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<b>Name</b>	James Wadsworth
<b>Department</b>	History
<b>What course are you proposing to collaborate on?</b>	GenH 100
<b>In which semester would you be teaching this class?</b>	
<b>Project Title</b>	Personalizing Historical Research for GenH 100 Students

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**Project Proposal (250–500 words)**

One of the primary goals of the GenH 100 course is to introduce students to historical research skills and methodology. In my GenH 100 courses, I seek to convince students that history matters by studying case studies where history has been disputed and challenged. We explore the questions of who owns history, what is a historian, and what do historians do. I have found that the most challenging aspect of this course for students is learning how to do research. And the central problem with doing research is that students lack motivation and/or interest enough in the research topics they choose from their very limited historical experience.

In an attempt to help them personalize history and their research and to make it more relevant to them, I would like to create a new research model that emphasizes their own personal histories. This research would have two main components. First, each student would perform genealogical research on their own ancestors. This would require them to learn how to use online search engines, to read primary source material, to keep track of their research, take notes, and to utilize a wide range of primary sources including oral histories, vital records, census records, immigration records, military records, probate records, land records, passenger lists, etc. I will create a research log and notebook requirement in which they will keep a close record of their research experience. Once they have done the best they can to trace their ancestors to the fourth or fifth generation (or longer if they can and wish to), they will meet with me to decide upon a larger research topic and question. This is the second major portion of the research. We will use the genealogical investigations to identify a viable research topic that is relevant to them and their families. For instance, if a student discovers that her/his ancestor participated in labor riots in Boston, s/he could choose to research those riots in greater detail and insert her/his ancestor into that story where possible.

The students will then be required to identify primary sources relevant to the question in addition to what they have already found and to consult secondary sources to help them answer their research question. In conjunction with the case studies which we will explore in class, I hope this more personalized approach to historical research will help motivate students to put forth their best efforts, train them in the fine details of historical research, expand their understanding of history, make history more relevant to their everyday lives, and enhance their interest in the past.

To accomplish all this, I would like the assistance of the reference and research librarians to help me construct a viable series of assignments and to create a webpage or a site on the library webpage that centrally locates all the genealogical research engines available to Stonehill students.

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## Course Description/Syllabus

Here is the Syllabus for last semester that I will be revising over this summer to accommodate the new research approach.

GH 100

Spring 2011

Critical Encounters in History

“To be ignorant of what happened before you were born is to remain a child always.” Cicero

“I used to think that ignorance of history meant only a lack of cultivation and a loss of pleasure. Now I am sure that such ignorance impairs our judgment by impairing our understanding, by depriving us of standards or the power of contrast, and the right to estimate. We can know nothing of any nation unless we know its history.”

Agnes Repplier.

Time: TTH 8:30–9:45; 10:00–11:15

Location: Duffy 206

Professor: James E. Wadsworth

Email address: [jwadsworth@stonehill.edu](mailto:jwadsworth@stonehill.edu)

Office: Duffy 277

Office Hours: TTH 11:30–1:00

Office Phone: 508–565–1281

Note: This syllabus is subject to revision by the instructor.

Please make sure that your Stonehill Email is functioning. I will use email to contact you regarding any changes in the syllabus, class scheduling or any other announcements.

### Attendance Policy:

You are expected to attend every scheduled class. Be advised that this is primarily a discussion-oriented class. If you miss class, you will fall seriously behind. You should also keep in mind that you have to be present (both physically and mentally) to receive participation points that count towards your final grade.

### Late Assignment/Exam Policy:

I expect all assignments to be turned in on time. I DO NOT accept late or make-up assignments and I DO NOT give early or make-up exams! Please think ahead and avoid unnecessary difficulty. If you fail to turn in any single assignment, you will fail the course!

### Academic Honor Code and Academic Integrity Policy:

I expect you to be familiar with the Academic Honor Code and Academic Integrity Policy found in the Hill Book. Cheating, or anything like unto it, will be dealt with in accordance with the policy of Stonehill College. I expect you to behave with honesty and maturity. Besides being cowardly and foolish, cheating compromises your integrity, diminishing your character, robs you of knowledge, and carries very severe academic consequences. Cheating can ruin your academic career. This notice is posted to provide due warning to those foolish few who may believe that cheating is the way to get ahead. Should you have any questions please contact me.

Grading Policy  
Prospectus 50  
Summary of Paper 100  
Bibliography-- 50  
First Exam 200  
Second Exam 200  
Term Paper 200  
Oral Presentation 50  
Class Participation 100

Total Possible: 950

The instructor reserves the right to give pop quizzes in the event that the students are unprepared for class discussion. Much of the learning that you will acquire in this course will occur outside of class as you read the material, prepare for your group presentations, complete your assignments, and research and write your term paper and exams. All of this will require your constant attention. Please schedule your time carefully and constantly check the syllabus so that you know what is coming up.

