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History 499
Spring 2008
Class time: TTH 9:35-10:50
Office hours: TBA

Senior Seminar

Catalog Description: "Seminar for senior undergraduate students to examine in-depth a particular historical topic. Topics will vary with instructors. Students will engage in discussion, and produce a research paper. Not for graduate credit. Open to history majors only. May not be taken more than twice without completion. Fulfills the CoLA Writing-Across-the-Curriculum requirement. Prerequisite: 392."

Topic: "The Business of Vice in U.S. History"

This seminar examines the vices discussed in historian John C. Burnham's provocative *Bad Habits: Drinking, Smoking, Taking Drugs, Gambling, Sexual Misbehavior, and Swearing in American History* (New York University Press, 1993), which is required reading and a starting point for thinking about research topics. Rather than research efforts at reform, this seminar focuses on the promotion, acceptance, and commercialization of these various vices. Proponents of vice included a diverse group of interests: business (beer brewers, cigarette companies, mass media, advertisers, entertainers, prostitutes, drug dealers); civil libertarians; sexual "swingers" as well as those living a "countercultural" lifestyle governed by an "anything goes" philosophy. While the focus is on the business (promotion) of vice, all topics must consider the ever-present environment of reformers seeking to ban or restrict these perceived social evils.

Possible research topics include:

- Changing media views of these "vices"
- The history of sex industry establishments (brothels, strip clubs)
- Indian gaming and other casinos
- Local ownership and promotion of gambling (race tracks, dog tracks, pool halls)
- The criminalization and decriminalization of alcohol or cigarettes, a.k.a. "Prohibition(s)" (Illinois banned the sale of cigarettes in the 1910s but later decriminalized this drug).
- City and state ordinances regarding sexual misbehavior: Their enforcement (or lack thereof).
- The demise of lotteries in the nineteenth century at the hand of reformers, and their subsequent rise as a source of state revenue beginning in the 1960s.
- Legal cases testing the limits of "obscenity" under the "community standard" doctrine.

The following readings will lead you to many more possible topics:

Required readings

1. Burnham, *Bad Habits: Drinking, Smoking, Taking Drugs, Gambling, Sexual Misbehavior, and Swearing in American History* (1993)
2. Choose one book from the list of "Vice Books" (<http://tinyurl.com/8egfh>) or one approved by the instructor. NOTE: It is your responsibility to get a book that is *available*. For your convenience, I have inserted the call numbers of each book. If you click on the hyperlink, you may "browse the shelf" of books on similar topics. You may also purchase but do so in time to present your book!

ASSIGNMENTS

Class Participation (25%)

Class participation includes completing assignments, meeting with your instructor or Writing Fellow (see below), and contributing to class discussions.

Book Review (15%)

You will write reviews (3-5 pages double-spaced) of the required readings. Digest the book's contents, discuss its strengths and weaknesses (substantive and stylistic), relate to course themes, and identify topics that need further exploration (i.e., possible research papers!). As you read each book, keep in mind some of the themes raised by Burnham. Example: Does a book support or refute his "constellation of vice" theory?

Peer Reviews (5%)

Historians focus their research and hone their writing by submitting it to peer review. You too should benefit from the constructive criticisms of your fellow students. In turn, you will act as primary reviewer of another student's paper.

Be constructive: Note the strengths and weaknesses of the student's paper. How could the paper be improved? Avoid the temptation to uncritically praise the paper you are reviewing; the author deserves to benefit from your helpful advice.

Oral Presentation (5%)

This assignment will help you develop the ability to speak in front of an audience. After completing your research, you will make an oral presentation of your findings. Your classmates and I will provide you with written feedback on your performance. This assignment is graded on a P/F basis (P = 100%, F = 0%).

Note: You must attend all presentations, both as a matter of courtesy to your classmates and as a learning experience. I will deduct points for those not attending these events.

