

HIGR267A-B
US Research Seminar:
Sources and Interpretation

Rebecca Jo Plant

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Fall Quarter 2017

Meeting time and place: Mondays 8-10:50 a.m. in HSS 6008

Office hours: HSS4062, Mondays, 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Course Description

This seminar focuses on the nuts and bolts of historical research and writing. Students must enroll in both the fall and the spring quarters.

In Fall quarter, the seminar will discuss a number of books and articles that exemplify different models of historical scholarship, focusing somewhat less on content than on the methodological, analytical, and narrative approaches employed by various authors. In addition, we will read two “how to” books—one on succeeding as a graduate student, and the other on the process of writing. (Some of what the latter authors say may strike you as simplistic or obvious, but don’t dismiss their advice – I can guarantee that you’ll have a happier and more productive time if you implement their suggestions.) Over the course of the quarter, students will also work to identify their research topic and a potential publication venue, begin conducting research, and complete a prospectus to be circulated and shared with the seminar.

During Winter quarter, students should ideally enroll in a 298 with their main advisor; although this is not required, it is strongly encouraged, as it is very difficult make adequate progress on the research paper with a full course load. Students should meet with their advisor (either individually or in groups), complete the process of research, read the relevant secondary literature, and begin to draft their paper. By the time we reconvene in Spring Quarter, students should have established the skeletal structure of their paper, though it will no doubt evolve further over the course of the quarter.

The seminar will be run as a workshop in Spring Quarter; students pre-circulate drafts or partial drafts of their papers to be analyzed and critiqued by their peers.

Assessment will be based on:

- *Weekly progress reports* (a paragraph to a page in length), starting Week 2. I want you to keep a time table tracking the time you spend devoted to your project and noting what you did during that time (see below); you should also briefly discuss your plans for the following week. This will be a part of your Research Diary, which we will discuss in class. (5%)

Monday	
1:00 – 2:00 pm	Read X article by Y author and wrote two paragraphs afterwards summarizing the argument and noting why it might be useful for me.
3:00 – 4:30 pm	Poked around in the online source collection Y, trying to familiarize myself with what is there.
Tuesday	
10:15 – 10:45 am	Filled out and submitted interlibrary loan requests for X
2:00 – 3:00 pm	Read more primary sources in online collection Y. There was one document that seemed particularly interesting; wrote a page-long analysis of it.

- *Oral introductions to readings and participation in seminar* (15%)
- *3-5 page précis*, including a brief statement describing the central question you hope to answer and laying out the parameters of your topic; a discussion of possible sources available to you; and the title description of a journal you would ideally like to publish in, along with a brief explanation of why you've selected that particular venue. (5%)
- *15-20 page prospectus*, including: a statement of your motivating research question and why it's important to explore; if possible, a tentative thesis statement based on preliminary research; a discussion of the relevant historical literature and (at the very end) an annotated bibliography of the key secondary sources, a detailed discussion of the sources/collections you will be using or have already consulted; a skeletal outline of the paper, identifying its different section; a calendar mapping how your plan/self-imposed deadlines for the next two quarters. (75%)

Readings: (articles for the course can be accessed on DropBox account; I will send you all the link)

- Joli Jensen, *Write No Matter What: Advice for Academics* (University of Chicago Press, 2017)
- Zachary Shore, *Grad School Essentials: A Crash Course in Scholarly Skills*, University of California Press, 2016
- Catherine A. Stewart, *Long Past Slavery: Representing Race in the Federal Writers' Project*, Chapel Hill: North Carolina Press, 2016
- Jonathan Metzl, *The Protest Psychosis: How Schizophrenia Became the Black Disease*, Boston: Beacon Books, 2009

Week 1, October 2: Introductions & When there are few sources or problematic sources

- Zachary Shore, *Grad School Essentials*
- Wendy Warren, “‘The Cause of Her Grief’: The Rape of a Slave in Early New England,” *Journal of American History* vol. 93. no. 4 (March 2007): 1031-49
- [Listen to interview with Wendy Warren on her book, *New England Bound: Slavery and Colonization in Early America* \(Liveright/W.W. Norton, 2016\)](#)

Week 2, October 9: Understand the limitations of sources

- Catherine A. Stewart, *Long Past Slavery: Representing Race in the Federal Writers’ Project*, Chapel Hill: North Carolina Press, 2016
- Stephanie Shaw, “Using the WPA Narratives to Study the Impact of the Great Depression,” *Journal of Southern History* vol. 69. no. 3 (August 2003): 623-58
- Paul J. Silva, *How to Write a Lot*, preface, chaps. 1-3

