

HIS 3942
History Practicum: *Brown v. Mississippi*
Fall 2015
MWF 3d period

Professor: Elizabeth Dale, Room 07 Keene Flint
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Office hours: WF 4th period; T 3d period
Grader: Ryan Thompson
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Office hour: Thursday 1:00-2:00 pm (Keene Flint 09)

What is history? What is it that historians do and how do they do it? These are questions that shape this course, which is designed to introduce you to the profession of history and the skills needed for historical study in the context of a particular historical problem.

To that end, this course starts with a historical event: the United States Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Mississippi* in 1936. In that opinion, the Court held that law enforcement officers who tortured suspects in order to make them confess to a crime violated the United States Constitution. We will look closely at *Brown* and explore its history. In the process, we will consider what sorts of questions historians need to ask to understand the history of that decision, and what sorts of tools and techniques they need to ask those questions and present their answers. At the end of the course, you will know more about *Brown*, its historical context, and the legal problems it raised. You will also have been introduced to the tools and techniques that will help you get the most out of your time as a history major at UF.

TEXTS:

The following books are required and are available at the UF bookstore or through Amazon.com:

Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*
Carter, *Scottsboro* (2007)

The following book is recommended, and available through Amazon.com:

Abbott, *Digital Paper: A Manual for Research and Writing with Library and Internet Materials* (2014)

Other materials listed in the syllabus are available through the course website (when noted) or are at the library.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING:

You will be graded on a series of research exercises, a document interpretation, final project, and your participation in class. In addition, all students are required to take the HIS3942 assessment the last day of class. This assessment is a short-answer quiz that the History Department requires of all students taking the practicum. It is not graded, but you will not pass the course if you do not complete it.

Weekly research exercises (altogether worth 25% of grade): These assignments help teach basic research skills you will need for history courses. Each one of these assignments is worth 5% of your total grade.

Scavenger hunt (10% of grade): in-library research assignment. This assignment will be handed out in class.

Class participation (worth 15% of grade): This class, like most history courses, requires the active participation and engagement of the students. We will be discussing materials, debating issues, and raising questions. That means you need to come to class prepared, and actively engage in class discussion. Your participation will be assessed on a weekly basis, according to the following point system:

- 3 points: engaged and sustained participation
- 2 points: limited contribution
- 1 point: present, but no participation
- 0 points: absent (see attendance policy below)

Final project (worth 50% of grade): You will do this in stages.

- Topic selection and brief (one paragraph) summary (10% of final grade)
- Thesis statement (10% of final grade)
- Annotated bibliography (10 % of final grade)
- Final stage: A 5 page long research paper proposal. The proposal will set out a paper topic, a thesis statement or question, an outline for the paper, and a bibliography. (20% of grade)

ATTENDANCE AND LATE PAPER POLICIES:

Attendance is expected. If you know you will miss a class, notify the professor (or Ryan) beforehand and make arrangements to get notes from a fellow student. If you must miss class unexpectedly, notify the professor *before class*. To be excused, you must present me with documentation justifying your absence.

All papers are due at the start of class on the day set out in the syllabus. A paper turned in late on the date due will be lowered by ½ grade (from a B- to a C+, for example). A paper turned in a day late will be lowered by 1 grade (from a B to a C, for example). A paper turned in two days late will be lowered by 2 grades (from a B to a D, for example). And so on.

ACCOMODATION:

Students seeking special accommodations must register with the Disability Resource Center and must provide a Letter of Accommodation to the professor. Information about the Disability Resource Center may be found here:

<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/students>.

No accommodation will take effect until the Letter of Accommodation has been submitted to the professor.

PLAGIARISM:

As we will discuss in class, academic honesty is a vital element of scholarly life. You should also be aware that the University of Florida has an honor code, that all students are required to follow. You will find information about that code here:

<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>.

Part I: Evidence

Week 1: August 24

Monday: Introduction

Wednesday: Analyzing a source: *Brown v. Mississippi* (1936)

Skim Rampolo, chapter 2 (evaluating primary sources) before class;
bring a copy of *Brown* (1936) to class

Friday: Facts vs. Evidence

*****1st short assignment handed out*****

Week 2: August 31

Monday: Plagiarism

Read Rampolo, chapter 6 (Plagiarism for class)

*****1st Short assignment due*****

Wednesday: More plagiarism

Friday: Digital Friday

*****2nd Short assignment handed out*****

Week 3: September 7

Monday: Labor Day Holiday

Wednesday: Further research, *Brown v. Mississippi* (1935)

Read Rampolo, chapter 3 (using primary sources) before class; bring
copy of *Brown* (1935) to class

*****2d short assignment due*****

Friday: Digital Friday

*****3rd Short assignment handed out*****

Week 4: September 14

Monday: Context, read *Chicago Defender* and *Chicago Tribune* articles on
Brown

*****3d short assignment due*****

Wednesday: Finding other primary sources

Read Rampolo, chapter 5 (locating primary sources) for class

Friday: Digital Friday

*****4th Short assignment handed out*****

Part II: Interpretation

Week 5: September 21: Articles

Monday: Finding

Read Rampolo, ch 5 (locating secondary sources) for class

*****4th short assignment due*****

Wednesday: Analyzing

Read Rampolo, chapter 2 (evaluating secondary sources) for class

Friday: Digital Friday

Week 6: September 24: Books

Monday: Finding

Read Rampolo, chapter 3 (critiques and book reviews; historiographic essays) for class

*****First step of final project due*****

Wednesday: Analyzing

Read Rampolo, chapter 3 (reading actively in history) for class

Friday: Digital Friday

Week 7: October 5: Comparison

Monday: Was Brown a Mississippi Scottsboro Case?

Wednesday: Discussion of other types of comparison

Read Rampolo, chapter 3 (comparative papers) for class

Friday: Digital Friday

Part III: Presentation

Week 8: October 12: Scholarly history, part 1

Monday: Oral History presentation (guest lecturer from Samuel Proctor Oral History Program)

Wednesday: Bibliography

Read Rampolo, chapter 7 (Bibliography) for class

*****Second step of long assignment due*****

Friday: Digital Friday

Week 9: October 19: Presenting a thesis

Monday: Articles

Read Rampolo, chapter 4 (developing a thesis) for class

Wednesday: Footnotes

Read Rampolo, chapter 7 (footnotes and endnotes) for class

Friday: Digital Friday

Week 10: October 26: Constructing an argument

Monday: Textbooks

Read Rampolo, chapter 4 (constructing an argument, supporting your thesis, responding to counterarguments) for class

*****Third step of final project due*****

Wednesday: Museums and library exhibits (guest lecturer from Matheson Museum)

Friday: no class

Week 11: November 2: Scholarly history, part 2

Monday: Monographs, biographies, etc

Wednesday: Scavenger hunt, no class

Friday: Homecoming Holiday

Week 12: November 9: Popularizing history

Monday: Wikipedia vs. encyclopedia

*****Scavenger hunt results due*****

Wednesday: Veterans Day Holiday

Friday: Digital Friday

Week 13: November 16: History and social media

Monday: Blogs, twitter, and Facebook

Wednesday: Maps and timelines

Friday: Digital Friday

Week 14: November 23: Presenting history

Monday: Presentations using Powerpoint or Prezi

Wednesday: Thanksgiving Holiday

Friday: Thanksgiving Holiday

Part IV: Wrapping Up

Week 15: November 30

Monday: No class, one-on-one meetings

Wednesday: No class, one-on-one meetings

Friday: No class, one-on-one meetings

Week 16: December 7

Monday: Practicum Quiz

Wednesday: Last Class

*****Final assignments due*****

Finals week: no Final