Final Paper (40%)

You must hand in a detailed outline and rough draft before submitting the final paper. Your paper must be 20-25 pages long (4,000-5,000 words), draw upon 25 or more sources (including a **minimum** of ten primary sources). This is a floor, **not** a ceiling! A superior paper will draw upon more primary source material.

Research Journal

Keep a journal tracking your research progress. Date each entry. Your first entries will include "brainstorming" about topics, later entries will inform me about your research steps and any problems you are encountering. **BRING YOUR JOURNAL TO EACH MEETING** with your instructor or Fellow. Along with your journal, you must keep a file with your notes and other research material. You will turn this in with your final paper. Considered as part of your final paper grade.

Late Assignments

You lose one letter grade for each day late.

COURSE GUIDELINES

Writing Fellows: To provide you with additional tutoring, I am assisted by three talented assistants who will meet with you weekly. These Writing Fellows are available to answer all of your questions concerning library research, documenting sources, writing mechanics, etc. They will also monitor your progress and report to me on a weekly basis. You are always free to see me during my office hours as well. The Fellows will be checking your weekly progress. I will be grading your major assignments and assigning you a course grade.

Topic selection: Your topic should be based largely on original historical material. Note: Do not select a topic that requires a great deal of material from other libraries.

Documentation: In this course, attention to detail is important. You are responsible for taking complete and accurate research notes, which you will turn in with your final paper. You must cite all the material used in your paper by inserting footnotes or endnotes. The *Chicago Manual of Style* is the standard citation guide for History. The "Documentation Models" in *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History* are based on the *Chicago Manual* and should suffice for most of your sources. I recommend that you keep this pocket guide as a useful reference for future use. Another alternative: Kate L. Turabian, ed., *A Manual of Style for Writers*.

Warning! I will not tolerate academic misconduct in this class. I will report suspected cases of misconduct. The Student Conduct Code sets forth penalties for academic misconduct. Possible sanctions include failure of an assignment, course failure, disciplinary probation, or suspension from the university. Don't risk it.

You must research and write your papers yourself. You may not have a friend write your paper. You may not hire someone to write your paper (this includes Internet paper mills, which I *can* and *do* check). You may not turn in a paper previously used in a different class.

Avoid **plagiarism**. Plagiarism consists of using someone else's ideas as your own without properly acknowledging them. Changing a few words is not enough; it is still plagiarism. If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, consult me.

Note: More than one missed meeting with Fellow/Instructor, or failure to turn in rough draft and supporting material with final paper will result in course failure.

January 15 Introduction
 17 **FELLOW SIGN-UP**

 22 DISCUSSION: Burnham, Bad Habits, 1st half.
 24 DISCUSSION: Burnham, Bad Habits, 2d half.

 29 DISCUSSION: "Vice Books"
 31 DISCUSSION: "Vice Books"

 Feb. 5 DISCUSSION: "Vice Books"
 7 **LIBRARY ORIENTATION**

 12 INDEPENDENT RESEARCH
 14 INDEPENDENT RESEARCH **PROJECT PROPOSAL DUE**

 19 INDEPENDENT RESEARCH
 21 INDEPENDENT RESEARCH

 26 INDEPENDENT RESEARCH
 28 INDEPENDENT RESEARCH

 Mar. 4-6 **ROUNDTABLE UPDATES TO CLASS** (5 minute presentation)
OUTLINE DUE (at meeting with fellow).

 March 11-13 **SPRING BREAK**

 March 18-20 INDEPENDENT RESEARCH

 March 25-27 INDEPENDENT RESEARCH

 April 1 **CAREER CENTER MEETING**
 3 INDEPENDENT RESEARCH **ROUGH DRAFT #1 DUE**
 8 INDEPENDENT RESEARCH
 10 INDEPENDENT RESEARCH **PEER REVIEW #1 DUE**

 April 15 Oral Presentations
 17 Oral Presentations

 22 Oral Presentations **ROUGH DRAFT #2 DUE**
 24 Oral Presentations

 29 Oral Presentations **PEER REVIEW #2 DUE**
 May 1 Oral Presentations
 5 **PAPER DUE**