

DEVIL IN THE DETAILS: MICROHISTORY & HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

FYS 100-28

Spring Semester 2016

Instructor: Douglas Winiarski

Course Meeting Times: TR 12:00–1:15

Location: GOTW C200

Email: dwiniars@richmond.edu

Cell Phone: (804) 683-3152 (emergencies only please!)

Office Hours: by appointment



Witches and heretics, religious prophets and confidence men, Indian captives and murdering mothers, cat massacres and slave conspiracies: these are the subjects of “microhistory,” a distinctive approach to the study of the past that seeks to reveal broader forces of historical change through detailed stories of obscure individuals and unusual events. In this First-Year Seminar, students learn how scholars research and write these gripping historical narratives. We will probe beneath the grand narratives of conventional history textbooks and develop theoretical and methodological competencies in the subfield of cultural history. The seminar will provide opportunities to read and analyze a challenging array of primary texts ranging from diaries and letters to court records and tax lists. Toward the end of the semester, students will research and write their own microhistories based on newspaper reports and other documents that chronicle the travels of an obscure nineteenth-century religious sect known as the Vermont Pilgrims.

FYS Requirements

“Devil in the Details” is designed to meet the general guidelines of the University of Richmond’s First-Year Seminar (FYS) program. I strongly encourage all students to familiarize themselves with the FYS program during the first week of the semester. A link to the FYS website is available on Blackboard.

Course Procedures & Requirements

“Devil in the Details” has no prerequisites and assumes no prior knowledge of the topic. Our bi-weekly meetings will consist of short presentations and seminar-style discussions. Keeping up with the scheduled reading assignments is crucial. I expect that you will spend *an average of two to three hours preparing for each class* and roughly *two hours per page when writing papers for class*. The course writing assignments are described in greater detail on our Blackboard website.

Attendance is mandatory. I will evaluate the quality of your participation in each of our class discussions using the following scale: 5 (excellent: multiple informed/insightful comments), 3 (good: moderate contributions), 1 (poor: minimal participation), and 0 (incomplete/absent). *Please do not email me to explain class absences other than those for approved University of Richmond events/activities.*

I expect all students to annotate or take notes on all of our readings. We will work to develop your critical reading skills early in the semester. I will occasionally collect, review, and evaluate your annotations/notes during the semester using the same 0, 1, 3, 5 scale described above. The combined score of these unannounced critical reading check-ins and other occasional short written homework assignments will count 5 percent toward your final grade.

Final grades for the semester will be calculated as follows:

Class Attendance & Participation	20%
Class Preparation, Homework, & Reading Annotations	5%
Great Awakening Visions Paper (5–7 pages)	15%
NEHH Transcription Project	5%
Microhistory Critical Review Essay (5–7 pages)	15%
Microhistory Presentation	10%
Research Paper (10–12 pages)	30%

Required Texts

The following books are available for purchase in the campus bookstore or from major internet distributors such as Amazon and Barnes and Noble.

1. Godbeer, Richard. *Escaping Salem: The Other Witch Hunt of 1692*, New Narratives in American History. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
2. Hacker, Diana T. *A Pocket Style Manual*, fifth ed. Boston: Bedford Books, 2010.

In addition, we will be reading a series of primary texts and scholarly articles that are available in one of three formats: (1) online; (2) through one of Boatwright Library's subscription databases; or (3) PDF files stored on our Blackboard website. *You will need to print copies of these texts and bring them with you to class.*

Library Research Sessions

Throughout the semester, we will be working to enhance your information literacy/library research skills. These skills will be developed through a series of library research sessions with our designated FYS librarian, Carol Wittig. The library research sessions will introduce you to the resources available at the UR Libraries, including the library website, catalog, and research databases. The sessions will also discuss ways to cite and evaluate your information.

Disability Accommodations

Students with disabilities for whom accommodations have been formally granted by a University of Richmond Disability Advisor must present a copy of their "Disability Accommodation Notice" to each professor within the first week of the academic term. Accommodations must be negotiated in advance for each scheduled course assignment. Students should plan to consult with me at least one week prior to any scheduled deadline.

Grade Scale

Final grades will be assigned based on the following grade scale: A+ (98–100); A (93–97); A- (91–92); B+ (88–90); B (83–87); B- (81–82); C+ (78–80); C (73–77); C- (71–72); D+ (68–70); D (63–67); D- (61–62); F (60 and below).

Cell Phones & Other Devices

While in class, please disable all cell phones and other communication devices. In addition, I ask that all students refrain from using laptop computers, tablets, and other electronic devices, which create distractions that disrupt the flow of our seminar discussions.

