

U of W-Madison

Dept. of History
Semester I, 1987-88

History 829 Research Seminar in Latin American History T. E. Skidmore

Course Description

This seminar will focus on how to do historical research. All members will present a piece of original research, either in the form of a seminar paper, or a portion of an M.A. or Ph.D. dissertation. The objective will be to improve our skills at researching and writing history.

During Part I of the semester we will explore differing approaches to doing historical research. Especially important will be the drafting of research proposals, based on a library search and consideration of appropriate methodologies.

In Part II of the semester we will look at a variety of primary sources, discussing the differing ways in which they might be used. Although the majority of sources are from the post-independence period, students may focus on any period of Latin American history for their research projects.

Part III will consist of presentations of student research projects. For students working on an M.A. or Ph.D. thesis, the presentation will be of an appropriate part (to be agreed with the Instructor).

PART I: APPROACHES TO HISTORICAL RESEARCH

September 7: Introductory Session: Begin selection of research areas and topics.

September 14: History: Its Nature and Study:

Reading:

William B. Taylor, "Between Global Process and Local Knowledge: An Inquiry into Early Latin American Social History, 1500-1900," in Olivier Zunz, ed., Reliving the Past: The Worlds of Social History (Chapel Hill, 1985), 115-190.

Walter Prescott Webb, "History as High Adventure," American Historical Review, vol. LXIV, No. 2 (January 1959), 265-281.

Philip D. Curtin, The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census (Madison, 1969), 3-13 "The Slave Trade and the Numbers Game: A Review of the Literature".

Arthur Marwick, The Nature of History (New York, 1970), 170-86 ("Historical Sources").

September 21: Famous Historical Voices: How Should We Read Them?

Reading:

Fidel Castro, La historia me absolverá (1953), selections.

Eva Perón, La razón de mi vida (1951), selections.

Background reading: Ted Szulc, Fidel: a Critical Portrait (NY, 1986), 282-300.

Nicholas Fraser & Marysa Navarro, Eva Perón (N.Y., 1980), 134-147.

Also: Begin work on library research practicum & complete definition of research projects.

September 28: Library Research Practicum

Presentation of results of library research practicum.

October 5: Discussion of Research Proposals

Dissertation research proposals of 3rd year students (or comparable proposals from previous years) will be discussed, along with

Research projects of other students--with attention to:

- (1) primary sources to be used, and
- (2) the strategy for identifying relevant secondary sources

By now: student research projects should be well under way

- complete research during Part II of the seminar
- begin writing before the end of Part II

PART II: WRESTLING WITH PRIMARY SOURCES

October 12: Brazilian Slavery: What Were the Realities?

Reading:

Joaquim Nabuco, Abolitionism: the Brazilian Antislavery Struggle translated and edited by Robert Conrad (Urbana, 1977) (original edition 1883)

PP. xi-xxv: Translator's Introduction

pp. 97-138: chapters on "The Influence of Slavery upon Brazilian Nationality," "The Effects of Slavery upon the Territory and Population of the Interior," and "The Social and Political Results of Slavery."

Robert Edgar Conrad, Children of God's Fire: A Documentary History of Black Slavery in Brazil (Princeton, 1983)

pp. 273-281: "A Master Abuses His Adolescent Slave Girl: A Court Case of 1883-1884"

- pp. 343-350: "'This Very Barbarous and Inhuman Traffic': A Bahian Planter-Politician Seeks to Abolish the Inter-Provincial Slave Trade (1854)"
- pp. 397-400: "'The Slaves' View of Slavery": A Plantation Rebellion Near Ilhéus, Bahia, and the Rebels' Written Demands for a Settlement"

October 19: Criollismo in Late Colonial Mexico

Reading:

Representación que hizo la ciudad de México al rey D. Carlos III en 1771 sobre que los criollos deben ser preferidos a los europeos en la distribución de empleos y beneficios de estos reinos in J.E. Hernandez y Davalos, ed., Colección de Documentos para la Historia de la Guerra de Independencia de México de 1808 a 1829 (México, 1877), vol. I, 427-455.

Background reading: pp. 51-58 of Timothy Anna, "The Independence of Mexico and Central America," in Leslie Bethell, ed., The Cambridge History of Latin America, vol. III: From Independence to c. 1870 (Cambridge, 1985)

October 26: Peru: a Foreign View and a National View

Reading:

"Informe del Prefecto de Junín acerca de Chanchamayo, Tarma, January 31, 1904"

Great Britain: Foreign Office, Diplomatic and Consular Reports Reports No. 2807 & 3079 (1901 & 1902) of Vice Consul in Chanchamayo, Peru

Also: A free-wheeling discussion of possible types of primary sources for Latin American history

PART III: RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

November 2: This and all subsequent seminar sessions (up to the seven remaining in the seminar) will be devoted to presentation of research papers

Grades and Credits

Grades will be weighted as follows: 2/3 on the research paper and 1/3 on oral participation.

Students will normally take the course for three credits. If enrollment at less than three credits is contemplated, the student should make sure to work out appropriate arrangements with the Instructor at the beginning of the course.