Be advised that the criteria for grading in this course is rigorous. An "A" really represents excellence above and beyond the call of duty. A "B" means that you have generally met expectations and shown consistent effort. A "C" means that you gave the assignment some effort, but struggled to meet expectations. A "D" means that despite the effort you may have put into the assignment, your work needs more careful attention and is not up to the standard of college level work. Please read the handout on the criteria for grading written assignments very carefully.

#### Course Description and Objectives:

This course has three main objectives. First, it explores the questions, "What is history?," "What is a historian?," and "Who owns history?" by looking at several historical case studies. Each case study represents important historical moments when large groups of people have struggled over historical memories and various and competing versions of historical understanding and interpretation have politicized history and thrown open the flood gates of controversy. I hope to convince you that history is more than just one darn thing after another and that history matters.

Another emphasis of the course is to introduce you to historical methodology and to help you develop your research skills. This includes learning to construct good research questions, developing an understanding of primary and secondary sources and the developing critical thinking and evaluative interpretation of historical sources and details, as well as constructing clear arguments solidly ground in evidence.

The historian's craft is far more than simply finding out what happened--although this is usually the first step. It is really a search for meaning and to comprehend the "why" and "how" of the past. For this reason, the past is subject to continuous reevaluation by each new generation of scholars whose own present suggests, and sometimes requires, new questions and new lines of thought and examination. Interpretations of the past only achieve a certain degree of authority once they have successfully weathered careful examination and continuous questioning.

The last purpose of this course is to help you strengthen your writing skills. To that end we have several out of class written assignments. This course challenges students to raise questions about their own beliefs and values as well as developing the skills historians use to produce history. I hope that you enjoy the ride.

Be advised that this course is not a lecture course. It is primarily a discussion course, although I will lecture occasionally. Current research demonstrates that adult learners learn more readily in an environment of hands-on engagement than in passive absorption. The discussion format requires that students actively engage the material and move towards higher levels of critical thinking. During the discussion I will help you identify the important arguments and the evidence used to support them. You need to pay attention and make note of the issues that I raise in my comments. Rather than provide this information as a lecture in which I do all the work of thinking and organizing the material, I have done so through readings, videos and discussions. This requires the student to work through and think about the information, discover connections, and create informed opinions. This format is far more challenging than a lecture format, both for me and for you. That said, it should be self-evident that if you have not done the reading, you will not be able to follow or contribute to the discussion. Therefore, if you are unwilling to complete the reading assignments and participate in the discussions, you should not stay in this class.

#### Disability Statement

Stonehill College is committed to providing all students equal access to learning opportunities. The Center for Academic Achievement is the campus office that works with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations. Students registered with The Center, who have a letter requesting accommodations, are encouraged to contact the instructor early in the semester. Students who have, or think they may have, a disability (e.g. psychiatric, attentional, learning, vision, hearing, physical, or systemic), are invited to contact The Center for Academic Achievement for a confidential discussion at 508-565-1208.

\*This syllabus is subject to change, if necessary, by the instructor\*

#### Required Texts:

Jim Cullen, *Essaying the Past: How to Read, Write, and Think About History* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009) ISBN 978-1-4051-8279-9

James W. Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong* (NY: Touchstone, 2007)

There is also a Reading Packet available for purchase at the Bookstore.

\*\*\*You should consider all handouts as required reading about which you may be tested.\*\*\*

#### Week 1

#Thurs. Jan. 20 Introduction

#### Week 2

#Tues. Jan. 25 What is History and What is a Historian?

1. Carl Becker, "Everyman His Own Historian," *American Historical Review*, 37, no. 2, (1931) 221-236.
2. Carl Becker, "What Are Historical Facts?" *Western Political Quarterly*, 3, no. 3 (Sept. 1955): 327-340.
3. Cullen, *Essaying the Past*, 1-13

#Thurs. Jan. 27 Who Owns History? Heroification

1. Eric Foner, *Who Owns History? Rethinking the Past in a Changing World* (NY: Hill and Wang, 2002), Preface.

2. Loewen, Lies My Teachers Told Me, 1–30.

3. Cullen, *Essaying the Past*, 14–19.

### Week 3

#Tues. Feb. 1 \*\*\*Meet in Front Lobby of Library for Library tour\*\*\*

1. Cullen, *Essaying the Past*, 20–28.

#Thurs. Fe. 3 *Mystery of the First Americans—Power and the Past* \*\*\*PROSPECTUS DUE\*\*\*

1. Cullen, *Essaying the Past*, 29–45.

### Week 4

Tues. Feb. 8 *The Debate Over Kennewick Man*

1. David Hurst Thomas, *Skull Wars: Kennewick Man, Archaeology and the Battle for Native American Identity* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), pages xix–xxxvii.

