

**History 469 Senior Seminar**  
**WSUV Spring 2012**  
TH 9:10-11:50 VLIB 260

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Office hours: Tu/Th 1:00-2:00 and by appointment

(History Department phone for closings, information, etc.: 360-546-9640)

**Course Description**

This intensive research and writing seminar is designed for senior students with a major or major concentration in history. The course will explore the practice of history, including how historians conceptualize questions about the past, how they locate and analyze a variety of sources to understand the past, and how they present their findings to other scholars and a broader public. Our primary task this semester is to pull together our knowledge and skills as historians to develop, research, and write a major 20-25 page original research paper.

The WSU History Department requires that the History 469 seminar “share a common focus on a relatively narrow topic...[to] allow students to engage intelligently with one another and to make suggestions and criticisms on one another’s research from a common core of knowledge.” This spring we will focus on connecting larger themes in U.S. history to the local history of Clark County and southwest Washington. We will collaborate with the Clark County Historical Museum (CCHM) in researching the history of workers and work in the area to contribute to a major upcoming exhibit tentatively entitled, “Tools of the Trade” (scheduled to open 2013). Students will investigate a variety of topics concerning work, labor unions, businesses, and workers and contribute new, original research and interpretations. Your work will have an impact beyond this class—it will be made available to future researchers and the public through a website, exhibition, or on deposit with CCHM or another library.

Although it has involved the vast majority of the population over time, the history of workers and work in the United States has been neglected, and the connections between labor and local history even more hidden. We will explore this subfield of history by reading several key works that demonstrate different kinds of research and writing. These works by professional historians will help model different approaches to history research and writing and help us as we develop our own research projects.

During the first half of the course, we will discuss these common readings to help us understand both historians’ work and the theme of work. We will also begin planning research projects, discuss research methods, and learn how to locate and evaluate archival, library, and internet sources. To help us in our quest for local sources and ideas, we will visit three major archives in Portland and Vancouver. Students will select a research topic, develop a bibliography, and write a historiographical essay that will help provide the underpinnings for the larger research project.

The second half of the course will focus on individual research projects and methods of analysis, interpretation, writing, and revision. Fellow class members and the instructor will provide constructive criticism on paper drafts. I encourage you to take this course very seriously, and to consider developing your research for the CCHM exhibit or to make your work publicly accessible in some other way (such as a paper that might be presented at a regional history conference—the Pacific NW Labor History Conference meets in Tacoma May 18-20--or donated to a local library, or submitted to a website). Consider this course the capstone to your college experience and the beginning of serious history work!

The success of the class depends on the full participation of all members. It is critical to read with care each assignment (refer regularly to syllabus schedule) and come to class prepared to contribute your thoughts, questions, insights, and evaluations. We will strive to create an atmosphere of cooperation, respect, openness, and good humor. Understand that we will often disagree in our debates of critical and sensitive topics—the classroom is the appropriate place for this kind of open exchange that allows for the consideration of multiple perspectives. I strongly encourage the continuation of our discussions outside of the classroom via Angel, email or in my office.

**Suggested research topics:** There are a limitless number of topics to select, such as:

Agriculture/farming	blue-collar jobs
Women's work WWII (Kaiser shipyards, etc)	white-collar jobs
School teachers	logging
Labor Unions (IWA, IBEW, ILWU, etc)	transportation
Clark County Trades & Labor Council	County Poor Farm
Immigrants	Vancouver Clinic
Strikes	

### **Required Texts**

Jules R. Benjamin, *A Student's Guide to History* (also see the online reference guide:  
<http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/benjamin/default.asp?s=&n=&i=&v=&o=&ns=0&uid=0&rau=0>)

Erasmio Gamboa, *Mexican Labor and World War II*

Nelson Lichtenstein *State of the Union: A Century of American Labor*

Jana Lipman *Guantánamo: A Working-Class History between Empire and Revolution*

Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for the Writing of Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*; (or, *The Chicago Manual of Style*) (available online, and basic format in Benjamin, *A Student's Guide*)

### **Class Procedures and Evaluations**

In this small seminar that meets weekly, students are responsible for the success of the course. As such, attendance and full participation are mandatory. Students are expected to read

with care assignments by the due date and come to class prepared to offer thoughtful comments, questions, and evaluations. To enhance discussions, we will create an atmosphere of cooperation, respect, and open exchange. You are responsible for obtaining any missed information and assignments. In addition to class sessions, the instructor is available to advise students on an individual basis regarding their research and papers.

