

FIU
Department of History
HIS 5289 Comparative History: The Proposal

Prof. Mark D. Szuchman
Fall 2008

Seminar: Wed: 5:00 - 7:40 pm, DM 370 / Software Training: Sat: 9-12, PC 322 (Sep. 6, 13, 20 and 27)

Office Hours: Wed. 1:30 - 3:00 (DM 398)

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BEFORE DOING ANYTHING ELSE:

READ STARTING ON PAGE 6 FOR IMPORTANT INFORMATION!!!

INTRODUCTION

This course is designed as a semester-long workshop with the goal of shaping a major research idea (thesis, dissertation) into two competitive proposals destined for submission to federal and/or private funding agencies. In addition, the skills and architecture that go into funding proposals also go into the proposals you submit to the University Graduate School as part of the doctoral dissertation process.

So much for the “grand design” and the “major objective.” Now, to specifics.

Students will read, participate in lecture-discussions and drill through software training; these are the required elements designed to build skills that will feed into two competitive proposals in fields in the humanities and social sciences. Emphasis is placed on: literature review, theory formulation, and sophisticated methodological techniques. All these elements will be wrapped in a written language designed to appeal to panelists by the proposal’s clarity of presentation and content mastery.

Grant/fellowship proposal writing is not an ancillary ingredient in the humanities and social sciences: it is crucial because it serves as the tonic of knowledge production and the lubricant in the machinery of intellectual creativity for graduate students. These skills serve a wide spectrum of post-graduate professions. Thus, one of my underlying expectations is to have you see how grantsmanship reifies your courses and coheres them around viable projects, keeping in mind that you are both the recipient and the mover of knowledge.

If this sounds like a lofty set of ideas, wait till you get to the grind. . . .

The first set of meetings will start with lectures and discussions of the readings. Our meetings will soon take on a workshop format. Every student will be a participant in an ongoing collaborative mode involving real-time and simultaneous web-based document editing and feedback of drafts as they are revised. In the event, you will learn, or at least strengthen, editing skills and writing.

KEYS TO SUCCESS

Humility. Above all else, you will need to be humble about your abilities to handle the amount of time and effort needed for the course, not because it is especially more onerous than other reading seminars in the Department, but because of the rich evidence for students’ underestimation, on the one hand, of how long it takes to do a good job of reading and understanding the material, and overestimation, on the other, of how effectively they manage their time to handle graduate-level obligations.

Hunger. You have to be hungry for new information, new modes of analysis, new modes of data gathering. You have to have thirst for accumulating literature, gathering titles, ordering their value and context. You have to have a sense of self-doubt, but as motivator, not inhibitor (“*am I doing enough? have I followed the right leads? have I articulated arguments clearly? am I afraid to ask questions?*”).

Software training/mastery. Four mandatory Saturday morning sessions are reserved for software training. Software is a fundamental part of the course, and training is not an optional matter. Software support will be available throughout the semester.

Notes. You will take notes on the weekly reading assignments. These notes will be “live” documents in the sense that you will be referring to them and refining them throughout the term and well beyond. The dynamic nature of your note-taking is a key element in their long-term usefulness. The notes will be given to me electronically at the end of each seminar meeting. You are free to exchange your notes with your classmates. You will receive training in the notes-taking component of the software and you will use it in your research and paper. Your notes form an essential component of my evaluation of your work.

Bibliography accumulation. You will have training in — and use of — database software designed to accumulate and manage bibliographies. While I will not be evaluating this aspect of your work, it will necessarily show in the required writing projects.

Discussions and participation. The scope and nature of your notes will, in part, determine the quality of your participation in seminar discussions. Each student will be expected to frame the class discussion of the readings at least once during the term. Students will be evaluated for the quality of their presentations, their notes and their overall participation during class meetings. Participation represents 50% of the grade.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Student Output. Students will write two proposals that, for lack of better terms, we will call a small proposal and a large proposal.

The small proposal will range from 1000 to 1250 words (4 to 5 pages, double-spaced in 10- to 11-point type, with one-inch margins all around. Note: a typical double-spaced page contains approximately 250 words]. Some agencies are somewhat constipated when it comes to the allowable space for the proposal, but you will learn not to mind; indeed, you should be able to embrace a comfortable accommodation with restrictive limits in length. The final version of the small proposal will be turned in half-way through the term. Only proposals to which I have given approval will be allowed to be turned in at this time. The implications for your grade will appear below under “Grading.”