3. Fergus M. Bordewich, *Killing the White Man’s Indian: Reinventing Native Americans at the end of the Twentieth Century* (Anchor, 1997), 162–203.

4. Armand Minthorn, “Human Remains Should be Reburied,” in *Kennewick Man: Perspectives on the Ancient One*, eds. Heather Burke, et al. (Walnut Creek, Cal.: Left Coast Press, 2008), 42–43.

#Thurs. Feb. 10 *Columbus: The Man and the Myth*

1. Cullen, *Essaying the Past*, 46–59

### Week 5

Tues. Feb. 15 *Columbus: The Man and the Myth*

1. Loewen, *Lies My Teachers Told Me*, 31–69.

2. Felipe Fernández-Armesto, “The Contexts of Columbus: Myth, Reality and Self-perception,” in *Columbus and the Consequences of 1492*, ed. Anthony Disney (Melbourne: la Trobe University, 1994), 7–19.

#Thurs. Feb. 17 *Myths of Native Americans*

1. Cullen, *Essaying the Past*, 60–68.

### Week 6

Tues. Feb. 22 *Myths of Native Americans*

1. Loewen, *Lies My Teachers Told Me*, 70–134

#Thurs. Feb. 24 *Federal Government, Opportunity, and Progress* \*\*\*BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE\*\*\*

1. Loewen, *Lies My Teachers Told Me*, 203–243, 280–300.

Video clip. *A Class Divided*

### Week 7

#Tues. March 1 *Civil War and Ken Burns*

1. Cullen, *Essaying the Past*, 71–88.

Thurs. March 3 *Civil War and Ken Burns*

1. Leon F. Litwack, “Telling the Story: The Historian, the Filmmaker, and the Civil War,” in *Ken Burns’s the Civil War: Historians Respond* ed. Robert B. Toplin (NY: Oxford Univ. Press, 1996), 119–140.

2. Eric Foner, *Who Owns History? Rethinking the Past in a Changing World* (NY: Hill and Wang, 2002), Chapter 9.

3. Loewen, Lies My Teachers Told Me, 135–203.

Week 8

#Tues. March 8 \*\*\*MID-TERM EXAM\*\*\*

Thurs. March 10 Holocaust on Trial

1. Cullen, *Essaying the Past*, 89–106.

\*\*SPRING BREAK\*\* March 12–20

Week 9

#Tues. March 22 Holocaust on Trial

1. Deborah Lipstadt, *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory* (NY: Plume, 1993), xi–29.

Thurs. March 24 *The Enola Gay and the Atomic Bomb—Hiroshima: Why We Dropped the Bomb*

1. Cullen, *Essaying the Past*, 107–120.

Week 10

#Tues. March 29 *The Enola Gay Exhibit: Smithsonian*

1. Mike Wallace, “Cultural War, History Front,” in Edward T. Linenthal and Tom Engelhardt, eds., *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1996): 171–198.

2. Martin Sherwin, “Hiroshima as Politics and History,” *Journal of American History* 82 (December 1995): 1085–93.

3. Edward T. Linenthal, “Struggling with History and Memory,” *Journal of American History* 82 (December 1995): 1094–1101.

Thurs. March 31 *Vietnam: Lessons of a Lost War*

1. Cullen, *Essaying the Past*, 121–151.

Week 11

#Tues. April 5 Vietnam

1. Loewen, *Lies My Teachers Told Me*, 243–258.

2. *Bloods: An Oral History of the Vietnam War by Black Veterans*, 1–15, 292–298.

3. Daniel Moran, *Wars of National Liberation* (London: Collins, 2001), 197–223.

4. Marilyn B. Young, et al. *The Vietnam War: A History in Documents* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 131–136, 143.

Thurs. April 7 Why is History taught this way? \*\*SUMMARY DUE\*\*

1. Loewen, *Lies My Teachers Told Me*, 301–339.

Week 12

1. #Tues. April 12 Loewen, *Lies My Teachers Told Me*, 259–279.

#Thurs. April 14 Road to 9/11

Week 13

#Tues. April 19 Meet with Professor to discuss research project—THIS IS A REQUIRED MEETING SO PLEASE

PLAN YOUR HOLIDAY SCHEDULE ACCORDINGLY.

Thurs. April 21 **\*\*EASTER WEEKEND\*\*** ENJOY!

Week 14

Tues. April 26 Global Warming

Naomi Oreskes and Erik M. Conway, Merchants of Doubt, 10–35, 169–239.

Thurs. April 28 Oral Presentations—Attendance Required!

Week 15

Tues. May 3 Oral Presentations—Attendance Required!

Thurs. May 5 Oral Presentations—Attendance Required! **!\*\*\*RESEARCH PROJECT DUE\*\*\***

**\*\*FINAL EXAM\*\***

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