The general topic of this course is post-Civil War Georgia. The point of the class, however, is not simply to learn that history in greater detail; the point is to show that you have mastered the skills and knowledge that one might reasonably expect of a graduating history major at Kennesaw. Students will demonstrate this mastery through discussions of common readings and the submission of a thesis of approximately 8000 words that is an original contribution to knowledge.

In this course, students will gain experience in the essential aspects of developing and producing a substantial piece of original historical scholarship:

- surveying the literature
- identifying suitable research topics
- locating applicable source material
- conducting and organizing research
- constructing an historical argument based on original research
- turning research into writing
- documenting research fully using accepted conventions
- undertaking the process of writing and re-writing to improve content, flow and style
- presenting findings clearly in both written and oral form
- learning from and assisting fellow students in a shared search for knowledge

I assume that students learned (and still remember!) the things that should have been covered in History 2270: bibliography (including databases such as America: History and Life and JSTOR); citation forms; critical reading and evaluation skills; proper grammar, punctuation, and the like; and, in general, how to “do” history. We will have a little bit of a refresher on some of these from time to time, but my expectation will be that students are coming into this class prepared to write a senior thesis. I also assume that students have at least a textbook knowledge of Georgia history.
Required books: none. Instead, students will read a number of articles from the *Georgia Historical Quarterly (GHQ)* and a few other pieces. Specific assignments are listed on the schedule. You probably used *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* ("Turabian") in your 2270 class. If you didn’t—or if you did and didn’t save it—you might want to borrow or buy a used copy. You’ll need it!

Grades for the course will be based on class participation, including exercises (20%), your paper proposal (10%), a peer review (10%), and the thesis (60%). Students should attend every class session. **Students who miss more than three class sessions (including the first week) will not pass the course.**

Note: Incomplete grades will be given only when the student has done satisfactory work up to the last two weeks of the semester, but for nonacademic reasons beyond his/her control is unable to meet the full requirements of the course. Students in the senior seminar will not be given a grade of Incomplete simply because they did not finish the thesis on time.

In addition to the class sessions listed below, students will meet with the professor at least four times outside of class during the term. Each student should schedule an appointment in August, in September, in October, and in November to discuss progress in the course and especially on the thesis. This is a minimum; I hope students will see me more often.

Students should take this class seriously. Always do the assigned reading and come to class prepared to discuss it competently. Always come to class. Understand that the thesis is the biggest and most important course assignment you will have at Kennesaw State. Notice that the class meets rarely after September. This is to allow students to work on their theses. Students who enter October with their projects well begun should be able to complete them successfully by the early December; students who don’t, likely won’t.

I am not scheduling a lot of interim steps to the completed theses (students should have a general topic by such a date, a thesis statement by another date, a list of five primary sources and five secondary sources and the a rough draft by whenever, etc.), because in my own experience, research and writing never proceed smoothly along such a line. Here are two dates: August 18, the first day of class, at which time you have nothing; and December 8, at which time you will have a successful thesis. Between those two dates, students will be at different places in their projects (although by Thanksgiving break we should be able to discern the beginning of a convergence toward “done”). Along the way, I will talk with students in class and individually and advise them on their progress.

On the afternoon of Friday, Dec. 4, the History and Philosophy Department will sponsor a program where selected theses from the two senior seminars will be presented to faculty and students. SO 5074, 1:00-4:00 More information forthcoming.
Major written assignments

**Thesis Prospectus:** The purpose of a prospectus is to clearly define your topic, establish its importance, and explain how you are going to carry out the project.

Your prospectus should include a descriptive title that clearly identifies your topic. It should clearly define and describe your topic in a couple of succinct paragraphs. This opening description of the project should begin to establish its importance and to convince a reader that it is worth reading.

Next, your prospectus should present your thesis. What are you going to say about that topic? How will you convince the reader of the validity of your thesis? You should include a discussion of the historiographical context of your project. What have other historians said about your topic and specifically your argument or perspective? How is your approach and argument going to be different? Are there any models that have influenced your approach to the topic?

Your prospectus should also include a research plan. This is a way to pace yourself and measure your progress throughout the course of researching and writing your paper. Your plan should include dates for when you will complete your secondary reading and your primary research, and set clear dates for when you will draft various sections of your essay.

