

HIST 3995

Honors Research Seminar

Spring 2025



Clio, Muse of History, by Charles Meynier, 1798

Wed 3:30-6:00pm
137 Schaeffer Hall

Professor Richard (Tyler) Priest, Department of History

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Office: 163 Schaeffer Hall (SH), 319-335-2096

Drop-In Hours: Tues 12:00-1:30 pm & Wed, 1:00-2:30 pm. In person or by Zoom: <https://uiowa.zoom.us/j/9397749856>. Meetings may also be arranged by appointment.

Bio: <http://clas.uiowa.edu/history/people/r-tyler-priest>
<http://typriest.com/>

Professor Colin Gordon

DEO, Department of History

Contact: colin-gordon@uiowa.edu, 276 SH, 319-335-2303

Course Description and Objectives

In this seminar you will design and begin to write your [History Honors Thesis](#), a 25-35-page research paper exploring a historical question about a topic of your choosing. Thesis writers set their own research agenda, undertake a more sophisticated project than is possible in a regular course, and complete their undergraduate careers with a substantial accomplishment. By the end of the semester, you will have defined your topic and research questions, selected a thesis advisor, located and begun to analyze sources, prepared an annotated bibliography, presented work-in-progress, and written a proposal. During the summer, you will complete your research and continue outlining and drafting your essay. The History Department has funds available to pay for travel to archives as needed.

In Fall 2025 you will enroll in History 3396: Senior Thesis, working both with the instructor of that class and your thesis advisor. A three-person committee, including the your thesis advisor and two other faculty members, will evaluate the finished thesis. A copy will be kept permanently in the History Department. Each year, the department awards a monetary prize for the most distinguished Honors thesis (Stow Persons Award). Some students choose to submit their essays for publication in the department's undergraduate journal, the [Iowa Historical Review](#); the essay also can serve as a writing sample for applications to professional or graduate programs.

Although the thesis is the result of independent research and writing, the two-semester History Honors sequence provides you with a cohort of peers who support one another in the challenge of creating new historical knowledge. Writing an Honors thesis may be the most difficult work you will do as an undergraduate -- and the most rewarding. Our conversations will spark new insights about all of your topics and about the historian's craft. You also will hone your skills in research, analytical writing, and oral presentation.

The Thesis Advisor

This semester you will choose a History faculty thesis advisor who specializes in a field related to your topic. The advisor helps you refine your topic, suggests sources, and reads drafts. Meeting regularly with your advisor will be critical to successful completion of the thesis. You and your advisor will sign a contract to align expectations for meetings and other communication during the summer and fall.

Honors Credit and Grading

To graduate with Honors *in the History Major*, a student must enroll in History 3995 for three hours of credit (Spring), and History 3996 for an additional three hours (Fall). The 3995 instructor assigns your grade for that class based on your progress during the spring, on the understanding that you will finish the Honors thesis in History 3996. Your thesis advisor assigns your final thesis grade for History 3996 (Fall 2024).

If you are a *University* Honors student, completing the Honors Thesis will fully satisfy the 12 credits of [experiential learning](#) for University Honors.

Course Requirements

Required Texts

The following book is available for purchase at [Iowa Hawk Shop](#):

Katherine Pickering Antonova, *The Essential Guide to Writing History Essays* (Oxford, 2020) (also available as an ebook through UI Libraries)

Additional readings are posted in PDF form on the ICON course website.

Classroom Format and Expectations

Our weekly meetings are designed to help you launch your research project as soon as possible. The class is held workshop-style, meaning that it emphasizes collaborative thinking and constructive criticism. These workshops offer you a platform to test your ideas, refine arguments, and debate the results of your research. To make this productive, you must arrive prepared to participate in discussion, whether your own work is on the agenda or not.

Because we meet only once a week, it will be especially important to make good use of our time together. Please arrive on time, silence devices, and do not use devices for activities unrelated to class. As we engage in our discussions, remember that differences of opinion are to be expected and indeed welcome -- as long as we are respectful and open to learning from one another.