Grades will be based on preparation for and contributions to class discussions, short assignments, and the major research paper.

**Participation and discussion (20%)** (includes attendance, preparation for and contributions to class discussion, facilitation of a discussion, contributions to Angel, oral review of history journal, etc.) To access your Angel account, use your WSU User ID and password (the same as for My WSU): <https://lms.wsu.edu/>.

**Short writing assignments (30%):**

**Bibliography (5%)**

**Historiography essay (15%)**

**Primary source evaluation (5%)**

**Peer review (5%)**

**Research paper (50%)** (20-25 page original research paper using primary and secondary sources, plus endnotes and bibliography; includes research prospectus, outline, research notes, first draft, final paper)

**WSU History Dept. Undergraduate Goals:** your work will be evaluated based on the following established department guidelines. Upon graduation, the history student should be able to:

- Identify and state problems of historical analysis.
- Understand the difference between fact and opinion.
- Recognize the contested nature of evidence and the value of historical scholarly debate.
- Show awareness of change over time.
- Be able to place the present in a historically-based context.
- Demonstrate information retrieval skills required for historical research.
- Communicate effectively through writing.

This course will help students further develop and demonstrate mastery of the following skills:

**Advanced Scholarly Communication Skills:**

In their written work and oral presentations, students will demonstrate a sophisticated and thorough understanding of their research topics and they will place their projects within their appropriate scholarly context(s). In both written and oral communications, students will clearly describe their research methodology and rationales, demonstrating awareness of competing methodological approaches. In their oral presentations, students will describe their research methodology and its rationale; key findings and insights; and the contribution of their project to scholarly research.

**Advanced Information Literacy Skills:**

Students will systematically and effectively assess and evaluate historical information and use it appropriately in the creation of their own research project. They will present, assess and analyze

available supporting data and evidence and demonstrate an understanding of their validity and relevance. As they integrate both primary and secondary sources into their research projects, students will include a sophisticated analysis of the nature, origin, purpose, value and limitations of each source in their scholarly work.

### **Advanced Analytical Skills:**

Students will demonstrate an understanding of the multiple contexts that inform their research projects and address these in their paper. They will demonstrate awareness of their own assumptions and cultural biases. They will fully understand, incorporate and accurately present diverse perspectives related to their research topics. These perspectives include, but are not limited to, local, global, social and gender diversity. In their conclusions, students will effectively and convincingly identify implications and consequences related to their research, demonstrating sound reasoning and an appropriate understanding of the limitations of their own research and of its usefulness to the scholarly community.

Furthermore, this class will help students meet the goals of Undergraduate Education at Washington State University by developing their **Critical and Creative Thinking** skills, fostering their **Information Literacy**, providing opportunities to hone their written and oral **Communication** abilities, and will provide them with a new sense of **Self and Society**.

### **History Dept. Assessment**

By participating in the class, your final work will be evaluated (anonymously) by selected members of the history department as part of the department's annual assessment. This will happen after the semester ends, and in no way will this impact your final grade. Because of this required assessment, you will need to **submit an electronic copy** (word doc is fine) of your final revised paper to me (deposit in drop box in Angel), which should **include both your name and WSU student number**.