Finally, your prospectus should include a bibliography with the primary and secondary sources that you plan to consult. You should closely follow the Chicago Manual of Style bibliography format.

**Peer Review:** Reading and critiquing the work of others is an essential part of doing history, so you will conduct a peer review of a colleague’s paper (the first draft). You will do two things. First, prepare a marked-up copy of the paper, looking for issues of grammar, style, and clarity. Second, write a two-page review, commenting on the paper’s organization, argument, and overall effectiveness.

**Thesis:** Your senior thesis should be a work of original scholarship, based on primary sources, of approximately 8,000 words (of text; excludes title page, notes, bibliography). Footnotes and bibliography should be formatted according to the *Chicago Manual of Style* (or Turabian), and the bibliography should be divided, at minimum, into primary and secondary sources. See “A Few Writing Tips” (available on D2L) for some specific guidelines on the paper.

You will submit both a written copy of the paper and an electronic copy.

The thesis will be evaluated according to the quality and extent of research; quality of writing (syntax and grammar, organization and clarity, style and flow); demonstrated analytical ability (sophistication and significance of argument, coherence and cogency, use of source material); originality and creativity; and adherence to guidelines and instructions.
General course / university policies

Cell phones and similar devices should be turned off and put away during class. Laptop computers should be used for course work only; other laptop use can be distracting to other students (and to the professor as well). Students should not study for other classes during ours. For the seventy-five minutes from 9:30 to 10:45 on Tuesdays and Thursdays, you should consider this class to be your full-time job.

Students with qualifying disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act who require “reasonable accommodation(s)” to complete the course may request those from Office of Student Disability Services. Students requiring such accommodations are required to work with the University’s Office of Student Disability Services rather than engaging in this discussion with individual faculty members or academic departments. If, after reviewing the course syllabus, a student anticipates or should have anticipated a need for accommodation, he or she must submit documentation requesting an accommodation and permitting time for a determination prior to submitting assignments or taking course quizzes or exams. Students may not request retroactive accommodation for needs that were or should have been foreseeable. Students should contact the office as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations. Student Disability Services is located in the Carmichael Student Center in Suite 267. Please visit the Student Disabilities Services website at www.kennesaw.edu/stu_dev/sds for more information, or call the office at 470-578-6443.

Every KSU student is responsible for upholding the provisions of the Student Code of Conduct, as published in the Undergraduate Catalog. See https://web.kennesaw.edu/scai/content/ksu-student-code-conduct. Among many other provisions, the Code includes the following:

“No student shall receive, attempt to receive, knowingly give or attempt to give unauthorized assistance in the preparation of any work required to be submitted for credit (including examinations, laboratory reports, essays, themes, term papers, etc.).”

“When direct quotations are used, they should be indicated, and when the ideas, theories, data, figures, graphs, programs, electronic based information or illustrations of someone other than the student are incorporated into a paper or used in a project, they should be duly acknowledged.”

“Unless specifically authorized, the presence and/or use of electronic devices during an examination, quiz, or other class assignment is considered cheating. Engaging in any behavior that a professor prohibits as academic misconduct in the syllabus or in class discussion is cheating.”

I treat matters of academic misconduct seriously.

Electronic Communications: The University provides all KSU students with an official email account with the address “students.kennesaw.edu.” Because of federal laws protecting educational information and other data, this is the sole email account you should use to communicate with your instructor or other University officials.

Should the University close for inclement weather or other cause, check D2L for instructions. In general, students should keep up with assigned readings during unanticipated time off.
# SCHEDULE

It is possible that we will have to make changes in this syllabus. Any such changes will be for good cause and will be announced in class (if possible) and through the e-mail function of D2L.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aug.</th>
<th>18</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Today’s session is an introduction to the course and to each other.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Th</td>
<td>examining the <em>Georgia Historical Quarterly</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Th</td>
<td>discussion of databases etc.—no assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Th</td>
<td>discussion of local archives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Day</td>
<td>Assignment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 17</td>
<td>Th</td>
<td>grammar/punctuation/etc. exercise (D2L)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Th</td>
<td>footnote exercise (D2L)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Oct. 1 | Th | book review exercise (D2L) |
| 8 | Th | no class—work on thesis! |
| 13 | T | no class—work on thesis! |
| 15 | Th | no class—work on thesis! |
| 20 | T | discussion of thesis progress; motivational talk |
| 22 | Th | no class—work on thesis! |
| 27 | T | no class—work on thesis! |
| 29 | Th | no class—work on thesis! |