We will be using the **UIowa Canvas/ICON** Course Management Website, <https://uiowa.instructure.com> to manage materials for the class. The syllabus, PDFs of readings, website links, announcements, and grades can all be accessed through Canvas/ICON. Remember to check the Canvas course website regularly.

E-mail

Per University policy, students are responsible for all official correspondence sent to their University of Iowa e-mail address (@uiowa.edu). I will make class announcements primarily through our course Canvas/ICON site (which you should check frequently), but do check your UI e-mail often as well, in case I need to communicate with you individually. In turn, I will reply to emails from your UI address within 24 hours M-F.

Attendance

You are permitted one unexcused absence without any grade penalty. If a major illness or other emergency requires you to miss more than one class, please e-mail me right away for an excused absence. Students with mandatory religious obligations or UI

authorized activities should discuss their absences with me as soon as possible; religious obligations must be communicated within the first three weeks of classes. For additional CLAS policies on absences, see [here](#).

I will take class attendance every period. Grading criteria is as follows:

- 20 – No more than 1 unexcused absence during the semester
- 18 – No more than 2 unexcused absences during the semester
- 16 – No more than 3 unexcused absences
- 14 – No more than 4 unexcused absences
- 12 – No more than 5 unexcused absences
- 0 – More than 5 unexcused absences

Participation and Engagement

The success of this workshop seminar depends on active student participation and engagement. This will be evaluated in a number of ways, including timely arrival to class, timely submission of assignments, preparation, oral participation, insight, and engagement with other students.

P&E grading criteria is as follows:

- 20 points – High level of P&E
- 18 points – Above average P&E
- 16 points – Average P&E
- 14 points – Below average P&E
- 12 points – Minimal P&E
- 10 points or below – Sub-minimal P&E

Assignments

During Weeks 2-9, you will have short weekly assignments, each worth 10 points. These assignments are designed to assist you in thinking about, selecting, defining, and researching your thesis topic. All require some form of written submission posted to Canvas assignments. Most are due at 9am on Wednesdays. During the last month of class, you will have three more substantial assignments – an annotated bibliography of sources, a research presentation, and a formal research proposal. Further instructions on all assignments will be provided.

Evaluation

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Due Date</i>	<i>Points/Percentage</i>
Attendance	Ongoing	20 points (10%)
Participation and Engagment	Ongoing	20 points (10%)
Assignment 1 – Hist Research/Writing	1/29	10 points (5%)
Assignment 2 – Local Archives Requests	2/3	10 points (5%)
Assignment 3 – Historical Sources	2/5	10 points (5%)
Assignment 4 – Archives Worksheets	2/12	10 points (5%)

Assignment 5 – Prelim Research Ideas	2/19	10 points (5%)
Assignment 6 – Thesis Analysis	2/26	10 points (5%)
Assignment 7 – Draft Proposal	3/12	10 points (5%)
Assignment 8 – Honors Thesis Contract	3/26	10 points (5%)
Assignment 9 – Annotated Bib	4/2	20 points (10%)
Assignment 10 – Research Presentation	4/16, 23, 30	30 points (15%)
Final Assignment – Research Proposal	5/3	30 points (15%)
Total		200 points (100%)

Course Letter Grade

There will be 200 points possible in the course, corresponding to the percentages listed above. Your final grade will be calculated according to the following scale:

200-185 – A
 184-180 – A-
 179-173 – B+
 172-165 – B
 164-160 – B-
 159-153 – C+
 152-145 – C
 144-140 – C-
 139-133 – D+
 132-125 – D
 124-120 – D-
 119- -- F

Academic Misconduct: All students in CLAS courses are expected to abide by the [CLAS Code of Academic Honesty](#). Academic misconduct, including plagiarism, must be reported by instructors to CLAS according to [these procedures](#).

- **Plagiarism** includes, but is not limited to, intentional *or unintentional* use of direct quotes without proper attribution and/or quotation marks; the use of someone else's ideas without appropriate attribution; and handing in someone else's work as your own. Our ICON site uses plagiarism detection software.
- **Artificial Intelligence** tools (ChapGPT, etc.): Because building your skills in analytical reading and writing are key learning objectives of this course, submitting work generated with AI assistance will be treated as a violation of academic honesty.

