

Texas A&M University – Central Texas
HIST 5380-125: Historiography and Historical Method
Spring 2021, Second Session
Online

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Office Hours:

By appointment. Email is the easiest way to reach me. Your message will be returned promptly even during weekends, evenings, holidays, and university break periods.

Mode of Instruction and Course Access:

This course is 100% online and uses TAMUCT's Canvas system (<https://tamuct.instructure.com/>).

Course Description (from the TAMUCT course catalog):

HIST 5380. Historiography and Historical Method. 3 Credit Hours. Explore various ideological schools of thought in the study of history. Emphasis on recent trends and techniques in historical writing. Pre-requisite(s): HIST 5300 and full admission to the graduate program or permission of instructor.

Course Overview:

This course provides an overview of historical writing and research from ancient times to the present, working with documents and primary and secondary source records, proper use of language and narrative, the impact of technology on the discovery, study, and writing of history, and concepts of historical knowledge.

Learning Objectives of Course:

Knowledge:

- Students will improve their ability to identify connections between historical issues and life outside the classroom

Comprehension:

- Students will demonstrate how to think historically about the past by identifying and critiquing historical interpretation and analyzing issues in historical context

Application:

- Students will select and use evidence from a variety of sources, including primary sources

Analysis:

- Students will examine current issues from a historical perspective

Synthesis:

- Students will compare the historical development of their own and other cultures

Evaluation:

- Students will complete assignments that prompt them to argue effectively and critically

Course Unit Learning Objectives:

- Week 1: Identify why the German model was the basis for the American profession
- Week 2: Examine the differences between the objectives of history and social studies
- Week 3: Debate whether “particularist commitments” strengthened the discipline
- Week 4: Assess the impact of technology on history
- Week 5: Evaluate whether “single factor” models explain long-run change
- Week 6: Critique whether it is possible to make factual statements about the past
- Week 7: Explain whether the discipline is dominated by historical relativism or the pursuit of a scientific “truth”
- Week 8: Distinguish the true task of a historian

Instructor Responsibilities:

- Select and present course content;
- Identify themes to be emphasized;
- Evaluate student historical understanding and skills;
- Communicate evaluations to students in a timely manner;
- Assist students in improving their skills.

Student Responsibilities:

- Complete all required readings;
- Attend class regularly;
- Participate in all class activities and discussions;
- Communicate with instructor (using office hours, and email);
- Complete all assignments on time.

Required Reading and Textbook(s):

Peter Novick. *That Noble Dream: The “Objectivity Question” and the American Historical Profession*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

- ISBN: 978-0-521-35745-6

Merritt Roe Smith and Leo Marx, eds. *Does Technology Drive History? The Dilemma of Technological Determinism*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994.

- ISBN: 978-0-262-19347-4

Arthur Danto. *Narration and Knowledge*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007.

- ISBN: 978-0-231-13823-9

Additional readings may be assigned and distributed at the discretion of the instructor.

Course Requirements:

The course grade will be determined by an Annotated Bibliography (20%), a Historiographical Essay (40%), and Discussion Board Questions (DBQs) (40%).

Grading Criteria Rubric and Conversion:

Annotated Bibliography:	20%
Historiographical Essay:	40%
<u>DBQs:</u>	<u>40%</u>
	100%

Final grades will be computed according to the following scale:

- A = 90-100%
- B = 80-89%
- C = 70-79%
- D = 60-69%
- F = 59-0%

Posting of Grades:

All grades will be posted in the Canvas grade book. Students should regularly monitor their grades and address any questions or concerns promptly to the instructor.

Throughout the course, the grade book will be updated at the end of each week to include all work completed up to that point in the course.

Late Policy:

Any assignment submitted after the due date and time will be subject to a penalty of ten percent per twenty four-hour period late. If a specific assignment carries its own late policy, the specific assignment's late policy takes precedence over this general late policy.

Annotated Bibliography:

See page 10 for more information.

Historiographical Essay:

See page 11 for more information.

Social Media Policy:

Due to the proliferation of social media and the need to keep professional distance between vocation and avocation, no Facebook friend requests will be accepted from current students. However, you are welcome to follow me on Twitter (@lukenic).