<p>| Nov. 3 | T | discussion of thesis progress; motivational talk |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 5</td>
<td>Th</td>
<td>no class—work on thesis!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 10</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>no class—work on thesis!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 12</td>
<td>Th</td>
<td>first draft due—copies to instructor and peer reviewer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 17</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>no class—work on thesis! Individual conferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 19</td>
<td>Th</td>
<td>peer reviews due—copies to instructor and author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 24</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>no class—Happy Thanksgiving break!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 26</td>
<td>Th</td>
<td>no class—Happy Thanksgiving break!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 1</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>no class—work on thesis!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 3</td>
<td>Th</td>
<td>begin presentations and discussion of papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 8</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>final papers due—presentations and discussion of papers continues</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TIPS AND GUIDELINES FOR YOUR RESEARCH AND WRITING

The Rhythm of Research

Tips as you move forward, mostly from my own experience

For 3 months, you will be living with this essay. Get used to it; it’s a rite of passage for all who are history majors.

• Keep your **hypothesis/working question** in your mind at all times.
  o You might want to affix a Post-it note to your computer or notebook to remind yourself of what you are doing this for.
  o Keep an eye out for information/perspectives in all your reading that serve to help address your hypothesis.
  o Use your hypothesis to be selective about what you choose to read.

• Only read **sources that are useful**.
  o Do not read books merely for the sake of including them in your bibliography.
  o If you find that a work does not serve your purposes, do not spend time with it.
  o But do not expect to use all that you read and all the notes that you take in your final paper; there will always be extraneous notes.

• Establish a **regular schedule** of reading and research.
  o Do not let too many days go by without doing at least some work on the project.
  o Work in very small increments of time, if you must.
  o Carry a relevant book in your purse/bag with you all the time for down-time reading.
  o If you let this sit for too long, you will waste time refamiliarizing yourself with the topic when you start up again.
  o Research has a momentum that can be lost if you let it dissipate.
  o Plan ahead–order ILL and GIL books and articles ahead of time.

• When you have ideas occur to you, at any time, write them down–have a place (a notebook, computer file, etc.) where you record **impromptu ideas**.

• Take the time and effort to **familiarize yourself with the events and people** with which your paper is concerned:
  o WHO are the primary players involved?
    ▪ I sometimes find it useful to maintain a register with brief bios of the pertinent characters, for quick reference
  o WHAT happened?
You should establish a pretty good sense of the trajectory of events, so that you can spend your time examining details and formulating an interpretation, rather than time and again trying to remember what happened.

It may behoove you to read at least a couple of narratives of the events in question before tackling the specifics

- WHERE did these things happen?
  - Americans, in general, do not know a damn thing about geography. Writing good history, however, is always easier when you have a good sense of where events took place. Take the time to gain familiarity with the geography, topography, climatology, etc.

- WHY did they happen?
  - Many of you will be asking this question as part of your discovery process. What are some of the potential reasons for your events taking place?
  - History is largely the study of change – why might some things have changed while others remain the same?

- WHEN did things happen?
  - Establish a chronology of important events and be sensitive to what this says about causation i.e. that one thing cannot happen before another.
  - As historians, we must be honest with the historical actors – always be sensitive to historical context. For example, we cannot assume that 18th-century women in France would think like 1970s feminists or that a 16th-century Jesuit would be committed to the idea of religious pluralism.