Deadlines

- February 9: Great Awakening Visions Paper due in class.
- February 25–March 3: Microhistory Presentations.
- March 3: Microhistory Critical Review Essay due in my office mailbox before 5:00 P.M.
- March 29: NEHH Transcription Project due in class.
- April 28: Research Paper due in my office mailbox before 5:00 P.M.

Class Schedule

What is Microhistory?

- Tuesday, January 12** **Introduction to the Course**
- Thursday, January 14** **A New Englander's Vision of Heaven & Hell (1742)**
- Winiarski, "Souls Filled with Ravishing Transport," pp. 43–46 (Blackboard). Note: be sure to locate of this article on the JSTOR database. Come to class with the six-digit stable URL number. For a complete citation, see the Blackboard Bibliography (below).
 - Examine original images of the Wheelock Vision Manuscript (Blackboard).
- Tuesday, January 19** **Dreams, Trances & Visions in the Great Awakening**
- Gillett, ed., "Diary of Rev. Jacob Eliot," pp. 33–35 (Blackboard).
 - Tracy, "Extracts from the Private Journal of the Rev. Ebenezer Parkman," pp. 204–212 (Blackboard).
 - Kidder, ed., "Diary of Nicholas Gilman," pp. 237–269 (Blackboard).
- Thursday, January 21** **Research Lab w/Carol Wittig (Early American Imprints & Early American Newspapers)**
- CLASS MEETS IN BOATWRIGHT LIBRARY, ROOM B-26.
- Tuesday, January 26** **Microhistory/Macrohistory I**
- Harrell, et al., "Great Awakening and Its Consequences," pp. 119–125 (Blackboard).
 - Marini, "Great Awakening," pp. 775–798 (Blackboard).
- Thursday, January 28** **Microhistory/Macrohistory II**
- Winiarski, "Souls Filled with Ravishing Transport," pp. 3–42 (Blackboard).

Theorizing Microhistories

- Tuesday, February 2** **Research Lab w/Carol Wittig (Microhistories)**
- CLASS MEETS IN BOATWRIGHT LIBRARY, ROOM B-26.
- Thursday, February 4** **Introduction to Cultural History**
- Geertz, "Thick Description," pp. 3–30 (Blackboard).
 - Begin reading selected microhistory.

Tuesday, February 9

Research Lab w/Carol Wittig (Scholarly Book Reviews)

- Continue reading selected microhistory.

CLASS MEETS IN BOATWRIGHT LIBRARY, ROOM B-26.
GREAT AWAKENING VISIONS PAPER DUE IN CLASS.

Thursday, February 11

Theorizing Microhistories I

- Lepore, “Historians Who Love Too Much,” 129–144 (Blackboard). Note: locate this article on the JSTOR database. Bring the six-digit stable URL number to class. For a complete citation, see the Blackboard Bibliography on the paper syllabus.
- Continue reading selected microhistory.

Tuesday, February 16

Theorizing Microhistories II

- Brown, “Microhistory and the Post-Modern Challenge,” pp. 1–20 (Blackboard). Note: be sure to locate this article on the JSTOR database. Come to class with the six-digit stable URL number. For a complete citation, see the Blackboard Bibliography (below).
- Continue reading selected microhistory.

Thursday, February 18

Archival Sources I

- Winiarski, “Religious Experiences in New England,” pp. 209–232 (Blackboard).
- Select and read one of the church admission “relations” from Hopkinton, Massachusetts (Blackboard).
- Continue reading selected microhistory.

Tuesday, February 23

Archival Sources II

- Transcribe one of the Hopkinton relations.
- Continue reading selected microhistory.

Tuesday, February 23

Special Evening Lecture by Dr. Erik Seeman

BROWN-ALLEY ROOM, WEINSTEIN HALL, 5:00 P.M.

Thursday, February 25

Student Presentations

Tuesday, March 1

Student Presentations

Thursday, March 3

Student Presentations

MICROHISTORY CRITICAL REVIEW ESSAY DUE IN MY OFFICE MAILBOX BEFORE 5:00 P.M.

