH 323

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Office Hours: MWF 10:00-11:30, T 2:00-2:30; Or by appointment

Image: Eustache Le Sueur’s The Muses Clio, Euterpe, and Thalia (1652-55)

The culmination of your Honors capstone research, you will wrap up your research and paper and present your work this semester, showcasing what you have learned about the discipline of history at Westminster. Your project will culminate in work that is roughly equivalent to a Master’s thesis. You will also attend the History 602 sessions and engage with students enrolled in that class while completing the All-College Honors Program requirements.

*Since you will be attending History 602 class sessions, this syllabus is modeled after that one. Some of the content won’t be relevant, but I have left it for your information. It has been amended to reflect your specific assignment guidelines, etc.

Course Outcomes:
1. Write a paper highlighting your original research that includes a historiographical assessment, incorporates primary and secondary sources, and reveals the utilization of research methods and critical reasoning.
2. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of your work and of the work of your fellow students in History 602.
3. Present your original work clearly and successfully in your Honors defense, at URAC, and at the poster session.
4. Discuss and be able to identify some of the challenges of writing history.
5. Evaluate your own work as a history major at Westminster College.
6. Complete the All-College Honors Program requirements.

Texts:
- Various articles as listed in the course schedule
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).
Expectations and evaluation:

- Attendance, Participation, and Professional Behavior [Outcomes #2-5]
- Honors Defense [Outcomes #3 and 6]
- Poster Presentation [Outcome #3]
- Portfolio [Outcomes #2, 4, and 5]
- Thesis [Outcomes #1 and 6]
- URAC Presentation [Outcomes #3 and 6]

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.

Defense: Your defense should adhere to the guidelines of the All-College Honors Program (found at https://www.westminster.edu/academics/honors/pdf/honors-research-guidelines.pdf). When we have decided (with the other members of your board) on a date, reserve the room before October 1. The Honors Program guidelines stipulate that the defense should be scheduled before October 31.
**Poster Presentation:** 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/](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 you get started. Your completed poster template should be turned in NO LATER than **Thursday, November 29.** 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!

**Portfolio:** 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 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 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.** A student who does not complete a portfolio will receive an incomplete until it is finished.

**Thesis:** See [https://www.westminster.edu/academics/honors/pdf/honors-research-guidelines.pdf](https://www.westminster.edu/academics/honors/pdf/honors-research-guidelines.pdf) for Honors Program guidelines. Your paper should use 12-point font and a 1 ½ inch left margin (all other margins should be 1 inch). Your footnotes and bibliography should be single-spaced. All other text should be double-spaced. There are title-page and table-of-contents templates available. Follow CMS guidelines for all formatting stipulations not addressed by the Honors Program guidelines. Your thesis will be based on your original analysis of the primary and secondary sources and on your historiographical assessment explaining how your research fits into the scholarship on the topic. The due dates of the assignments listed below are negotiable. The Honors Program guidelines indicate that your defense should take place before October 31 and that your board members should have your thesis at least two weeks before the defense. Final revisions are due on December 1.

**Honors Board Meeting:** Schedule a meeting with your board to take place no later than the second week of the semester.

**Introduction and Historiography:** Submit the introduction of your paper along with your historiographical section on D2L by TBA.

**Revised Methods Work:** In a separate file, revise your Methods paper. Turn in the parts you plan to include in your thesis (you don’t need to submit what you don’t want to use), making sure to revise the quality of your writing. You might also want to rearrange material/evidence/paragraphs to better fit your thesis. Submit on D2L by TBA.

**First Draft:** Submit on D2L by TBA. Check the Honors Program guidelines and make sure your draft is complete as possible. After I provide feedback, send your thesis to Drs. Cuff and Smith at least two weeks before the defense.

**Defense:** See the instructions above and the Honors Program guidelines.

**Final Revisions:** Submit by **Saturday, Dec. 1.** Make sure you have complied with all Honors Program requirements.

**Poster Session:** See the instructions above.

**Portfolio:** See the instructions above.
Creating a Community with History 602 Capstone Students: There will be a place to post questions and ask for advice on the History 602 D2L page (to which I have granted you access). I have titled it “History Capstone Posts” under “Discussions.” Please check these posts frequently (ideally once a day) and respond in kind. 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.

“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

*On dates marked with an asterisk, History 602 is not meeting as a class. On those dates, individual conferences will take place. You may also schedule a conference. We will arrange those if/as needed.

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

*Thursday, Aug. 30 – Meet with Dr. Lahr to Set Due Dates

Tuesday, Sept. 4 – Historical Research and Its Challenges


*Tuesday, Sept. 11 – Scheduled Individual Conferences

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

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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.]

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

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

*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.]

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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.]

*Thursday, Nov. 15 – Scheduled Individual Conferences

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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 – History 602 Presentations

*Thursday, Nov. 29 – Poster File Due

Saturday, Dec. 1 – Final Revisions Due

Tuesday, Dec. 4 – History 602 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.

Spring 2019 Requirements/Possibilities:
- URAC presentation (required)
- NCUR/OAH presentation
- Submit your thesis to an undergraduate journal for possible publication