

## History 407: **Research Seminar on the United States, 1870-1900**

Fall Quarter, 2013: Tuesdays 15:00 - 17:50  
475 McKenzie

Professor: James C. Mohr  
Office: 383 McKenzie Hall  
Hours: UW 13:30 - 14:30 and **by appointment**  
Phone: 541-346-5903  
E-mail: [jmohr@uoregon.edu](mailto:jmohr@uoregon.edu)

You have a major overriding goal in this course: the production of a formal paper of approximately 20-25 pages, based upon original research and primary sources. That will be a formidable task and will take a good deal of work, some of which is bound to be frustrating. But the overall process should also be a positive and engaging challenge – perhaps even fun – and should result in a piece of scholarship you can be proud of.

In many respects, grading is secondary in this course. The primary goal is to let you experience the process of creating a genuine piece of original history on your own. But for the purpose of grading, your paper will constitute 80% of your final grade, and the other 20% will be a function of your reports on original sources, your class participation, and your research efforts.

### **Syllabus:**

Oct 01: The first part of this class session will introduce you to the basic ground rules and expectations for this course.

The second part of this class session will introduce you to some of the UO's most important original resources in this field. Historians cannot fabricate their accounts of the past; they must base them upon actual materials. Consequently, an important part of being a good historian is finding – and recognizing – sources upon which a good piece of history might be written. During the week to come, you will devote a minimum of nine hours to one or more of those primary sources (chosen by you), and you will report to the class next week on what you find. Some of you will be looking at newspapers, others will be surveying state government reports, magazines, medical journals, or similar materials. Each of you will prepare a **brief written summary** of what you found in your sources (no more than three pages) and be prepared to report orally on your sources for the session of October 8.

Oct 08: Reports on primary sources:

In this session you will share with fellow students the results of your exploration in the primary sources you chose to examine. What materials did you find that might have promise as the basis for a paper? How rich (or how poor) were the sources you looked at? Even if you had nothing else available to you, what kinds of papers could be written from your sources? You will **turn in the brief descriptive summary** of what you found in your sources.

Oct 15: Selection of paper topics:

Each student will come to class with a **written paper proposal**. This proposal may take the form of an outline, a short series of paragraphs, or a formal statement. You will present your plans to the class, and the other students will offer critiques, hints, and ideas of their own to help you toward the structure of a good paper. You will **turn in your written paper proposal**.

Oct 22, Oct 29, and Nov 05: No class sessions those weeks; you will be working independently:

During those three weeks, each of you separately will be **required** to have a formal tutorial with Professor Mohr to discuss your progress. You **may** consult with him as often as you wish, but you **must** do so at least once during that two-week period or suffer a mandatory reduction of one full letter grade on your final paper. Appointments will be scheduled individually.

Nov 12: Oral progress reports delivered in class:

This session will feature progress reports regarding your research and writing. It will provide a final chance to share impressions, ideas, and suggestions as a group prior to the “big push” to finish your individual papers in the final weeks of the quarter. We will also review the handout on writing tips and some general guidelines appropriate to papers like the ones you are writing.

Nov 19 and Nov 26: No class session those two weeks; you should be finishing up your paper

During this period, Professor Mohr will be available for as many independent meetings about your papers as you wish. Drafts will not be required, but Professor Mohr is willing to go over drafts (or part-drafts or draft sections), and get back to you with comments, provided you submit your drafts by Nov 19.

Dec 03: **PAPERS DUE**. Your papers, in final form, are due in class. This session will be devoted to a general wrap-up discussion of your research experiences and of what each of you found.