

Department: HIST

Course No.: 240W

Title: History Workshop: Topics in American Society and Culture

Credits: 3

Contact: Nancy Shoemaker

WQ: W

Catalog Copy: History Workshop: Topics in American Society and Culture. Either semester. Three credits. Open to sophomores or higher. Prerequisite: ENGL 105 or 110 or 111 or 250.

Techniques of primary historical research based on collaborative research and writing on a topic selected by the instructor. With a change in content, may be repeated for credit.

W Criteria: In a workshop setting, students collaborate on the same research project using primary source documents. They then write individual research papers using the collective data and notes gathered by the class. The research papers number at least 15 pages. Each student submits their paper first in a rough draft, receives feedback from peers and the instructor, revises the paper, and resubmits it in final form. Other small assignments in which students prepare for the research paper in stages contribute to the final grade.

Because the main purpose of the course is to learn to do original historical research in primary documents and interpret one's findings in an essay constructed around an argument or thesis, the entire course could be considered a skills course in which writing and research share in significance. Writing will be discussed in class (how to avoid plagiarism and what it is, how to proofread and edit, how to organize one's ideas, how to develop a thesis, etc.) Students will also read each other's work and receive written and oral commentary from peers in group meetings and from the instructor in individual meetings. Because the research paper IS the course, students who do not produce a satisfactorily written paper by

the end of the semester will not pass the course. In some ways, the content of the course is immaterial, since the topic of the research conducted by the class changes every time the course is taught. The main objective of the class is that students learn how to research and write an original historical essay.