### **Course Schedule**

#### **I. What Historians Do and How They Do It**

- Th Jan 12** Introduction to historical research, the historian's craft, and WSU History Department Goals and Assessments
- Th Jan 19** Becoming an historian; subfields of history; introduction to labor history; recollections from a former Hist 469 student  
(**Benjamin, pp 1-50; Gamboa, xvii-90; Review previous Hist 469 students' work:** <http://www.ccrh.org/comm/camas/index.php>)
- Th Jan 26** How Do We Research and Write History? A Case Study  
(**Gamboa, 91-131**)  
**Field Trip: Clark Co Historical Museum**
- Th Feb 2** Interpreting History for a Larger Public  
**Field Trip: Portland archives**

## **II. Planning the Research Project**

- Th Feb 9** Selecting and researching a topic; Labor unions in the 20<sup>th</sup> century  
(Benjamin, 88-127; Lichtenstein, 1-97)
- Th Feb 16** Locating Historical Sources  
(Lichtenstein, 98-211; paper topic due)
- Th Feb 23** Historians at work: Working-Class in U.S. History  
(Lichtenstein, 212-276; bibliography of secondary sources due)
- Th Mar 1** Historians as Detectives: retrieving sources, answering questions  
(Benjamin, 51-78; historiographical paper due)

## **III. Interpreting Sources and Crafting a Paper**

- Th Mar 8** Engaging with Primary Sources: finding evidence, interpreting, reaching conclusions (Benjamin, 128-174; primary source evaluation; Lipman, 1-143)
- Mar 15** Spring break, no class
- Th Mar 22** How to Make Sense of It All: organizing research, avoiding plagiarism  
(research paper outline due)
- Th Mar 29** The Historical Profession  
(Lipman, 144-227)

## **IV. Revising, Polishing, and Presenting a Paper**

- Th Apr 5** Peer review process; troubleshooting, editing, refining and polishing papers  
(Draft papers due to peer reviewers)
- Th Apr 12** Individual meetings w/instructor  
(peer reviews due to instructor)
- Th Apr 19** WSUV annual Research Showcase:  
<http://admin.vancouver.wsu.edu/academic-affairs/research/research-showcase>  
Presentations
- Th Apr 26** Presentations and class celebration (TBA)
- Tu May 1** Final papers due

## **Additional WSUV Policies**

### **Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is the cornerstone of the university and will be strongly enforced in this course. Any student caught cheating on any assignment will be given an “F” for the course and will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. **Plagiarism** is considered cheating. It is when you present someone else’s words or ideas as your own, in writing or in speaking; present ideas without citing the source; paraphrase without crediting the source; use direct quotes with no quotation marks; use direct quotes without citation of the source; submit material written by someone else as your own (this includes purchasing a paper); submit a paper or assignment for which you have received so much help that it is no longer your own work. Consult with the instructor if you do not have a clear understanding of plagiarism. For additional information about WSU’s Academic Integrity policy/procedures please contact (360) 546-9573.

**Disability Accommodation:** Accommodations may be available if you need them in order to fully participate in this class because of a disability. Accommodations may take some time to implement so it is critical that you contact Disability Services as soon as possible. All accommodations must be approved through Disability Services, located in the Student Resource Center on the Lower Level of VSSC. (360) 546-9138

**Note-taking and other recording during class:** Copyright belongs to Laurie Mercier (2012) as to this syllabus, all lectures, and course-related written materials. During this course students are prohibited from making audio, video, digital, or other recordings during class, or selling notes to or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the express written permission of the faculty member teaching this course.

**Emergency Notification System:** The WSU Vancouver Campus Safety Plan, which can be found at <http://www.vancouver.wsu.edu/safety-plan>, contains a comprehensive listing of university policies, procedures, statistics, and information relating to campus safety, emergency management, and the health and welfare of the campus community. Everyone should also become familiar with the WSU Vancouver ALERTS web site <http://www.vancouver.wsu.edu/alerts/> where information about emergencies and other issues affecting WSU Vancouver will be found and should go to the ZZUSIS portal at <http://zzusis.wsu.edu> and register/update their emergency contact information for the Crisis Communication System (CCS). In the event of a **Building Evacuation**, a map at each classroom entrance shows the evacuation point for each building. Please refer to it.

Finally, in case of **class cancellation campus-wide**, please check local media, the WSU Vancouver web page and/or [www.vancouver.wsu.edu/alerts](http://www.vancouver.wsu.edu/alerts). Individual class cancellations may be made at the discretion of the instructor.