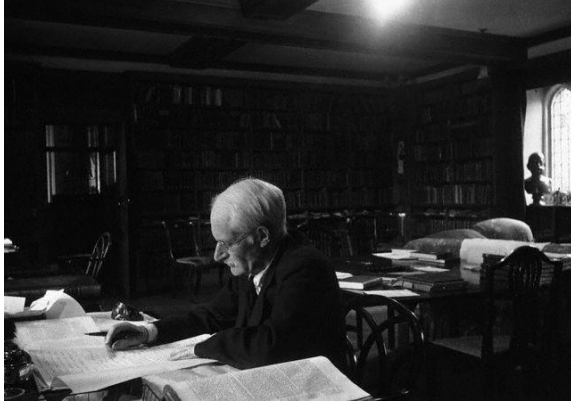


**HI401W – Senior Thesis Seminar  
Spring 2021  
Course Meeting Times: 4:00-5:15 TuTh  
Zoom Meeting Link: <https://bac.zoom.us/j/9454122255>**



**Left: English historian George Macaulay Trevelyan researching in his study. 1950.**

**Right: Digital technician scanning books from the New York Public Library for the Google Books Project. 2004.**

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Instructor: Dr. Daniel Hutchinson  
Office: 308C Robert Stowe Hall  
Office Telephone: 704-461-5019

Scheduling Office Hour Appointments: <http://bit.ly/hutchinson-appointments>

Email address: [danielhutchinson@bac.edu](mailto:danielhutchinson@bac.edu)

**RECOMMENDED TEXTS:**

Jenny Presnell, *The Information-Literate Historian: A Guide to Research For History Students* (Oxford University Press, 2012)

Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing History*, sixth or seventh edition (Bedford/St. Martin's, 2012).

Additional readings and media will also be placed on the course website.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This seminar is designed to prepare history majors for the senior thesis. The seminar will discuss research skills and methodologies essential for completion of the thesis, and explore research resources useful in obtaining access to primary and secondary sources. Students will demonstrate their mastery of skills learned in the course by the completing the senior thesis and presenting their research findings to the seminar and the college community.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

- For students to successfully complete the senior thesis, the capstone project demonstrating the research and writing skills acquired through the course of their academic career.
- For students to engage in the skills and methodologies required to complete a major research project.
- For students to become familiar with a variety of research resources useful for acquiring primary sources needed to complete the senior thesis, especially in the realm of digital history.
- To fulfill the educational mission of Belmont Abbey College: to enable students to "lead lives of integrity, to succeed professionally, to become responsible citizens, and to be a blessing to themselves and to others."

## **WRITING INTENSIVE DESIGNATION:**

This seminar is designated as a Writing Intensive Course. As such it fulfills the core requirement for such a course in that it develops written communication skills through:

- Substantial writing requirements, with a thesis with a minimum length of 25 pages (approximately 6000 words).
- Writing assignments over the course of the semester to develop rhetorical and cognitive writing skills.
- Students receiving feedback on written work and submitting revisions.
- Writing requirements make up at least 50% of course credit.
- Employing the University of Chicago style guide for all written assignments.

## **COURSE POLICIES:**

Substantial alterations to typical course policies have been made in response to the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. Future adjustments may be required over the course of the semester in response to unfolding events. Please know the instructor will attempt to work with you to ensure both your health and your academic success. Regardless of these altered circumstances, success in this class requires your active participation and full engagement.

The Thesis Seminar is different from traditional history courses in several senses. Instead of the traditional lecture format, this course is discussion-based, focused on the particular readings and assignments of interest for that class session. The effectiveness of the seminar will depend on the quality of discussion brought by each of the seminar's participants. **Accordingly, it is essential that every member of the seminar regularly attend class and arrive prepared to engage in discussion.**