Resources for Academic Support:

- [History Department Writing Center](#). Browse their excellent online handouts or make an appointment for writing help.
- [Tutor Iowa](#)

SCHEDULE

Wed 1/22- Introductions

Wed 1/29 - What is History?

Reading: Antonova, *The Essential Guide to Writing History Essays*, Chaps. 2-3, plus pp. 268-272

Assignment #1: Historical Research and Writing

Mon 2/3 - Assignment #2: Local Archives, Due in ICON by 1pm.

Reading: "Websites for Local Archives" (Word); "Resource Guide -- Archival Collections" (Word)

Wed 2/5 -Sources for Historical Research

Reading: Antonova, *Essential Guide to Writing in History*, Chapter 9

Assignment #3: Sources for Historical Research

Wed 2/12 - Primary Sources and Archives Visit: UI Special Collections and Iowa Women's Archives

(Meet in Map Room on the Third Floor of the Main Library)

Reading: Antonova, *The Essential Guide to Writing History Essays*, Chap. 9

Assignment #4: Archives Worksheets

Wed 2/19 - Topic Ideas and Research Questions

Assignment #5: Preliminary Research Ideas

Wed 2/26 - Senior Thesis Examples

Reading: Examples of past theses posted in the 2/26 Module.

Assignment #6: Thesis Analysis

Wed 3/5 - Entering Scholarly Conversations

Reading: Antonova, *The Essential Guide to Writing History Essays*, Chapter 8

Website: UC-Santa Cruz, "[Write an Annotated Bibliography](#)"

Wed 3/12 - Refining Your Topic

Assignment #7: Draft Research Proposal

Wed 3/19 - NO CLASS - SPRING BREAK

Wed 3/26 - Individual Consultations

Assignment #8: Honors Thesis Contract

Wed 4/2 - Preparing Research Presentations and Proposals

Reading: Antonova, *The Essential Guide to Writing History Essays*, Chapter 10

Assignment #9: Annotated Bibliography

Wed 4/9 - Revising in Response to Peer and Advisor Comments

****Travel Grant Proposals Due** (Optional)**

Wed 4/16 - Research Presentations and Discussion**Wed 4/23 - Research Presentations and Discussion****Wed 4/30 - Research Presentations and Discussion****Wed 5/7 - Conclusion and Reflections****Mon 5/12 - Research Proposal**

Final Assignment: Research Proposal (abstract, focused questions, annotated bibliography, tentative claims, proposed additional research, and preliminary outline). Submit first to advisor for comments and then revise based on comments.

****Tentative Deadlines for HIST 3996, Fall 2025:**

Week 10: Submit penultimate (second to last) thesis draft to faculty advisor

Week 12: Advisor returns comments on drafts to student

Weeks 12-13: Student revises drafts based on comments

Week 13: Fall Undergraduate Research Festival (poster presentation)

Weeks 13-14: Distribute final thesis to committee members

Weeks 14-15: Thesis defense (student and three-person committee)

[How to submit your Honors Thesis](#)

Undergraduate Research Funding, Awards, and Scholarships**UI History Department**

The Department of History has funding to help fund summer research travel to libraries or archives beyond Iowa City. Amounts vary from year to year, but it is always worth

applying, and the request process is straightforward (list of archives/collections and estimated budget). **Travel grant requests** are due April 9.

The department also offers scholarships to students working in certain fields, as well as awards to recognize service, highest GPA, and outstanding honors thesis. These awards carry a cash reward and generally are announced in the spring to graduating seniors. Study the list here <https://history.uiowa.edu/undergraduate/scholarships>

Honors thesis writers also should be aware of is the Hamod Habhab Keeshan Fellowship, awarded by the *Honors College* to a University Honors student who also is working on a History Honors Thesis: <https://honors.uiowa.edu/hamod-habhab-keeshan-scholarship>.

