

Yale Summer History Lab Syllabus

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Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description: The Yale Summer History Lab serves as an introduction to the study of academic history for majors / potential majors and an exploration of history as a discipline for non-majors intending to work in history-adjacent fields such as journalism, creative non-fiction, political science, or cultural history practiced within literary or fine arts disciplines. It requires no previous experience in history and is suitable for any secondary or post-secondary student. Each 3-hour class meeting is a “lab” or project that explores an essential aspect of doing academic history. Students read, discuss, practice, and write about how historians think, how we use evidence, the ethics and methods of historical research, and the goals, constraints, and responsibilities of academic historical writing.

Required Texts:

- Katherine Pickering Antonova, *Essential Guide to Writing History Essays* [“EG” below]
- Sarah Maza, *Thinking About History*
- John Lewis Gaddis, *The Landscape of History*
- John Merriman, *History of Modern Europe* (two chapters provided; whole text recommended for background)
- Supplemental texts provided by instructor

Assignments and Attendance:

Full attendance is required except in cases of documented medical necessity. Completing assigned readings before each class meeting will be necessary to fully participate. All written assignments are initiated in class, but sometimes require follow-up and/or revision after class. All written work will be completed in a shared Google Drive folder, using Google Docs, which tracks each student’s contribution to writing and editing collective documents.

Grading:

20% on in-class participation in activities and discussion

60% on the effort and independent thinking of written contributions to classroom-based projects, as tracked via Google Documents:

- Report on genres of historical writing (produced & written in small groups)
- Personal account of class activity (independent)
- Analysis of the personal accounts from your group (independent)
- Short historiographical essay (independent)
- Position paper on the industrial revolution (independent)
- Report for the Sadler Committee (small group)
- Causation argument (small group)
- Critique of causation argument (small group)
- Historiographical chart (small group)
- Alternative Treaty of Versailles and map (small group)

- Short essay in defense of group's alternative treaty (small group)
- Narrative summary of primary sources on the history of Yale University (independent)
- Collective re-write of a published work of academic history to improve style and clarity (whole class)

20% on contributions to the final written research project, as tracked via Google Documents

- Research bibliography (small group)
- Notes on assigned readings from the bibliography (independent)
- Assigned contributions to collective essay based on class research (independent)
- Comments and revisions to collective essay (independent)

Academic Integrity:

Written assignments in this course will derive from group discussions and preparation, and will sometimes involve editing and commenting on other students' work. However, each student's individual authorship will be identified under their own name in each shared Google Document, and grades will be based entirely on your own work only. Each student is expected, as in all courses at Yale University, to avoid academic dishonesty, as defined here:

<http://catalog.yale.edu/handbook-instructors-undergraduates-yale-college/teaching/academic-dishonesty/>. Your contributions to each project must be your original work. Academic integrity and its importance to the quality of academic research will also be discussed as part of the course.

SCHEDULE

Day 1: What Defines Academic History?

Required Reading: EG, Chs. 1-3; Maza, Introduction

Project: Genres of Historical Writing (group written report + small in-class exercises)

Day 2: Historical Interpretation

Required Reading: EG, Ch. 9; Maza, Ch. 6; Gaddis, Ch. 3

Project: Primary and Secondary sources (independent writing of a personal account, analysis of other accounts, and historiography)

Day 3: Perspectives and Identity in History

Required Reading: Maza, Ch. 1, Merriman, Ch. 14

Project: Role-playing game on Industrialization in Britain (short individual position paper + group written report)

Day 4: Reasoning about Causation

Required Reading: EG, Ch. 6; Maza, Ch. 5; Gaddis, Chs 6-7

Project: Causes of World War I (small group written argument using specific language claiming causality + small group written critique of other group's argument)

Day 5: Historiography

Required Reading: EG, Ch. 8; Gaddis, Chs. 1-2

Project: Debates on the Treaty of Versailles (group-drawn chart of the literature with oral analysis of the maps)

Day 6: History and Place

Required Reading: Maza, Ch. 2, Merriman, Ch. 24

Project: Treaty of Versailles and the redrawing of Eastern Europe (a group-written alternative treaty and map of European borders with written explanation)

Day 7: Historical Evidence

Required Reading: EG, Ch. 10 (selections); Maza, Ch. 3-4; Gaddis, Chs. 4-5

Project: Primary sources on the history of Yale University (independent written narratives based on selected documents)

Day 8: Historical Research Practices

Required Reading: EG, Chs. 4, 5, 9, 10-11 (selections from each); NYTimes article about the David Abraham scandal

Project: Producing a research bibliography on the history of Yale University (group work with independent reading and notes after class)

Day 9: Historical Writing

Required Reading: EG, selections on style and clarity

Project: Collective re-write of a published work of academic history

Day 10: Being an Academic Historian

Required Reading: EG, Ch. 11; Maza, Conclusion; Gaddis, Ch. 8

Project: Collective preparation of a research essay on a selected topic of Yale University History (with assigned independent contributions, comments, and revisions)