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Course number: History 4300

Course name: Junior Research Seminar in US Social and Cultural History

What are the student learning outcomes related to information literacy for the assignment?:

There are six student learning outcomes associated with information literacy embedded in this capstone course for History majors. The course guides students through the process of researching and writing an original research paper about a topic in US social and cultural history.

1) Students will learn that authority is constructed and contextual through intensive work with primary and secondary sources. They will learn how to interrogate primary sources through close contextualized interpretation that attends to authorship (or artisanship in the case of material culture), genre, origins, provenance, and spatial and temporal factors. Students will learn how to assess secondary sources by looking closely at authorship, genre, publication venue, and reviews.

2) Students will learn about the process of information creation through following the steps necessary for writing a 20-25 page research paper and making an 8-10 minute illustrated oral presentation. They will each develop and support an original historical argument that draws on extensive work with primary sources and conversation with secondary sources.

3) Students will learn that information has value through learning about how to fully and properly attribute and cite other scholars' ideas and through the actual time-consuming experience of generating knowledge through original research.

4) Students will learn about research as inquiry during each step of writing a research paper: after narrowing the scope of their research to a set of primary sources, they will then formulate a set of questions about the sources, which will then lead them to secondary sources, and in some cases further sets of primary sources. The process is one of narrowing and widening. As they write their papers, the students will learn about how to synthesize and organize their findings such that they can make meaningful historical arguments. Ultimately they will leave the course with a greater appreciation for the work that goes into history research and writing.

5) The work students will do with secondary sources will expose them to a range of different opinions about a particular issue, thus teaching them that scholarship is conversation and debate, rather than simply fact finding. They will learn how to follow and engage in conversations and debates.

6) My hope is that this course will teach students when to dive down a rabbit hole in the search for an answer and when to come up for air, which is to say that the course will develop in students the tools and the desire to search for information. Searching as strategic exploration is at the very heart of this course-- it demands that students choose a topic, identify their sources, assess their sources for relevancy, use creativity and insight to find needles in the haystack, and ultimately to manage the search process itself so that their final papers will be informed by what they discover during their wide-ranging search.

Please describe your assignment and/or learning activities. (500 word limit):

Students will: 1) Identify a topic in US social or cultural history for which there is an appropriate set of primary sources available through a digital repository or in one of SMU's libraries or archives. 2) Learn and master the procedures of historical research: note-taking, citations, management of sources. 3) Identify and work with appropriate secondary sources from the discipline of History as well as other relevant disciplines to the topic.

4) Formulate a thesis; prepare and outline; write and revise a final paper. 5) Select and format as slides appropriate illustrations for an oral presentation of research findings.

How do you intend to collaborate with your department's liaison librarian? (100 word limit):

I will collaborate with Rafia Mirza, SMU's Humanities Research Librarian, to prepare learning activities and workshops introducing students to 1) digital repositories of archival primary sources; 2) digital repositories of newspapers and periodicals; 3) search strategies for secondary sources; and 4) citation and research management strategies. I will also work with DeGoyler's Russell Martin and Joan Gosnell to introduce students to SMU's archives of historical materials.

Please describe your plan for assessing the information literacy learning outcomes. (250 word limit):

Using rubrics that will include each of the information literacy outcomes listed above, I will assess the following assignments: 1. Paper Proposal (10% course grade) 2. Annotated Bibliography of Primary Sources (10% course grade) 3. Annotated Bibliography of Secondary Sources (10% course grade) 4. Final Paper (40% course grade) 5. Illustrated Oral Presentation (10% course grade) The assessment of information literacy outcomes will account for 80% of the course grade; the remaining 20% is class participation.