- **Senior Thesis:** The goal of this course is to prepare and assist students in the completion of the senior thesis, a requirement for the completion of the History major and for graduation. The thesis is due on **5:00 PM, on Thursday, May 6, 2020**. If the thesis is not turned in by this date, the student will not pass the course and cannot graduate.
- **Belmont Abbey College Attendance Policy:** Belmont Abbey College requires faculty to monitor attendance for every class session. Within the seminar format, where the quality of the discussion is measured by student participation, attendance is even more critical. Thus **students are expected to attend every scheduled class session**. Students with excused absences must provide documentation for all absences. Excused absences include documented illnesses, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official college activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness. **Students with unexcused absences will suffer a penalty to their class participation grade.**
- **Reading & Assignments:** Seminar discussions will be centered on collective reading and research assignments. Each seminar participant will often be responsible for individualized readings and assignments. Thus, if the student is absent or has not completed their work, the entire seminar will miss the opportunity to share the student's insights. Accordingly, students are expected to have completed each reading and assignment by the announced assigned time. A schedule of readings and assignments are posted to the course website.
- **Revisions:** Writing is really the process of rewriting and revision over time. Over the semester students will submit drafts of their thesis to the instructor and to peers, and revise their prose based on the feedback they receive.
- **Politeness and decorum:** because the seminar is centered on discussion, both the students and the instructor are expected to act in a **civil manner** when engaged in the seminar. Students are asked to refrain from actions that distract others during class. Students using laptops, iPads, or other devices should refrain from any activity that distracts other students. The usage of these devices in the classroom is a privilege, not a right.

#### **GRADING/EVALUATION:**

The course grade is based on the following scale and assignments:

- **Senior Thesis –May 6** - 50% of course grade
- **Thesis Presentation** – 20% of course grade
- **Thesis Prospectus – February 16** - 10% of course grade
- **Writing Assignments** – 10% of course grade
- **Class Participation** - 10% of course grade

## Grade Scale

- A: 100-93
- A-: 92-90
- B+: 89-88
- B: 87-83
- B-: 82-80
- C+: 79-78
- C: 77-73
- C-: 72-70
- D+: 69-68
- D: 67-63
- D-: 62-60
- F: 60-0

**Senior Thesis:** Completion of the senior thesis is the major goal of this course. The thesis consists of a research project ranging some 25-50 pages in length. The thesis should pose a research question supported by a strong evidence base of primary and secondary sources. The thesis will also investigate the historiography of the topic, and place the research question within that historical literature. The thesis will also employ the citation methods laid out in the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Through the course of the semester students and the instructor will meet to discuss their thesis and the writing process.

**Digital History Thesis Option:** an alternative method for the senior thesis is completion of a digital history project. For more information on this alternative approach, see the Digital History Thesis option requirements on the final page of the syllabus.

**Thesis Presentation:** Students will present the findings of their thesis research to the seminar near the end of the semester. Students will have approximately thirty minutes to make their presentations, and are encouraged to employ digital technology in presenting their thesis. Thesis presentations will be open to the entire college community. **Students will not be permitted to make a thesis presentation without substantial progress in the writing of the thesis.**

**Thesis Prospectus:** To assist in the preparation for the research and writing of the thesis, students will compose a thesis prospectus some 5-15 pages in length. This prospectus will contain a description of the research question, a prospective thesis statement, a historiographical analysis of your topic, and an annotated bibliography of primary and secondary sources. Students will discuss their prospectus with other seminar members in class.

**Reading and Research Assignments:** Students will complete a number of brief reading and research assignments in the first half of the semester. These assignments will focus on particular research skills and methodologies. For these assignments, students will post their findings on the course page to share with the other seminar participants.

**Class Participation:** The success of the seminar will depend in large measure on the quality of student participation. Timely completion of reading and research assignments, collaborative discussions on the research and writing process, and regular seminar attendance will determine the class participation grade.

## **Academic Dishonesty & Belmont Abbey College Policy:**

In accordance with the moral and academic standards of Belmont Abbey College, academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism (the appropriation of passages from the writing of another as one's own), collusion (improper collaboration with another in preparation of notes, term papers, or other written work), cheating (giving or receiving, offering or soliciting information, or using illicit material in an examination or quiz), or fabrication of sources used in a paper and included in its bibliography. It also includes appropriating another's ideas, theories, or interpretation as one's own without proper attribution. Stern disciplinary action will be taken against any student who is found guilty of academic dishonesty, and penalties levied will be clearly stated in each course syllabus.