Tuesday, March 8

No Class—Spring Break

Thursday, March 10

No Class—Spring Break

Constructing Microhistories

- Tuesday, March 15** **William Perkins on How to Prosecute a Witch**
- Breslaw, ed., “On the Identification of a Witch,” pp. 369–374 (Blackboard).
- Thursday, March 17** **The Stamford-Fairfield Witch-hunt (1692–1693)**
- Hall, ed., “Stamford-Fairfield Witch-hunt,” pp. 315–354 (Blackboard).
- Tuesday, March 22** **Narrating the Fairfield Witch-hunt I**
- Godbeer, *Escaping Salem*, pp. 1–69.
- Thursday, March 24** **Narrating the Fairfield Witch-hunt II**
- Godbeer, *Escaping Salem*, pp. 70–126.
- Tuesday, March 29** **Analyzing the Fairfield Witch-hunt w/Richard Godbeer**
- Godbeer, *Escaping Salem*, pp. 127–171.

NEHH TRANSCRIPTION PROJECT DUE IN CLASS.

Do-It-Yourself Microhistory

- Thursday, March 31** **The Vermont Pilgrims (1816–1817)**
- Ham, “Prophet and the Mummyjums,” pp. 290–299 (Blackboard). Note: locate this article on the JSTOR database. Bring the six-digit stable URL number to class. For a complete citation, see the Blackboard Bibliography (below).
- Tuesday, April 5** **Research Lab w/Carol Wittig (Primary Texts)**
- CLASS MEETS IN BOATWRIGHT LIBRARY, SEMINAR ROOM #1.
- Thursday, April 7** **Selected Reports of the Vermont Pilgrims**
- Readings T.B.A.
- Tuesday, April 12** **Individual Research Meetings**
- Thursday, April 14** **Research Lab w/Carol Wittig (Secondary Literature)**
- CLASS MEETS IN BOATWRIGHT LIBRARY, SEMINAR ROOM #1.
- Tuesday, April 19** **The Vermont Pilgrims in Context**
- Hatch, *Democratization of American Christianity*, pp. 17–46, 170–179 (Blackboard).

Thursday, April 21

Wrapping Up & Course Evaluations

RESEARCH PAPER DUE IN MY OFFICE MAILBOX BEFORE 5:00 P.M., TUESDAY, APRIL 28.

Blackboard Bibliography

- Breslaw, Elaine G., ed. "On the Identification of a Witch." In *Witches of the Atlantic World: A Historical Reader & Primary Sourcebook*, pp. 369–374. New York: New York University Press, 2000.
- Brown, Richard D. "Microhistory and the Post-Modern Challenge." *Journal of the Early Republic* 23 (2003): 1–20.
- Geertz, Clifford. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture." In *The Interpretation of Cultures*, pp. 3–30. New York: Basic Books, 1973.
- Gillett, E. H., ed. "Diary of the Rev. Jacob Eliot." *Historical Magazine and Notes and Queries, Concerning the Antiquities, History and Biography of America*, 2d ser., 5 (1869): 33–35.
- Hall, David D., ed. "The Stamford-Fairfield Witch-hunt." In *Witch-Hunting in Seventeenth-Century New England: A Documentary History, 1638–1693*, second ed., pp. 315–354. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1999.
- Ham, F. Gerald. "The Prophet and the Mummyjums: Isaac Bullard and the Vermont Pilgrims of 1817," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 56 (1973): 290–299.
- Harrell, David Edwin, Jr., Edwin S. Gaustad, John B. Boles, Sally Foreman Griffith, Randall M. Miller, and Randall B. Woods. "The Great Awakening and Its Consequences." In *Unto a Good Land: A History of the American People*, pp. 119–125. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2006.
- Hatch, Nathan O. *The Democratization of American Christianity*, pp. 17–46, 179–179. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989.
- Kidder, William, ed. "The Diary of Nicholas Gilman," pp. 237–269. M.A. thesis, University of New Hampshire, 1967.
- Lepore, Jill. "Historians Who Love Too Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography." *Journal of American History* 88 (2001): 129–144.
- Marini, Stephen A. "The Great Awakening." In Charles H. Lippy and Peter W. Williams, ed., *Encyclopedia of the American Religious Experience*, vol. 1, pp. 775–798. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1987.
- Tracy, Joseph, ed. "Extracts from the Private Journal of the Rev. Ebenezer Parkman." In *The Great Awakening: A History of the Revival of Religion in the Time of Edwards and Whitefield*, pp. 204–212. 1842; reprint, Carlisle, Pa.: Banner of Truth, 1976.
- Winiarski, Douglas L. "Religious Experience in New England." In Amanda Porterfield, ed., *A People's History of Christianity*, vol. 6, *Modern Christianity to 1900*, pp. 209–232. Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 2007.
- Winiarski, Douglas L. "Souls Filled with Ravishing Transport: Heavenly Visions and the Radical Awakening in New England." *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 61 (2004): 3–46.