COURSE INFORMATION:

HIS 240: Introduction to Historical Research Methods, 3 credits

Fall/Spring of each academic year (e.g. M/W, 11:30-12:45pm)

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:

Drs. Timothy Jenness and Lore Kuehnert

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Using a topical approach, this course introduces students to the historiography, methods, research, and writing skills used by professional historians. Students will use the skills taught in this course to produce an original research project. The course is open to students in all majors who have completed the prerequisites and seek to improve their research skills in preparation for future academic and professional work. Prerequisites: ENG 101 and six credits of college-level history, three credits of which must be either HIS 201 or 202 or an equivalent, transferable course from another institution.

TEXTBOOK AND COURSE MATERIALS:


Strunk, Jr., William and E.B. White, The Elements of Style

(Additional supplemental readings based on semester’s topic.)

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Students will acquire skills in several basic learning areas necessary for college study, successful careers, and personal achievement. All students will:

1. Develop an introductory understanding of historiography that includes divergent interpretations of history.
2. Understand and apply critical thinking and basic methodological approaches to historical research.
3. Produce an original research project that demonstrates an ability to gather, evaluate, and synthesize historical evidence.

MINIMUM HOURS OF COURSEWORK:

To earn one academic credit at HCC, students are required to complete a minimum of 37.5 clock hours (45 fifty-minute “academic” hours) of coursework per semester. Those hours of coursework may be completed through a combination of hours within the classroom and hours outside the classroom. Certain courses may require more than the 37.5 minimum hours of coursework per credit. For most classes, students should expect to do at least 2 hours of coursework outside of class for each hour of in-class coursework.
### COURSE CONTENT OBJECTIVES:

After completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Explain the difference between primary and secondary sources.
2. Formulate discipline-appropriate questions consistent with the process of historical inquiry.
3. Identify a variety of methodological approaches used by scholars in the field.
4. Identify select historical arguments in scholarly writing.
5. Develop a working hypothesis and apply the steps involved in completing a research project.

### ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES:

**Writing Assignments:**

All writing assignments will be tailored to the topical theme selected by the instructor. Students will write one position essay or book review, a prospectus, annotated bibliography, detailed research paper outline, and ten to fifteen page research paper.

**Examinations and Quizzes:**

One exam and select quizzes will comprise part of the course’s overall assessment structure.

**Discussion/Class Participation:**

This seminar-style course will require weekly group and one-on-one discussions designed to nurture intellectual discourse and professional collegiality.

**Attendance:**

Required.

**Grading:**

Final course grades will be determined as follows (example):
The overall course grading rubric is as follows.

- **A** = 90% or above: Excels in all course components
- **B** = 80-89%: Achieves above average competency in most components
- **C** = 70-79%: Achieves basic competency in almost all components
- **D** = 60-69%: Does not achieve competency, but completed most components
- **F** = 59% or below: Does not achieve competency, did not complete most components

**COURSE POLICIES AND DECORUM:**

TBD by instructor

**TOPICAL OUTLINE:**

The course is comprised of three, five-week topical units that focus on the fundamental stages of historical inquiry. Shorter formative assignments will be determined by the instructor of record based on the chosen theme.

1. Historiography and methodology
2. The nature of historical inquiry, sources, and design
3. Fundamentals of historical writing

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND OTHER SPECIAL NEEDS:**

Students may receive reasonable accommodations if they have a diagnosed disability and present appropriate documentation. Students seeking accommodations are required to contact the Disability Support Services (DSS) office as early as possible. Students may contact a DSS staff member for an appointment at dss@hagerstowncc.edu or at 240-500-2530.