Week 3, October 16: Unpacking singular moments or events

- Paul A. Kramer, “Making Concessions: Race and Empire Revisited at the Philippine Exposition, St. Louis, 1901-1905,” *Radical History Review*, vol. 73 (1999): 74-114
- George Chauncey, Jr., “Christian Brotherhood or Sexual Perversion? Homosexual Identities and the Construction of Sexual Boundaries in the World War I Era,” *Journal of Social History* vol. 19 (1985): 189-211
- Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, “‘Loveliest Daughter of Our Ancient Cathay!’: Representations of Ethnic and Gender Identity in the Miss Chinatown U.S.A. Beauty Pageant,” *Journal of Social History*, vol. 31, no. 1. (Autumn 1997): 5-31
- Rebecca Jo Plant and Frances M. Clarke, “‘The Crowning Insult’: Federal Segregation and the Gold Star Mothers Pilgrimages of the Early 1930s,” *Journal of American History* vol. 101, no. 4 (September 2015): 406-32
- Silva, chaps 4-6

Week 4, October 23: Gov docs: Using governmental records

- Mae Ngai, “The Architecture of Race in American Immigration Law: A Reexamination of the Immigration Act of 1924,” *Journal of American History* vol. 86, no. 1 (June 1999): 67-92
- Anna Pegler-Gordon, “Chinese Exclusion, Photography, and the Development of U.S. Immigration Policy,” *American Quarterly* vol. 58, no. 1 (March 2006): 51-77
- Meg Jacobs, “‘How About Some Meat?’: The Office of Price Administration, Consumption Politics, and State Building from the Bottom Up, 1941-1946,” *Journal of American History*, vol. 84, no. 3 (December 1997): 910-41
- Margot Canaday, “Building a Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship under the 1944 G.I. Bill,” *Journal of American History* vol. 90, no. 3 (December 1993): 935-57

Week 5, October 30: Identifying a great topic; knowing when to shift gears

Precis due in class (no need to turn in weekly progress report)

- Mary Klann, "'Babies in Baskets': Motherhood, Tourism, and American Identity in Indian Baby Shows, 1916–1949," *Journal of Women's History* vol. 29, no. 2 (Summer 2017): 38-61
Mary Klann received her PhD from UC San Diego last spring; she'll be joining us for the second part of class.
- Jonathan Michel Metzl, *The Protest Psychosis: How Schizophrenia Became the Black Disease*, Boston: Beacon Books, 2009

Week 6, November 6: Local histories, national and transnational themes

- Rodney J. Steward, "Confederate Menace: Sequestration on the North Carolina Home Front," in Stephen Berry, ed., *Weirding the War: Stories from the Civil War's Ragged Edges*, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011, 54-70
- Laura McEnaney, "Nightmares on Elm Street: Demobilizing in Chicago, 1945-1953," *Journal of American History* vol. 92, no. 4 (March 2006): 1265-91
- Matthew D. Lassiter, "The Suburban Origins of 'Color-Blind' Conservatism: Middle-Class Consciousness in the Charlotte Busing Crisis," *Journal of Urban History*, vol. 30 (2004): 549-82
- N.B.D. Connolly, "Colored, Caribbean, and Condemned: Miami's Overtown District and the Cultural Expense of Progress, 1940-1970," *Caribbean Studies*, vol. 34, no. 1 (2006): 3-60

Week 7, November 13: Individual lives; larger stories

- Donna Schuele, "Love, Honor, and the Power of Law Probating the Ávila Estate in Frontier California," in *On the Borders of Love and Power: Families and Kinship in the Intercultural Southwest*, ed. David Wallace Adams (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012)
- Donna Schuele, "An Archive, a Lawsuit, and the Tragic Tale of the Loss of Rancho Sausal Redondo," forthcoming in *The Southern Californian*
- Drew Gilpin Faust, "'Trying to Do a Man's Business': Slavery, Violence and Gender in the American Civil War," *Gender & History* vol. 4, no. 2 (June 1992): 197-214
- T.J. Jackson Lears, "Sherwood Anderson: Looking for the White Spot," in *Power of Culture: Critical Essays in American History*, 13-37

Week 8, November 19: Submitting and revising

- Frances M. Clarke and Rebecca Jo Plant, "No Minor Matter: Underage Soldiers and the Nationalization of Habeas Corpus in the Nineteenth-Century U.S." and cover letter (submitted to *Law and History Review* in April 2016)

- First set of readers reports (received August 2016)
- Second submission (skim over, identifying changes) and cover letter (November 2016)
- Second set of readers' reports (February 2017)
- Final version: Frances M. Clarke and Rebecca Jo Plant, "No Minor Matter: Underage Soldiers, Parents, and the Nationalization of Habeas Corpus in Civil War America" *Law and History Review* vol. 35, no. 4 (November 2017). (skim over, identifying changes)

*How did we initially present our submission to the editor? What are the major changes between the first and the final version? Why is the title different? To what extent did Frances and I address the readers' criticism/suggestions, and to what extent did we choose **not** to address their critiques? Does anything surprise you about set of documents; if so, what?*

Week 9, November 25: Workshopping prospectuses

- Joli Jensen, *Write No Matter What*, chaps 1-16

Week 10, December 4: Workshopping prospectuses

- Joli Jensen, *Write No Matter What*, chaps. 17-28

Prospectus due in my box on December 11

Potentially helpful links and resources

- "How to Write a Research Article for the American Archivist" (dropbox)
- "Publishing an Article: Why and Where" (dropbox)