The second proposal will be either 10 pages in length (otherwise, same format/layout conditions apply as for the small proposal) if generic, or the allowable length of the specific agencies to which you will be applying. The large proposal is due at the end of the course; you will turn it in then, assuming that I give it my approval.

Software training. Students will attend four software training sessions on **Nota Bene** held during the first four Saturdays of the semester from 9:00 am to noon in the computer lab located in PC 322. Because literature reviews and mastery of the concepts related to the subject you will be proposing to investigate are essential components, attendance at software training sessions is not optional. It is optional for those already comfortable with **Nota Bene**, but they, too, are welcome to attend to strengthen skills and learn new tricks. NOTE: Users of Mac computers will need an Intel-based machine with Mac OS X version 10.4.9 or later, the Windows operating system, and, optimally, virtualization software, such as *Parallels* or *VMware Fusion*).

Grading. Your grade will consist of: the quality and consistency of your oral and written contributions (25%); and the quality of your two written proposals (30% for the smaller proposal and 45% for the longer one).

In applying the principle that — at least in this instance — the course imitates life, each of the proposals deemed competitive and fundable by an anonymous three-member panel will receive either “A” or “A-.” If deemed to be an “Alternate,” the grade will be “B+” or “B”. If the proposal is not considered competitive, the student will receive the grade of “C” only (i.e., failing) or below.

Readings.

For September 3:

Kuhn, Thomas S. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. 2d ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970.

Carr, Nicholas. “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” *Atlantic Monthly* (July/August 2008): 56-63.

Additional readings involving historiographical articles will be assigned on a weekly basis.

Works of a historiographical nature / examples of state-of-lit reviews

Read the following three works together:

- Epstein, James. "Politics of Colonial Sensation: The Trial of Thomas Picton and the Cause of Louisa Calderón." *American Historical Review* 112, no. 3 (June 2007): 712–41.
- Blaufarb, Rafe. "The Western Question: The Geopolitics of Latin American Independence." *American Historical Review* 112, no. 3 (June 2007): 742–63.
- Cañizares-Esguerra, Jorge. "Entangled Histories: Borderland Historiographies in New Clothes?" *American Historical Review* 112, no. 3 (June 2007): 787–99.

Bonnell, Victoria E. "The Uses of Theory, Concepts and Comparison in Historical Sociology." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22, no. 2 (1980): 156-73.

Bronner, Fred. "Urban Society in Colonial Spanish America: Research Trends." *Latin American Research Review* 21, no. 1 (1986): 7–72.

Campbell, Leon G. "Recent Research on Andean Peasant Revolts, 1750-1820." *Latin American Research Review* XIV, no. 1 (1979): 3-50.

Chasteen, John Charles. "Fighting Words: The Discourse of Insurgency in Latin American History." *Latin American Research Review* 28, no. 3 (1993): 83-111.

Collier, Simon. "The Historiography of the *Portalian* Period (1830-1891) in Chile." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 57 (November 1977): 660-90.

Gaddis, John Lewis. *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Gelman, Jorge, and María Inés Schroeder. "Juan Manuel de Rosas contra los estancieros: Los embargos a los 'unitarios' de la campaña de Buenos Aires." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 82, no. 3 (August 2003): 487-520.

Haber, Stephen. "Economic Historiography and Latin American Economic Growth." In *How Latin America Fell Behind: Essays on the Economic Histories of Brazil and Mexico, 1800–1914*, edited by Stephen Haber. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997.

Hunt, Lynn. "Charles Tilly's Collective Action." In *Vision and Method in Historical Sociology*, edited by Theda Skocpol, 244-75. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

Kuznesof, Elizabeth A., and Robert Oppenheimer. "The Family and Society in Nineteenth-Century Latin America: An Historiographical Introduction." *Journal of Family History* 10 (Fall 1985): 215-34.

Scott, Joan Wallach. "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis." *American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (December 1986): 1053-75.

Skocpol, Theda, ed. *Vision and Method in Historical Sociology*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

Suny, Ronald Grigor. "Back and Beyond: Reversing the Cultural Turn?" *American Historical Review* 107, no. 2 (December 2002): 1476–99.

