

# Introduction to the History Major (HIST 2151)

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## CLASS INFORMATION

**Class Sessions:** Wednesdays 9:30-12:00  
**Location:** 103 Schaeffer Hall (unless otherwise announced)

## INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

**Instructor:** Colin Gordon  
**Office:** 270 Schaeffer Hall  
**Office Hours:** Wednesday and Thursday, 1:00 to 2:30 or by appointment.  
**Office Phone:** (319) 335-2292  
**Email:** [colin-gordon@uiowa.edu](mailto:colin-gordon@uiowa.edu)

## ABOUT THE COURSE

This class is designed to introduce new history majors to the skills and methods of historical research and analysis. It is a “workshop” course, in which much of our class time will be devoted to the actual practice of historical research—in the archives, in the library, at the computer. Over the course of the semester, each student will work on a small research project related to Iowa history, utilizing archival sources available locally (in the State Historical Society of Iowa). You will complete this project in stages, as detailed on the ICON/Canvas site under “assignments.” At each stage of the research process, you will present your work-in-progress to the class for constructive criticism and suggestions. Other class meetings will introduce students to the elements and tools of historical research.

### *Readings*

The readings and resources for this course are listed on the ICON/Canvas site, organized by date. The reading load is not onerous, and it is important to complete the assigned readings ahead of the class meeting each Wednesday morning. All course readings are available on the ICON/Canvas course webpage; they can be found (usually hyperlinked) in the description of each unit or “module.” There is a module for each class meeting, outlining that week’s class and expectations. The first module provides a range of background resources.

### *Course Evaluation and Assignments*

Class assignments are detailed under the “Assignments” tab on ICON/Canvas. Course evaluation rests on your research project, completed in four stages, and your participation and engagement in the class. There are no examinations.

- **Research Proposal** (Due February 12): The first stage of the research process is a short proposal that outlines the historical problem you are interested in, and offers a brief description of the relevant primary and secondary sources. The grade is for the written proposal and its presentation in class.
- **Research Paper Introduction** (Due March 19): The second stage is a one or two page introduction to your paper. The grade is for the written work and its presentation in class.
- **First Draft of Research Paper** (Due April 14): By mid-April, you will have a preliminary draft of your paper. The grade is for the written work and its presentation in class.
- **Final Draft of Research Paper** (Due May 5)
- **“Roll-Call” Attendance:** This is the easiest 10 points you will ever earn. Just show up.
- **Participation and Engagement:** At the end of the semester, I will add a grade for attendance and participation. This is *not* just a reward for showing up regularly, but is an assessment of your engagement in the course.

Research Proposal	15
Introduction	15
Essay Draft	20
Final Essay	30
Attendance	10
Participation and Engagement	10

### *Grading System and the Use of +/-*

Final grades will be assigned on the basis of the following distribution.

97-100% = A+	83-86% = B	70-72% = C-
93-96% = A	80-82% = B-	67-69% = D+
90-92% = A-	77-79% = C+	63-66% = D
87-89% = B+	73-76% = C	60-62% = D-
		Below 60% =

### ***Late Work Policy, and other Accommodations***

Life is complicated and all of us have many obligations and challenges, and we would rather you do the work late than not at all. HOWEVER, I only accept work up to one week late. Work that is more than one week late will not be accepted. Late work receives only ½ credit. In other words, failure to submit work on time will result in an automatic 50% grade before the work is graded (for example, if the assignment is worth 5 points, a late assignment will be worth a maximum of 2.5 points). Your success in this class is important, to you and to me. If there are circumstances that may affect your performance in this class, please let me know as soon as possible so that we may work together to develop strategies for adapting assignments to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course.

### ***Classroom Dialogue and Dynamics***

As a “workshop” class, this course relies heavily on in-class activities, and discussion—including the presentation and constructive criticism of each other’s work. It is important to sustain a comfortable environment in which we share ideas, observations, and questions respectfully; such an environment is only possible when instructors and students treat each other with mutual respect and listen without interruption.

### **COURSE SCHEDULE**

The following is a basic outline of the course schedule, listing the weekly class meetings and their topical coverage. For a more detailed course schedule, including daily topics, activities, and readings, consult the ICON/Canvas course site.

January 18: Introduction to the Course  
January 25: Field Trip to State Historical Society  
February 1: Field Trip to Main Library  
February 8: Crafting a Research Proposal  
February 15: Presentation of Research Proposals  
February 22: Crowdsourcing History (in Main Library classroom)  
March 1: Digging into Data  
March 8: Anatomy of a Research Paper  
March 22: Presentation of Introductions  
March 29: State Historical Society Research Session  
April 5: Individual Consultations on Research Progress  
April 12: TBA  
April 19: Presentation of First Drafts  
April 26: Posters and Presentations  
May 3: Final Presentations

## Addendum – Spring 2017

Department Office: 280 Schaeffer  
Department Director (DEO): Elizabeth Heineman  
DEO e-mail: [elizabeth-heineman@uiowa.edu](mailto:elizabeth-heineman@uiowa.edu)

Department Phone: 319-335-2299  
DEO Office: 280 Schaeffer  
DEO Phone: 319-335-2299

**Administrative Home:** The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall, or see the CLAS Academic Policies Handbook at <http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook>.

**Electronic Communication:** University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their University of Iowa e-mail address (@uiowa.edu). Faculty and students should use this account for correspondences (Operations Manual, III.15.2, k.11).

**Accommodations for Disabilities:** A student seeking academic accommodations should first register with Student Disability Services and then meet with the course instructor privately in the instructor's office to make particular arrangements. See <http://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/> for more information.

**Academic Honesty:** All CLAS students or students taking classes offered by CLAS have, in essence, agreed to the College's Code of Academic Honesty: "I pledge to do my own academic work and to excel to the best of my abilities, upholding the IOWA Challenge. I promise not to lie about my academic work, to cheat, or to steal the words or ideas of others; nor will I help fellow students to violate the Code of Academic Honesty." Any student committing academic misconduct is reported to the College and placed on disciplinary probation or may be suspended or expelled (CLAS Academic Policies Handbook).

**CLAS Final Examination Policies:** The final examination schedule for each class is announced by the Registrar generally by the fifth week of classes. Final exams are offered only during the official final examination period. No exams of any kind are allowed during the last week of classes. All students should plan on being at the UI through the final examination period. Once the Registrar has announced the date, time, and location of each final exam, the complete schedule will be published on the Registrar's web site and will be shared with instructors and students. It is the student's responsibility to know the date, time, and place of a final exam.

**Making a Suggestion or a Complaint:** Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit with the instructor (and the course supervisor), and then with the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident (CLAS Academic Policies Handbook).

**Understanding Sexual Harassment:** Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community have a responsibility to uphold this mission and to contribute to a safe environment that enhances

learning. Incidents of sexual harassment should be reported immediately. See the UI Comprehensive Guide on Sexual Harassment for assistance, definitions, and the full University policy.

**Reacting Safely to Severe Weather:** In severe weather, class members should seek appropriate shelter immediately, leaving the classroom if necessary. The class will continue if possible when the event is over. For more information on Hawk Alert and the siren warning system, visit the Department of Public Safety website.

**Resources for Students:** Students will find the University or History Writing Centers very useful for this course; the Tutor Iowa site is also very valuable for students seeking extra help:

History Writing Center: <https://clas.uiowa.edu/history/teaching-and-writing-center>

University Writing Center: <http://writingcenter.uiowa.edu/>

Speaking Center: <http://clas.uiowa.edu/rhetoric/for-students/speaking-center>

Tutor Iowa: <http://tutor.uiowa.edu/>