Canvas Access and Course Participation:

The most important prerequisite is that you have access to TAMUCT's Canvas portal, at <https://tamuct.instructure.com/>. If you are logging in the first time, your username is your MyCT username and password. If you have forgotten your username or password, follow the link provided on the login page.

If you do not have login credentials for Canvas (i.e. a username and password) you must resolve this immediately. No one—including your instructor—can do this for you. Failure to do so will result in failure of the course, since assignments are due beginning at the end of the first week of the course. While many of you are already familiar with Canvas, because such a large percentage of your final grade depends on Canvas participation these details bear repeating.

Be sure to look around the Canvas course shell. Perhaps you have used Canvas before, but not this version. If this is your first time using Canvas, or if you need a refresher, visit the Help section. There, you will find a variety of tutorials and other types of assistance.

The following are the Canvas modules used:

- “Announcements” is where you will find instructor announcements, which will also be emailed to you when they are posted.
- “My Media” is where you will find the weekly podcasts and other information you may need for each week of class (not applicable for face-to-face courses).
- “Discussions” is where you will post your answers to the Discussion Board Questions (DBQs). As a reminder, when you post your answers to the DBQs, for each question you are required to submit three posts. The first should be a longer post—in a new “thread”—that thoroughly answers the question and demonstrates that you mastered the reading for that week. The second and third posts are shorter comments on your classmates’ posts.
- “Grades” is where you can monitor your course grades.
- “Assignments” is where you will find information about upcoming assignments.

At any point during the semester, if you need technical assistance related to Canvas, contact:

Help Desk Central
Online Chat: <https://www.tamuct.edu/help>
Phone: (254) 519-4266

While you in no way are expected to be a “computer expert” in order to succeed in this course, you should be aware of the types of documents most commonly posted on Canvas. These include *.pdf, and *.doc(x) files. To be successful in this course, you must be able to access both types of files. The following is a short description of each:

***.pdf**: commonly known as “pdf files,” for this course these may include primary source documents, readings, or excerpts of books or articles. Be sure you have Adobe Reader installed on the computer you use to access Canvas. If you need to download the current version of Adobe Reader, you may do so here for free:

<http://get.adobe.com/reader/otherversions/>

***.doc(x)**: commonly known as “Word documents,” I will post these files often, including the syllabus and other course documents from time to time. The latest version of Microsoft Word is recommended, but older versions should work fine even if they do not have every feature.

***.mp3**: on a weekly basis, I will post an audio file/podcast to review the previous week’s work, as well as preview the week ahead and provide other timely information and announcements at that stage of the course. *It is very important that you are able to listen to these files.* While they are optional, and do not include content you cannot obtain elsewhere, they summarize course announcements, feedback on previous assignments, additional explanation of future assignments, or information about the course readings.

If you have trouble accessing these files via Canvas, it may be easier if you first download them to your computer (or, perhaps a flash drive if you are using a shared computer) before attempting to open them. If you still need help, contact or visit a TAMUCT computer lab, which contains computers equipped with software that can open all of the above files types. On duty technicians will also be able to assist you on the phone or in person if you have questions:

<http://www.tamuct.edu/departments/informationtechnology/computerlabs.php>

The “normal” structure of this course that you should follow each week is:

1. Listen to the podcast for the week.
2. Complete weekly reading.
3. Complete Discussion Board Questions (DBQs).

At the start of each week, review your previous week’s work and grades in the Canvas grade book. All weekly assignments such as the Discussion Board Questions will be graded before the next weekly assignments are due. More substantial assignments, such as reviews, essays, and research papers, are typically returned electronically with comments and grade to the email address from which you submitted the assignment in approximately one week from the due date.

The inherent flexibility of this course is that you are able to complete the weekly assignments at your leisure. The drawback is that you have to be disciplined and self-motivated to such an extent that you are able to complete all assignments in a timely manner. No one will be staring over your shoulder to ensure you have done so.

