

## CAPSTONE SEMINAR

## THE GILDED AGE

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**WELCOME TO SENIOR SEMINAR**

This class will lead students through the process of formulating an effective research question, developing a research strategy, understanding and interpreting primary sources, situating oneself within existing historical scholarship, and creating a polished research paper. Students will develop an online portfolio of their work in the History major and present themselves professionally in preparation for their chosen post-graduate pursuits.

Each professor's capstone seminar is individualized. My version of

HI 460 for Spring 2020 considers the fraught and turbulent period from the end of the Civil War to the early twentieth century: an era of rising American industrial and military fortunes; stunning racial, gender, and economic inequality; and blossoming American multicultural arts and literature. Find out: what lies just under the surface of the Gilded Age? 🐷



**Course Details (3 credits)**  
**Blended Course. Meets**  
**Mondays 5-8 on dates listed**  
**Room: Sullivan 318**

**PreReqs: Successful**  
**completion of Historians**  
**Craft + EN 102 or EN 250**  
**Fulfills your LASC capstone**  
**and History major capstone**

**Instructor**  
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**Office Hours: M 1:30-3:30,**  
**Th 1-2 and by appt**

# RESOURCES



## e-Portfolio

If you took Historian's Craft here at Worcester State, you may have begun an e-portfolio (if not, I'll help you set one up). In this course you will use the Blackboard Portfolio tool to organize and present a coherent, polished portfolio of your work in the major. Why? You will find it handy to have a permanent collection of your best work once you graduate, whether you choose to make it public or not.

## Research Tools

Historians increasingly use digital tools for research collection, management, communication and scholarship. This is true for all historians across the discipline,

as many sources are now either “born digital” or accessed online in digital formats. Especially if you are planning to continue in a history-related field like teaching or public history, or if you are planning to go to graduate school, you will appreciate knowing how to **use digital research tools** like Zotero, Mendeley, Tropy, Endnote, or Dropbox, and how to **explore** the world of historical scholarship using electronic resource capabilities. Check out the world of History Twitter with the hashtag #twitterstorians.

## Course Readings

Make sure you have a recent edition (8th or 9th) of Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (Univ of Chicago Press).

Many works published during the Gilded Age are in the public domain, making online access to them possible in multiple formats. All of the course's additional readings will be available online, as PDFs on Blackboard, linked to the course website, or located in WSU's library resources.

In the first weeks of class, you will also need a college-level U.S. history textbook that covers the period from the end of the Civil War until World War I. You are not required to buy one. If you don't own one or can't borrow from a friend, use the free American Yawp textbook online

([www.americanyawp.com](http://www.americanyawp.com)). 🐼

## Important Course Policies

**TECHNOLOGY ETIQUETTE:** Do bring laptops or devices for in-class use when we meet face to face. Please stay on task with your devices, refraining from web-surfing or social media use. No cell phone use during class.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** All papers and other assignments for this class must be your own work, and your own writing.

- When and where you employ the work of others, you need to cite your sources.
- Papers that are clear cases of plagiarism – not inadvertent errors in citation or footnoting – are insults to me and to the class. Plagiarism is also a serious

academic offense. Some examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to: copying, or only slightly rephrasing, passages out of books, magazines, journals, and/or web sites and submitting them as your own work; buying papers off the internet; or submitting a friend's paper instead of your own.

- If you submit a plagiarized paper, you will automatically receive a failing grade (an “E”) for the course.

**ACCESSIBILITY:** All accommodations requested through Student Accessibility Services will be honored. If you see ways the course could better accommodate a diversity of students, please let me know. I am committed to providing a learning environment in which all students can succeed.

# REQUIREMENTS

## Course Requirements and Grading

A capstone course is designed to help you synthesize and integrate learning in the major and your college education; demonstrate mastery of historical thinking and the student learning outcomes of the history major; and facilitate your transition from WSU to your chosen post-graduate plans. The culminating learning experience of your history degree is a senior-level research seminar focused on a deep, narrow topic in which you produce



- a semester-long inquiry resulting in a substantive original research paper adhering to the scholarly conventions of the discipline of history
- a polished portfolio of your work in the History major as an example of professional self-presentation.

**Successful completion of this class is a graduation requirement.**

**Class Participation and Discussion (35% of final grade)** will be critical to your learning in this course. Research and writing are usually solitary, even idiosyncratic, endeavors in the humanities. Probably most of your experience with research papers has been a hidden (and perhaps, shockingly close-to-deadline) process with a public product turned in (and too often then simply forgotten about) at the end of a semester. **This term will be different:** we will be very focused on making the iterative **PROCESS** of research and writing more transparent and reflecting on it both individually and collectively. Your individual research inquiry will benefit from deep engagement with our common texts and with the give-and-take of seminar discussion throughout the semester, as well as from responding to posted discussion board prompts to help you reflect on and document your growth in research skills.

**Breakdown:** (15 points class attendance & participation) + (20 points discussion board) = **35 points**

**Professional Development (15%)** is an integral part of any capstone course, no matter what your post-graduate plans. History is a degree that leads to a wide range of fields and careers, and we want you to leave Worcester State with the ability to articulate your strengths and interests, having crafted a practical toolkit of artifacts (portfolio, writing samples, CV, and personal statement) that can be adapted for your own needs as you prepare for graduation and beyond.