Collegiate and University Sources of Funding for Undergraduate Research

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) and the University of Iowa each offer a wide range of funding support for undergrad researchers as well as other types of scholarships. For links, scroll down toward the bottom of the page at: <https://history.uiowa.edu/undergraduate/scholarships>

Hawkeye Experience Grant

Awards stipends in variable amounts for undergraduate students at the University of Iowa who are involved in applied learning experiences outside of the classroom. Through the Pomerantz Center, students can apply for up to \$4,000 each in funds to defray the cost of interning, interning abroad, undergraduate research, or community engagement/service-learning in Summer 2025.

CLAS Administrative Policies

Administrative Home

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall, or see the CLAS Academic Policies Handbook at <http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook>.

Electronic Communication

Students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their UI email address (uiowa.edu) and must use this address for any communication with instructors or staff

in the UI community. For the privacy and the protection of student records, UI faculty and staff can only correspond with UI email addresses.

Academic Honesty and Misconduct

All CLAS students or students taking classes offered by CLAS are expected to abide by the College's [Code of Academic Honesty](#). Undergraduate academic misconduct must be reported by instructors to CLAS [according to these procedures](#).

CLAS Final Examination Policies

The Registrar announces the final examination schedule for each class generally by the fifth week of classes. Final exams are offered only during the official final examination period. **No exams of any kind are allowed during the last week of classes.** All students should plan on being at the UI through the final examination period. Once the Registrar has announced the date, time, and location of each final exam, the complete schedule will be published on the Registrar's web site and will be shared with instructors and students. It is the student's responsibility to know the date, time and place of a final exam.

Student Complaints

Students with a complaint about a grade or a related matter should first discuss the situation with the instructor and/or the course supervisor (if applicable), and finally with the DEO (Chair) of the school, department, or program offering the course. Sometimes students will be referred to the department or program's Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS). Undergraduate students should contact [CLAS Undergraduate Programs](#) for support when the matter is not resolved at the previous level.

Drop Deadline for this Course

You may drop an individual course before the deadline; after this deadline you will need collegiate approval. You can look up the [drop deadline for this course here](#). When you drop a course, a "W" will appear on your transcript. The mark of "W" is a neutral mark that does not affect your GPA. To discuss how dropping (or staying in) a course might affect your academic goals, please contact your Academic Advisor. Directions for adding or dropping a course and other registration changes can be found on the [Registrar's website](#). Undergraduate students can find policies on dropping CLAS courses [here](#).

Mental Health Resources

Students are encouraged to be mindful of their mental health and seek help as a preventive measure or if feeling overwhelmed and/or struggling to meet course expectations. Students are encouraged to talk to their instructor for assistance with specific class-related concerns. For additional support and counseling, please see the guidance and resources at mentalhealth.uiowa.edu, including the 24-7 [UI Support and](#)

[Crisis Line](#). Information about UCS, including resources and how to schedule an appointment, can be found at counselling.uiowa.edu. Additionally, the Office of the Dean of Students can help students navigate personal crisis situations. They can provide one-on-one support, help with identifying options, and access to [basic needs resources \(such as food, rent, childcare, etc.\)](#). Student Care and Assistance: 132 IMU, dos-assistance@uiowa.edu, or 319-335-1162 and more info: dos.uiowa.edu/assistance.

University Policies

Accommodations for Disabilities

The University is committed to providing an educational experience that is accessible to all. If a student has a diagnosed disability or other disabling condition that may impact the student's ability to complete the course requirements as stated in the syllabus, the student may seek accommodations through [Student Disability Services](#) (SDS). SDS is responsible for making [Letters of Accommodation \(LOA\)](#) available. **The student must provide an LOA to the instructor as early in the semester as possible, but requests not made at least two weeks prior to the scheduled activity for which an accommodation is sought may not be accommodated.** The LOA will specify what reasonable course accommodations the student is eligible for and those the instructor should provide. Additional information can be found on the [SDS website](#).

[Free Speech and Expression](#)

[Absences for Religious Holy Days](#)

[Classroom Expectations](#)

[Non-discrimination](#)

[Sexual Harassment/Misconduct and Supportive Measures](#)

[Sharing of Class Recordings](#)

***If the University is closed during class time for any reason, you are responsible for checking the class ICON homepage for immediate updates.**

***The instructor reserves the right to modify this syllabus and/or course policies as the semester progresses. Any changes will be presented in class and in announcements through ICON.**