Complete Course Calendar

Week One: Origins of the American Historical Profession

Objective: Identify why the German model was the basis for the American profession

- 3/22: Listen to Week 1 Podcast
Read Novick: Chs. Preface, 1-4
- 3/27: **DBQs 1 due by 11:59 p.m.**

Week Two: Divergence and Convergence within the Profession

Objective: Examine the differences between the objectives of history and social studies

- 3/29: Listen to Week 2 Podcast
Read Novick: Chs. 5-11
- 4/3: **DBQs 2 due by 11:59 p.m.**

Week Three: A Unified Profession No More?

Objective: Debate whether “particularist commitments” strengthened the discipline

- 4/5: Listen to Week 3 Podcast
Read Novick: Chs. 12-16
- 4/10: **DBQs 3 due by 11:59 p.m.**

Week Four: An Overview of Technological Determinism

Objective: Assess the impact of technology on history

- 4/12: Listen to Week 4 Podcast
Read Smith/Marx: Chs. Smith, Heilbronner I, Heilbronner II, Bimber, Hughes, Misa
- 4/17: **DBQs 4 due by 11:59 p.m.**
- 4/17: **Annotated Bibliography due by 11:59 p.m.** (by Microsoft Word email attachment to luke_nichter@tamuct.edu)

Week Five: Technological Determinism as an Independent Variable?

Objective: Evaluate whether “single factor” models explain long-run change

- 4/19: Listen to Week 5 Podcast
Read Smith/Marx: Chs. Scranton, Perdue, Bulliet, Williams, Marx, Staudenmaier
- 4/24: **DBQs 5 due by 11:59 p.m.**

Week Six: The Meaning of History

Objective: Critique whether it is possible to make factual statements about the past

- 4/26: Listen to Week 6 Podcast
Read Danto: Chs. Introduction, Preface, Afterwords, I-V
- 5/1: **DBQs 6 due by 11:59 p.m.**

Week Seven: The Meaning of Historical Explanation

Objective: Explain whether the discipline is dominated by historical relativism or the pursuit of a scientific “truth”

- 5/3: Listen to Week 7 Podcast
Read Danto: Chs. V-X

5/8: **DBQs 7 due by 11:59 p.m.**

Week Eight: The Meaning of a Historian's Work

Objective: Distinguish the true task of a historian

5/10: Listen to Week 8 Podcast

Read Danto: Chs. XI-XV, "Danto's Philosophy..."

5/15: **DBQs 8 due by 11:59 p.m.**

Historiographical Essay due by 11:59 p.m. (by Microsoft Word email attachment to luke_nichter@tamuct.edu)

911 Cellular:

Emergency Warning System for Texas A&M University – Central Texas

911Cellular is an emergency notification service that gives Texas A&M University-Central Texas the ability to communicate health and safety emergency information quickly via email, text message, and social media. All students are automatically enrolled in 911 Cellular through their myCT email account.

Connect at [911Cellular](https://portal.publicsafetycloud.net/Texas-AM-Central/alert-management) [https://portal.publicsafetycloud.net/Texas-AM-Central/alert-management] to change where you receive your alerts or to opt out. By staying enrolled in 911Cellular, university officials can quickly pass on safety-related information, regardless of your location.

Drop Policy:

If you discover that you need to drop this class, you must complete a [Drop Request Form](https://www.tamuct.edu/registrar/docs/Drop_Request_Form.pdf) [https://www.tamuct.edu/registrar/docs/Drop_Request_Form.pdf]. Professors cannot drop students; this is always the responsibility of the student. The Registrar's Office will provide a deadline on the University Calendar for which the form must be completed, signed and returned. Once you return the signed form to the Registrar's Office, you must go into Warrior Web and confirm that you are no longer enrolled. If you still show as enrolled, FOLLOW-UP with the Registrar's Office immediately. You are to attend class until the procedure is complete to avoid penalty for absence. Should you miss the drop deadline or fail to follow the procedure, you will receive an F in the course, which may affect your financial aid and/or VA educational benefits.