**Breakdown:** (5 points CV & Career Plan) + (10 points Portfolio) = **15 points**



**The Research Paper (50%)** is the main product and work of this semester for you. We'll stage that process in a highly structured way with lots of intermediate work including proposal, drafts and revision. This may be different from the way you've worked on large research projects in the past, but this scaffolding is designed to maximize your chances of success with the research and writing process – which is, let's face it, very challenging intellectual work which needs a lot of time and support. It cannot be rushed and it cannot be postponed until the last few weeks of the term.

**Breakdown:** (5 points Timeline) + (5 points Source Analysis) + (10 points Skeleton Draft and Conference) + (10 points Final Draft) + (20 points Revised Draft) = **50 points**



# CRITERIA AND SLO'S

## Working Alongside Graduate Students

In this course you will be combined with a graduate research class (HI 914 The Gilded Age). As you're working on your capstone projects, the graduate students are researching and writing about their own Gilded Age topics. Their expertise and experience will no doubt inform your efforts, and they have much to learn from you as well. Grading criteria for the two courses are kept separate and reflect expectations appropriate to the two course levels.

## Grading Schema

*\* Discussion Board grade is 5 posts x 4 points = 20. The boards on Jan 13 and Feb 17 are required. I will post 8 prompts, and you'll need to complete 5 of them throughout the semester.*

Discussion Board*	20
Attendance & Participation	15
Timeline (Jan 20)	5
Source Analysis (Feb 24)	5
Skeleton Draft + Conference (Mar 9 & 23)	10
Final Draft (Apr 13)	10
CV / Career Plan (Apr 27)	5
Revised Draft (May 4)	20
Portfolio (May 11)	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

## STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

LASC Capstone Outcome	How We Fulfill it in This Course
Communicate effectively orally & in writing	Students will demonstrate effective written communication through an intensive semester-long research project design and the successful completion of a substantive original research paper. Students will also effectively communicate their professional goals and skills by creating an academic portfolio and writing a CV. Students will use effective oral communication because the course is a small seminar heavily reliant upon class discussion, presentation, and peer review.
Apply skills in critical thinking	The course is organized around a semester-long original research project. Students will apply critical thinking skills in the selection, location, evaluation, and presentation of historical sources; in originating a persuasive, evidence-based thesis, and in crafting a high-quality paper that demonstrates strong historical thinking.
Understand how scholars in various disciplines approach problems and construct knowledge	Students will identify, distinguish among, and use different schools of historiographical thought. Students will model how historians create knowledge and will develop that model on the scale of a semester-long research project. Students will also correctly use the writing, citation, and other disciplinary conventions of scholarly writing in the field of history. Since historians work primarily through the analysis of sources and the creation of historical texts, these elements of the course will provide students opportunities to practice the "habits of mind" of successful historians.
Make connections across courses and disciplines	Students will synthesize knowledge and skills from across their coursework. Students are invited to develop meaningful connections from courses taken in their major and throughout their previous years at college; in addition, we recognize and even encourage that a capstone research project is may be connected to scholarly interests and intellectual problems that predate the seminar itself.

# SYLLABUS

*Subject to change, please check the website for updates*

#	DATE	WHAT WE'RE DOING	WHAT TO BRING	WHAT'S DUE
<b>OL = Online week, no class meeting in person (shaded gray) / F2F = Face to Face, meets in person 5 - 8 pm</b>				
1	<b>M 1/13 OL</b>	Introductions (Online)		<b>OL Intro (Disc Board)</b>
2	<b>M 1/20 OL</b>	Defining the Gilded Age (Online)		<b>Timeline Contributions</b>
3	M 1/27 F2F	From Topic to Research Question	Speaking notes for your presentation	<b>Presentation Day</b>
4	M 2/3 F2F	Lecture Day 1		
5	M 2/10 F2F	Research Workshop	Laptop	
6	<b>M 2/17 OL</b>	Arts, Material Culture, and Visual Sources		<b>TOPIC IDEA (Disc Board)</b>
7	M 2/24 F2F	Literature of the Gilded Age		<b>Source Analysis</b>
8	M 3/2 F2F	Historiography: How and Why		
9	M 3/9 F2F	Lecture Day 2		<b>SKELETON DRAFT</b>
<b>M 3/16 No class, Spring Break</b>				
10	M 3/23 F2F	Individual Conferences		
11	<b>M 3/30 OL</b>	Work Week - no class meeting, keep writing		
12	M 4/6 F2F	Writing Workshop	Bring printed draft to class to work on	
13	M 4/13 F2F	Film Day		<b>FINAL DRAFT</b>
14	<b>M 4/20 OL</b>	Work Week - no class meeting, keep revising		
15	M 4/27 F2F	CV and Professional Development		<b>CV and Career Plan</b>
16	M 5/4 F2F	Revisiting Our Timelines		<b>REVISED DRAFT</b>
	M 5/11 F2F	Research Showcase Mini-Conference		<b>Completed Portfolio</b>



NEW YORK CITY.—THE RAILROAD STRIKE EXCITEMENT—WORKINGMEN'S MASS MEETING IN TOMPINS SQUARE, WEDNESDAY EVENING, JULY 25TH.