Trimberger, Ellen Kay. "E. P. Thompson: Understanding the Process of History." In *Vision and Method in Historical Sociology*, edited by Theda Skocpol, 211-43. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

Van Young, Eric. "Recent Anglophone Scholarship on Mexico and Central America in the Age of Revolution (1750-1850)." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 65, no. 4 (November 1985): 725-44.

Weinstein, Barbara. "The Decline of the Progressive Planter and the Rise of Subaltern Agency: Shifting Narratives of Slave Emancipation in Brazil." In *Reclaiming the Political in Latin American History: Essays from the North*, edited by Gilbert M. Joseph, 81-101. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001.

Meeting Schedule/Activities.

Aug.	27	Communications with students (Introduction; organization; protocols)
Sep.	3	Review of introduction; organization; protocols; Kuhn (all); the lit review: presentations, reading discussions, pt. 1. ONE-PAGE ABSTRACT AND AGENCY LIST ARE DUE (see below, p. 6 ff.)
	6	<i>Software training PC322, pt. 1</i>
	10	Selected articles; the lit review: presentations, readings discussions, pt. 2
	13	<i>Software training PC322, pt. 2</i>
	17	Selected articles: the lit review: presentations reading discussions, pt. 3
	20	Software training PC322, pt. 3
	24	Selected articles; the lit review: presentations, readings discussions, pt. 4. First draft of <i>small</i> proposal will have been submitted for collaborative treatment
	27	<i>Software training PC322, pt. 4</i>
	24 - Oct 8	Proposal draft revisions, communal feedback
Oct.	8	Proposal draft revisions, communal feedback.
	15	SMALL PROPOSAL DUE as NB file by 5:00 pm
	22	Proposal draft revisions, communal feedback. First draft of <i>large</i> proposal will have been submitted for collaborative treatment
	29	Proposal draft revisions, communal feedback
Nov.	5-12	Writing period
Nov.	19	Individual consultations
Nov.	26	Individual consultations
Dec.	3	Individual consultations
	10	LONG PROPOSAL DUE as NB file by 5:00 pm

August 26, 2008

From: Mark D. Szuchman

To: Members of the Seminar HIS 5289/Comparative History: "The Proposal"

Re: Introductory remarks

Introduction. This note is designed to give you a preliminary orientation to the procedures we will follow in this course and to introduce you to performance expectations. I would ask you to read this document carefully while in class: there will likely be questions, some of which can be answered by my proxy, who is experienced in my seminars' architectural design. We can talk about outstanding issues next week.

Objectives. The course has a carefully conceived architecture designed to achieve several specific goals:

- Well-focused and clearly-presented literature reviews, which will require
 - deep reading of literature in promising research areas associated with your scholarly interests
 - the achievement of increasingly sophisticated standards for capturing the principal contributions to the subject area's theories, methodologies and content
 - the creation and maintenance of a comprehensive bibliographic database
 - the examination of the literature you read such that its theoretical contributions are made salient as one of the integral component of building your qualitative database
- Increased sophistication in the use of software designed for scholarly research and writing, on the one hand, and collaborative writing on the other
- Increased exposure to funding agencies
- Sustained practice in writing proposals

Preparatory activities:

- Google Docs. You will create your own Google account, if you don't have one already. Begin by doing a web search on "google accounts" and follow instructions. You will notify me once you have your Google account. The software you will consistently use for this course will include Google Docs, along with Nota Bene (see next item, below).
- Nota Bene: You will use Nota Bene for all your writing in this course (on the basis of years of experience with students in previous graduate courses, you are likely to use NB for all your writing from here on). You will each receive a CD with Nota Bene v. 8.0 (the Scholar Workstation edition) if you don't have your own already. Your name and the software serial number will be put on a list. You will install the program on your computer (preferably a laptop) and you will return the CD to me in class on September 3. Once NB is installed, close the application and go on the web to download the latest updates from: www.notabene.com. Click on Support, then on Scholar's Workstation 8.0 Update. **READ THE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY (IN FACT, PRINT THE PAGE) AND ENTER MY FIRST AND LAST NAMES AND MY E-MAIL ADDRESS (szuchman@fiu.edu), ALONG WITH THE SERIAL NUMBER (CLICK ON HELP, ABOUT NOTABENE), IN THE RELEVANT FIELDS.**

Please note that the licenses for NB are owned by me and the College of Arts & Sciences and that there is no implication of license transfer by providing you with the CD. Thus, the company's records list me as the license owner. If you succeed in the course by receiving the grade of B or better -- no Incompletes -- the license will be formally transferred to your name at the end of the semester. At that point, acquiring all further updates and/or new versions will be your responsibility.

