

HTS 2101: Research Methods

Fall 2009

Tu/Thur, 9:35-10:55am

Army Building, Room 2

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Course Overview:

This course is designed for HTS majors. It is intended to provide you with the analytical skills you will need to excel in our program. We will focus on three basic skill-sets: Reading, Research, and Writing.

First, you will learn to read historical and sociological scholarship at a high level. This process is not as simple as it sounds. As an HTS Major, you will read an enormous amount -- mostly scholarly articles and books. You will have to read efficiently to do well in HTS.

Second, you will learn to do historical research. This is the fun part. Doing research is literally creating knowledge, and everyone in HTS can (and must) learn to do this. You will address questions faced by all students of history. How do I choose a research topic? How do I review the scholarly literature on that topic? How can I find and use appropriate sources for my project? How do I turn my research notes into a research paper?

Obviously, your research findings must be communicated -- usually in the form of a research paper. Hence, the final focus of this course. You will work hard to improve your ability to write clear and convincing papers. As an HTS major, you will write many papers. These papers will vary in length -- 5 pages, 10 pages, 30 pages -- depending on the course and the purpose of your work. Whatever its length, an effective paper must be thoughtfully conceived, carefully organized, and clearly written. This course will cover all essential aspects of effective scholarly writing, including the use of footnotes.

All HTS majors should know the Georgia Tech library like the backs of their hands. There is a wealth of information waiting to be discovered, and *not* just online! In this class, you will spend a substantial amount of time in the library.

The course will be more of a "workshop" course than a lecture course. We will emphasize practical skills, not theory. Prepare to be busy with meaningful projects.

Requirements:

There will be several criteria for the grade in this course: class attendance and workshop projects, four advanced research projects, and two brief research papers. In fulfilling these requirements, students are expected to adhere to the **Georgia Tech Honor Code** (see www.deanofstudents.gatech.edu/Honor/). We are happy to accommodate students requiring any special considerations due to a disability. You might also contact the **ADAPTS Office** (see www.adapts.gatech.edu/index2.htm).

Attendance and In-class Workshop Projects (20%)

Throughout the semester, you will complete a variety of in-class projects. These will be relatively short projects, and we will discuss them more as the semester develops.

Advanced Research Projects (40%)

You will also complete four advanced research projects that will further develop your skills as a researcher. Each of these projects will use a different kind of research: magazines and newspapers, U.S. census materials, Congressional documents, and oral history interview. We may add an additional project later in the semester.

Brief Research Papers (40%)

Finally, you will write two brief research papers. These papers are intended to hone your writing skills and raise your awareness of writing style, the structure of a research paper, the logic of research and analysis, as well as the proper ways of citing sources.

Summary of grade breakdown:	Attendance/Workshops.....	20%
	Adv. Research Projects.....	40%
	<u>Brief Research Papers.....</u>	<u>40%</u>
	Total.....	100%

Readings:

All books are available at the **Engineer's Bookstore** at 748 Marietta Street. Additional readings will be posted on T-Square.

Required Books:

Benjamin, A Guide to Historical Research.

Strunk and White, Elements of Style.

Best, Damned Lies and Statistics.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

PART I: THINKING ABOUT RESEARCH

Week 1 Aug. 18, 20

Course Introduction

Week 2 Aug. 25, 27

Project: *Life* and Newspapers

Week 3 Sept. 1, 3

Resources at Georgia Tech: Library and Archives

Week 4 Sept 8, 10
 Asking Questions and Defining Terms
 Damn Lies and Statistics

PART II: DOING RESEARCH

Week 5 Sept 15, 17
 Census Data

Week 6 Sept 22, 24
 Government Documents
 Congressional Hearings and Roll Call Votes

Week 7 Sept 29, Oct. 1
 Oral History

Week 8 Thursday only: Oct 6
 Archival Research

Week 9 Oct 13, 15
 Archival Research (Using the Internet)

Week 10 Oct 20, 22
 To Be Announced (Work Week)

Week 11 Oct 27, 29
 Oral History (Continued)
 Presentations on Oral History Research

PART III: WRITING RESEARCH

Week 12 Nov 3, 5
 Grammar and Structure

Week 13 Nov 10, 12
 Logic

Week 14 Nov 17, 19
 Citations

Week 15 Nov. 24, 26
 Thanksgiving: No Class

Week 16 Dec 1, 3
 Semester Wrap-Up