Academic Integrity:

Texas A&M University -Central Texas values the integrity of the academic enterprise and strives for the highest standards of academic conduct. A&M-Central Texas expects its students, faculty, and staff to support the adherence to high standards of personal and scholarly conduct to preserve the honor and integrity of the creative community. Academic integrity is defined as a commitment to honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Any deviation by students from this expectation may result in a failing grade for the assignment and potentially a failing grade for the course. Academic misconduct is any act that improperly affects a true and honest evaluation of a student's academic performance and includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism and improper citation of sources, using another student's work, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials. All academic misconduct

concerns will be reported to the university's Office of Student Conduct. Ignorance of the university's standards and expectations is never an excuse to act with a lack of integrity. When in doubt on collaboration, citation, or any issue, please contact your instructor before taking a course of action.

Academic Accommodations:

At Texas A&M University-Central Texas, we value an inclusive learning environment where every student has an equal chance to succeed and has the right to a barrier free education. The Department of Access and Inclusion is responsible for ensuring that students with a disability receive equal access to the University's programs, services and activities. If you believe you have a disability requiring reasonable accommodations please contact the Department of Access and Inclusion at (254) 501-5831. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such. For more information please visit our [Access & Inclusion](https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/access-inclusion.html) webpage [https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/access-inclusion.html].

Texas A&M University-Central Texas supports students who are pregnant and/or parenting. In accordance with requirements of Title IX and guidance from US Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, the Dean of Student Affairs' Office can assist students who are pregnant and/or parenting in seeking accommodations related to pregnancy and/or parenting. For more information, please visit <https://www.tamuct.departments/index.php>. Students may also contact the institution's Title IX Coordinator. If you would like to read more about these [requirements and guidelines online](#), please visit the website [http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.pdf].

Tutoring:

Tutoring is available to all A&M-Central Texas students, both on-campus and online. On-campus subjects tutored include Accounting, Advanced Math, Biology, Finance, Statistics, Mathematics, and Study Skills. Tutors are available at the Tutoring Center in Warrior Hall, Suite 111. If you have a question regarding tutor schedules, need to schedule a tutoring session, are interested in becoming a tutor, or any other question, contact Academic Support Programs at 254-519-5796, or by emailing Larry Davis at lldavis@tamuct.edu.

Chat live with a tutor 24/7 for almost any subject on your computer! Tutor.com is an online tutoring platform that enables A&M-Central Texas students to log-in and receive FREE online tutoring and writing support. This tool provides tutoring in over forty subject areas. Access Tutor.com through Canvas.

University Writing Center:

Located in 416 Warrior Hall, the University Writing Center (UWC) at Texas A&M University-Central Texas is a free workspace open to all TAMUCT students with satellite hours in the University Library. Students may arrange a one-on-one session with a

trained and experienced writing tutor by visiting the UWC during normal operating hours (both half-hour and hour sessions are available) or by making an appointment via [WCOOnline](https://tamuct.mywconline.com/) [https://tamuct.mywconline.com/]. In addition, you can email Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr. at bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu to schedule an online tutoring session. Tutors are prepared to help writers of all levels and abilities at any stage of the writing process.

While tutors will not write, edit, or grade papers, they will assist students in developing more effective composing practices. By providing a practice audience for students' ideas and writing, our tutors highlight the ways in which they read and interpret students' texts, offering guidance and support throughout the various stages of the writing process. In addition, students may work independently in the UWC by checking out a laptop that runs the Microsoft Office suite and connects to WIFI, or by consulting our resources on writing, including all of the relevant style guides. Whether you need help brainstorming ideas, organizing an essay, proofreading, understanding proper citation practices, or just want a quiet place to work, the University Writing Center is here to help! If you have any questions about the University Writing Center, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr. at bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu.

Library Services:

The University Library provides many services in support of research across campus and at a distance. We offer over 200 electronic databases containing approximately 250,000 eBooks and 82,000 journals, in addition to the 72,000 items in our print collection, which can be mailed to students who live more than 50 miles from campus. Research guides for each subject taught at A&M-Central Texas are available through our website to help students navigate these resources. On-campus, the library offers technology including cameras, laptops, microphones, webcams, and digital sound recorders.

Research assistance from a librarian is also available twenty-four hours a day through our online chat service, and at the reference desk when the library is open. Research sessions can be scheduled for more comprehensive assistance, and may take place on Skype or in-person at the library. Assistance may cover many topics, including how to find articles in peer-reviewed journals, how to cite resources, and how to piece together research for written assignments.