Also note that Nota Bene is a modular product consisting of a base suite of applications (word processing (Nota Bene), bibliographic db and management (Ibidem); hypertext search and retrieval (Orbis), and a

non-bibliographic db application (Ibid Plus). Other NB products are optional add-on's that become part of the integrated suite, but they are not included in the base suite distributed to you. One of the add-on's is Archiva Pro, which is designed to work on bibliographic resources on the Web, troll for them, especially university libraries, Library of Congress, etc., and data repositories (e.g., JSTOR, OCLC, CSA, Sociological Abstracts, etc.), and bring the results into Ibidem. If you wish to take advantage of this powerful research application, you are responsible for its purchase directly from the NB website, where you will find student discounts. **IN ORDER TO RECEIVE THE 50% DISCOUNT, YOU ARE INSTRUCTED TO WRITE "FIU SPECIAL ARCHIVA PRO FOR \$50" IN THE NOTES BOX AT THE BOTTOM OF THE ORDER FORM.**

I encourage you to explore NB prior to the first mandatory Saturday training sessions. The CD includes 21 instructional videos, each lasting from 2 to 9 minutes. You can access the video tutorials by clicking on Help, Instructional Videos...

Protocols, procedures:

NB:

- You will bring your laptops to every class meeting and to the computer lab sessions.
- You will enter into Ibidem every bibliographic item that you come across that is even remotely of possible value to your studies and research, broadly defined. Bibliographic records in your databases ought not to be limited to immediate needs; items with related, but not immediate possibilities, should normally be seriously considered for entry.
- You will take notes using Nota Bene on everything we discuss or you read; for note-taking purposes on the literature you read, you will use the relevant Ibidem bibliographic record to launch your note-taking file (i.e., Ibidem's Note-Taking File utility).
- You will send me your NB notes on your readings weekly as attachments to email. Do not send me the bibliographic db item itself.
- You are encouraged to seek the advice and guidance of students in the seminar who are experienced with these processes. While it's not nuclear science in difficulty, you don't get to master the process except by prolonged exposure to it over repeated iterations: practice makes less imperfect.

Google Docs:

- You will provide in writing a brief introduction to the research topic of your current interest (warning: this may not be the topic on which you will end up writing your proposal). This document should be no longer than 250 words. **NOTE: IN THIS COURSE, SPECIFIED MAXIMUM LENGTHS ARE NOT OPTIONAL, THUS, 250 WORDS (IN THIS CASE) REPRESENT THE ABSOLUTE LIMIT.**
 - You will write the above brief introduction in NB, making sure to use the appropriate Style Manual. Once finished, you will save it again, using the Save As... mechanism, and you will choose RTF. You will use Google Docs to upload the file, which you will then make available (Share) to me and to the other students (you will have everyone's email addresses; you will see a Share item in Google Docs: follow instructions). This should be done in plenty of time prior to the next class meeting. In the event you don't know this, from your Google account, you will be able to open any shared Google Doc from any computer anywhere. All you need is a browser.
- You will also do a comprehensive search of private and public funding agencies that may provide resources for your project. You should include agencies that provide major grants and those that provide smaller, grants-in-aid. You should be ready to present and discuss these agencies' profiles in detail at our next meeting.

Reading:

- Be ready to discuss Kuhn on September 3; have your note-taking files ready (unless you first need to wait for the first mandatory software training session on Saturday, September 6, in which case, use your normal word processor: you will subsequently convert it to NB).
- Read Carr (distributed pdf).

First software training session (Saturday, September 6, 9:00 am to noon, PC 322):

- Bring a couple of professional journal issues with you.
- Bring a flash drive containing some files with notes on any previous reading or some other academic work (the word-processing program probably won't matter — it's likely to be MS Word). FILES WRITTEN ON MAC'S SHOULD FIRST BE SAVED AS RTF FILES.