## **Services For Students With Special Learning Needs:**

Should academic or testing accommodations be necessary for any student with a disability, the student should notify each of his or her instructors within the first two weeks of classes or as soon as possible after an initial verification of the disability has taken place. Accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis. Students must file proper documentation of the disability with Linda Tennant in the Academic Assistance Office, located on the lower level of the Abbot Vincent Taylor Library. Linda Tennant can be reached by phone at 704.461.6776 or by email at LindaTennant@bac.edu.

## **SYLLABUS CHANGE POLICY:**

Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advanced notice. All changes will be announced, either in class or via the course website.

## **COURSE CONTENT AND OUTLINE:**

This is a general outline that is subject to change.

Date	Topic	Assignment Due
Week 1:		
01/19	Introduction/Syllabus	
01/21	Finding Sources	*** INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS ***
01/26	Evaluating Primary & Secondary Sources	*** INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS ***
01/28	Historiography and the Thesis	*** INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS ***
02/02	The Challenges and Opportunities of Digital History	*** INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS ***
02/04	The Challenges and Opportunities of Digital History	*** INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS ***
02/09	Thesis Prospectus Discussion	*** INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS ***

02/16	<b>*** NO CLASS ****</b>	<b>*** THESIS PROSPECTUS DUE ***</b>
02/23	Citation & Chicago Manual of Style	<b>*** NOTES ASSIGNMENT DUE ***</b>
03/02	Evaluating Evidence & Arguments	<b>*** DRAFT ASSIGNMENT DUE ***</b>
03/09	Incorporating Historiography	<b>*** DRAFT ASSIGNMENT DUE ***</b>
03/16	Thesis Roundtable: Peer Draft Revisions	<b>*** DRAFT ASSIGNMENT DUE ***</b>
03/23	Thesis Roundtable: Peer Draft Revisions	<b>*** DRAFT ASSIGNMENT DUE ***</b>
03/30	<b>*** NO CLASS – WRITE!! ***</b>	
04/06	Thesis Presentations	
04/08	Thesis Presentations	
04/13	Thesis Presentations	
04/15	Thesis Presentations	
04/20	Thesis Presentations	
04/22	Thesis Presentations	
04/27	Thesis Presentations	
04/29	Thesis Presentations	
05/06	<b>*** FINAL DRAFT DUE ***</b>	

## **Digital History Thesis Option**

### **HI401W – Senior Thesis Seminar**

#### **Overall Requirements for All History Theses:**

- The thesis must demonstrate substantive and engaged use of primary sources as the foundation of the thesis.
- The thesis must engage with the historiographical context of the selected topic, noting the interpretations of other scholars.
- The thesis must provide attribution for all sources in accordance with the Chicago Manual of Style.
- Students must publicly present their thesis and its findings.
- The thesis must be at least 6,000 words in length. This requirement is a part of Belmont Abbey College's standard for "W" (writing-intensive) courses.

#### **Specific Requirements for a Digital History Thesis:**

- The project must employ primary sources as the foundation of project. Students are especially encouraged to seek our primary sources that have not yet been digitized or otherwise not available online.
- Digitization of all sources must follow professional and legal standards in accordance with U.S. copyright law. Students are strongly encouraged to work with primary source materials that are in the public domain and available for anyone to use without copyright permission.
- Thesis presentations will explore the historical topic the project examines, as well as the methods and tools used to create the project.
- A Digital Thesis must make use of at least one major digital humanities approach in the thesis. This list below is not exhaustive, and students with unique skill-sets or ideas are encouraged to propose alternative approaches. Each approach possesses its own distinctive tools and methodologies. Students are responsible for obtaining access to these tools. The final projects must provide brief information on how those tools and methods were used.

#### **Common Digital History Approaches:**

- Text Transcription
- Digital Mapping
- Data Visualization
- Network Analysis
- Media & Image Digitalization
- Video, animation, and documentary editing
- Oral History Creation
- Database Creation
- Crowdsourcing
- Virtual & Augmented Realities
- Historical Simulation