You have a major overriding goal in this course: the production of a formal paper of approximately 20-22 pages, excluding endnotes and bibliographical essay. The paper will be based upon original research and primary sources. That will be a formidable task and will take a good deal of work, some of which is bound to be frustrating, especially at the beginning. But the overall process should also be a positive and engaging challenge – perhaps even fun – and should result in a piece of scholarship you can be proud of. The primary goal is to let you experience the process of creating a genuine piece of original history on your own.

In this course you will:

* gain experience in how to find and to use appropriate source materials
* gain experience in assessing and analyzing source materials and situating those materials in larger contexts
* gain experience in how to construct long research papers (including conceptualization, organization, the logical flow of arguments, and the shaping of narratives)
* gain experience in revising and editing your writing
* gain experience in presenting complicated material to others

Those are all skills that will serve you well for the rest of your lives.

All UO policies regarding academic misconduct are applicable to this course, including especially those related to plagiarism or accepting the work of others as your own.

In many respects, grading is secondary in this course. But for the purpose of grading, your paper will constitute 80% of your final grade, and the other 20% will be a function of your reports on original sources, your class participation, your overall research efforts, and your bibliographical essay.

One final note: This is the only five-credit undergraduate course that the department offers and it represents the capstone of your History major. You should, therefore, be prepared to spend at least 25% more time and effort on this course than you have on any other course you have ever taken. You will probably want to spend even more time than that, so you can be sure to produce
something you will be proud to remember as the culmination of your undergraduate years.

Syllabus:

Sep 29: The first part of this class session will introduce you to the basic ground rules and expectations for this course.

The second part of this class session will introduce you to some of the UO’s most important original resources in this field. Historians cannot fabricate their accounts of the past; they must base them upon actual materials. Consequently, an important part of being a good historian is finding – and recognizing – sources upon which a good piece of history might be written. During the week to come, you will devote a minimum of nine hours to one or more of those primary sources (chosen by you), and you will report to the class next week on what you find. Some of you will be looking at newspapers, others will be surveying state government reports, magazines, medical journals, or similar materials. Each of you will prepare a brief written summary of what you found in your sources (no more than three pages), so keep good notes about everything you looked at. That summary will be posted to Canvas so other members of the class can also gain from what you discovered. On October 6, you will offer a brief oral report on the highlights of what you found.

Oct 06: Reports on primary sources:

In this session you will share with fellow students the results of your exploration in the primary sources you chose to examine. What materials did you find that might have promise as the basis for a paper? How rich (or how poor) were the sources you looked at? Even if you had nothing else available to you, what kinds of papers could be written from your sources? We will also go over some tips for finding good paper topics.

Oct 13: Selection of paper topics:

Each student will come to class with a written paper proposal. This proposal may take the form of an outline, a short series of paragraphs, or a formal statement. You will present your plans to the class, and the other students will offer critiques, hints, and ideas of their own to help you toward the structure of a good paper. You will turn in your written paper proposal to Professor Mohr, who must approve it (unless additional discussions or reconsiderations prove
appropriate, approval will normally be given at the time of presentation).

Oct 20, Oct 27, and Nov 03: No class sessions those weeks; you will be working independently:

During those three weeks, each of you separately will be required to have a formal tutorial with Professor Mohr to discuss your progress. You may consult with him as often as you wish, but you must do so at least once during that two-week period or suffer a mandatory reduction of one full letter grade on your final paper. Appointments will be scheduled individually.

Nov 10: Oral progress reports delivered in class:

This session will feature progress reports regarding your research and writing. It will provide a final chance to share impressions, ideas, and suggestions as a group prior to the “big push” to finish your individual papers in the final weeks of the quarter. We will also review the “tips” on writing and talk about some general guidelines appropriate to papers like the ones you are writing.

Nov 17 and Nov 24: No class session those two weeks; you should be finishing up your paper

During this period, Professor Mohr will be available for as many independent meetings about your papers as you wish. Drafts will not be required, but Professor Mohr is willing to go over drafts (or part-drafts or draft sections), and get back to you with comments, provided you submit your drafts by Nov 17.

Dec 01: PAPERS DUE. Your papers, in final form, are due at the beginning of class. In addition to your major paper, you will also turn in a “bibliographical essay” of no more than three (3) pages. The essay will identify and assess the principal materials upon which your paper was based and relate any “war stories” you have to tell about the research process. This session will be devoted to a general wrap-up discussion of your experiences with this exercise and of what each of you found.