

American Studies 804: Research Seminar

Spring 2004: Thursdays, 3:00-5:00
(Alcove E. Kansas Union)

Professor Bill Tuttle
Office: 213N Bailey
Voicemail: 864-9476
e-mail: tuttle@ku.edu

American Studies 804 is a research and writing seminar. As the capstone course in the American Studies graduate curriculum, it presumes that you have already completed the introductions to American Studies, theory, and methodology. In previous courses you should have made considerable progress in defining your research project, including having done a thorough survey of the secondary literature in books and articles, having identified primary sources in archives and libraries, having developed a theoretical focus, and having settled on methodological approaches.

The goal of American Studies 804 is to take your research and writing to the next stage, i.e., preparation for publication, or for inclusion as a chapter in your dissertation or thesis. In this course, you will research your article or chapter, and at the end of the semester, you will present your research to the seminar in a journal-length article, or chapter, perhaps aimed at publication. Above all, whether published or not, your paper should represent **your very best work**.

We are fortunate that KU is home to valuable collections of primary source materials. The Spencer Research Library houses both the Kansas Collection and the University of Kansas Archives. Another KU Resource, Government Documents located in Anschutz Library, is a repository for federal and state documents, including legislative hearings and reports, studies by executive branch agencies, and extensive economic and demographic data.

Nearby Lawrence are significant national and regional archives and libraries, including the Truman and Eisenhower Presidential Libraries, the Kansas State Historical Society, the Central Plains Regional Branch of the National Archives and Records Service, and the Western Historical Manuscript Collection at the University of Missouri, Kansas City. Students researching local topics will find material in country historical societies, such as the Watkins Community Museum in downtown Lawrence.

Finally, Watson Library houses abundant secondary sources in contemporary American history, including books, periodicals, and newspapers.

I. Required books are:

Strunk, William, Jr., and E. B. White, *The Elements of Style* (Longman, fourth edition, 2000)

Storey, William Kelleher, *Writing History: A Guide for Students* (Oxford University Press, 2004)

II. Schedule for AMS 804 (I want your input)

January 27:

February 5:

February 12:

February 19:

February 26:

March 4:

March 11:

March 18:

March 25: Boston/Spring Break

April 1:

April 8:

April 15:

April 22:

April 29: New Orleans

May 6:

May 13:

III. Course requirements:

- a. Research paper (50 percent of final grade)
- b. Presentation on a particular research tool: electronic sources, oral history, archival research, research in visual, musical, or aural sources (20 percent of final grade)
- c. Attendance and participation in discussions (20 percent of final grade)
- d. I hope that you will benefit from participating in 3-4 person research, writing, and support groups.

IV. Research paper:

- a. Your research paper must be at least 20 pages in length, but no more than 35 pages.
- b. While the topic is yours to choose, your topic must have my prior approval. In other words, come to see me so that I can help you to define your topic
- c. Although you will want to begin your research by reviewing the relevant theoretical and secondary literature (for historical context, leads to other sources, etc.), your paper should be more than a rehash of what has already been published on your topic in books and magazines.
- d. In class on February 26, submit a five-page prospectus for your research paper, including:
 - 1) a working title
 - 2) working hypotheses (i.e., what do you think your conclusions will be?)
 - 3) a statement explaining the methodology(ies) you will be using
 - 4) what your audience is: M.A. thesis, Ph.D. dissertation, convention paper, published article?)
 - 5) a bibliography of secondary sources
 - 6) an annotated list of the primary sources in which you will be doing research
- e. In your research paper, I want you not only to describe what happened, but also to explain how, when, where and, most important, why it took place as it did.
- f. Writing American Studies scholarship is a literary as well as a research challenge, and I expect your prose to meet high standards. I will be happy to work with you to improve your writing. KU's Writing Center is also very helpful.
- g. I hope that this challenge will help you not only to develop your research and literary abilities, but also to improve your analytical skills.
- h. Your research paper is due May 13.

VI. I encourage you to talk with me about any aspect of the course. My office is 213N Bailey Hall. My office hours are Tuesdays, 2:45-4:00; Wednesdays, 3-4:30; and by appointment. To make an appointment, either email me or leave a message on my voicemail (864-9476).

VII. A final note regarding your course work: Plagiarism. The American Historical Association defines “plagiarism” as “the expropriation of another author’s text, and the presentation of it as one’s own.” If you plagiarize, you can expect to receive an F for the course.

The definition in the *Harbrace College Handbook* is instructive: “Plagiarism is literary theft. When you copy the words of another, be sure to put those words inside quotation marks and to acknowledge the source with a footnote. When you paraphrase the words of another, use your **own** words and your **own** sentence structure, and be sure to give a footnote citing the source of the idea....”

According to the Writing Center, “KU subscribes to a digital plagiarism detection program called Turnitin.com, which may be used to check papers submitted in this course. You may be asked to submit papers in a digital format (email attachment or on disk) so that your paper can be checked against Web pages and databases of existing papers. Although you may never have engaged in intentional plagiarism, many students do incorporate sources without citations....”