Our 27,000-square-foot facility on the A&M-Central Texas main campus includes student lounges, private study rooms, group work spaces, computer labs, family areas suitable for all ages, and many other features. Services such as interlibrary loan, TexShare, binding, and laminating are available. The library frequently offers workshops, tours, readings, and other events. For more information, please visit our [Library website](https://tamuct.libguides.com/) [https://tamuct.libguides.com/].

Instructor reserves the right to amend this syllabus at any time.

Annotated Bibliography

The purpose of this annotated bibliography assignment is to prepare you to write the historiographical essay at the end of the course. This assignment provides you an opportunity at the midway point in the course to report back on the sources you have identified thus far for your historiographical essay, which will help you to refine your thinking and the methodology by which you plan to undertake your historiographical essay.

An annotated bibliography is a list of correctly formatted citations for published works such as books and journal articles on the topic of your historiographical essay. Each citation should be followed by a 2-3 sentences (maximum) which inform the reader of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the source cited. The annotation should include, at a minimum, the source's thesis, supporting arguments (as appropriate), methodology, type of evidence used, and some idea of the source's historiographical placement, i.e. historical genre.

This assignment, as well as your historiographical essay, should conform to the Chicago/Turabian Manual of Style. For more information, see: *The Chicago Manual of Style, 17th ed.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017.

If you have questions, be sure to ask me early, i.e. not the night before the assignment is due. *No internet sources are permitted. Any assignments based on internet sources will receive a zero.* Superior annotated bibliographies will demonstrate a clear topic, contain a minimum of 20 sources and three historical genres, follow directions, demonstrate a mastery of the sources included, and be well-written and free of routine mistakes. No cover page is needed, and a standard font type, size, and margins should be used.

Additional Resources

The examples provided below, while not exactly like the annotated bibliography you are required to prepare, are similar. They are helpful in that they provide additional tips for thinking about issues such as bibliography construction and purpose, annotations, and they each provide samples.

Univ. of N. Carolina: <https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/annotated-bibliographies/>

Cornell University: <http://guides.library.cornell.edu/annotatedbibliography>

University of Central Florida: <http://stars.library.ucf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1052&context=lib-docs>

Tallahassee Community College: http://tcc.fl.libguides.com/ld.php?content_id=24113916

Historiographical Essay

In lieu of a final examination, you are required to write an article length historiographical essay based on your annotated bibliography. The purpose of the historiographical essay is to permit you an opportunity to examine the historiography of a historical topic of your choice.

In doing so, you are required to examine a minimum of three different genres of historical interpretation of your chosen topic. You should categorize the different genres appropriately and explain the attributes of each genre. Categories could include: modernist, postmodernist, revisionist, neomodernist, neorevisionist, etc., or others as you see fit, as appropriate for your topic. The names of the categories are less important than clearly explaining the differences between them.

Following an introduction in which you should introduce your topic and the genres, include a description of the genres and the works that compose them. While your goal in this assignment is the “truth,” including your unbiased assessment of the historiography of your topic, you must come to some conclusion rooted in your own analysis. That, naturally, requires some subjectivity. This is the same approach taken to research and writing by any professional historian.

Possible questions to help guide your analysis follow:

- Has one historical interpretation endured longer than others?
- Is one genre more convincing than others? Why or why not?
- Is one genre more methodologically sound? Why or why not?
- What are the trends in terms of research on that topic, and how has it evolved over time?
- What factors—whether internal to the historical discussion on topic, or external—do you think have contributed such evolution? (Hint: this is perhaps the most important consideration)
- Has a genre fallen out of fashion for some reason?

This assignment should conform to the Chicago/Turabian Manual of Style, as your annotated bibliography did. If it does not, you will be penalized. For more information, see: *The Chicago Manual of Style, 17th ed.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017.

If you have questions, be sure to ask me early, i.e. not the night before the assignment is due. *No internet sources are permitted. Any assignments based on internet sources will receive a zero.* Superior historiographical essays will include a clear topic, follow directions, demonstrate a mastery of the sources included, and be well-written and free of routine mistakes. No cover page is needed, and a standard font type, size, and margins should be used.