Learn to “GUT” a book (as in a fish). There is not time for you to read all the books that you will consult in their entirety. You should approach reading a historical monograph in this sequence:

- Is there a summary/abstract of the book available on any of the various search engines?
- Read a review or two of the book to get an overview of what it covers and the argument that it makes (many of these are available electronically now).
- Look at the table of contents.
- Read the introduction.
  - usually tells the reader what the book intends to do
  - often has a summary of what is included in the chapters that follow
  - often describes the author’s methodology
- Read the conclusion.
- Read the beginning and end paragraphs or pages of the chapters that are applicable to your topic.
- If a chapter appears especially applicable, read it in its entirety.
- You will be left with a considerably shorter amount of reading (i.e. 40 pages of a 300-page book, or the like)

Always be sensitive to the point of view of authors.
- The same sources and events, as you know, can be interpreted in very different ways. Does the author in question display a certain bias or approach?
- Note not only perspectives but also the emphases of historians. For example, a
Marxist historian is likely to emphasize much different features of the Industrial Revolution that is a right-leaning scholar.

- Make note of where you find disagreement between scholars – these are interesting things to include in your discussion. Plus, you will want to make your own assessment and situate yourself in relation to what others have written.

- Read not only for content and information, but also for style and methodology. You can learn more than just data from books and articles that you read, but also approaches to writing and presenting information.
  - You may want to model your approach to writing on someone you have read

- Try to read/use the latest edition of any book

- Be prepared to read only chapters in books. For example, for a paper on Florence Nightingale, you might read only the chapter on military medicine in a book on the Crimean War.

- Use indices of books to find sections in books that deal specifically with subjects in which you have interest.

- Become comfortable with text-hopping.
  - Keep an eye out for sources mentioned by authors that might be of interest to you.
  - Some of the most useful sources can be found by following the string through texts.

- Read articles to see how historians address a single question in a similar-length work.
  - Use these as models for your own work: you are essentially being asked to write an article.

- Divide your reading/research into manageable chunks.
  - Try rewarding yourself in some manner when you complete a chunk i.e. if I get my background reading on the English Peasant Revolt done, I”m going to give myself the evening off.

- Whenever possible, utilize human resources to aid you in your research.
  - This is often a means of making the process of discovery shorter; very often people have covered the same ground already and might have insights into where to go/what to look at/what questions to ask.
  - We have friendly and knowledgeable professors of history and philosophy in the Department.
  - Don”t hesitate to contact librarians at collections, archives and foundations that may have material of interest.
  - Contact authors and professors from other universities directly; the worst that can happen is that they don’t respond, but most will.
• **Organize your notes** carefully.
  o Use keywords/categories in order to tag types of information.
    ▪ Make these searchable if possible.
    ▪ Data points might have multiple categories.
    ▪ You may want to do this after a session of note-taking.
  o Re-read your notes reasonably soon after taking them.

• Keep tabs on the **page numbers** from where you are getting information.
  o If you quote verbatim, make sure that the quote is accurate and that you identify the correct page number.
  o Make sure you distinguish what is quoted and what is paraphrased.
  o When you paraphrase, make sure you do so faithfully.

• **Miscellaneous tips** on note-taking:
  o Be careful when transporting, cutting and pasting, etc. if using a word processing program.
  o Employ a shorthand system that you trust and will be able to read afterward.
  o Number your notecards (if only for reference sake).
  o On each notecard/piece of paper, indicate where the information comes from.
  o Somewhere, keep full bibliographical info on your sources (no need to include it on each page of your notes).
  o If you keep notes in a book, with a highlighter or pencil, transfer them to paper reasonably soon after you take the notes.

• Don’t be afraid to let your research take you in a different direction from where you planned to go at the outset; **be flexible**. If it becomes clear early on that your proposed essay is not going to work, don’t beat a dying horse—change tack.

**Do’s and Don’ts for the Senior Seminar**

DO …

… begin work on the essay immediately: in particular, order interlibrary loan or GIL books and articles that you will think you might need TODAY, as you will be expected to begin your background secondary reading right away.

… commit yourself to doing some work on this project every week: you should spend as much time (and perhaps a bit more) each week on this course as you do in any other course.

… expect to work very hard on this; there is a reason that this is the capstone course for the History major—it supposed to challenge you. You may have to give up social events/holidays.
… expect to get frustrated at times that your hypotheses and or expectations are altered or foiled; this, however, is no reason to panic—it is a predictable part of completing any large project.

… be proactive; although there are weigh-stations along the way to gauge your progress, there is no day-by-day schedule for you to follow—you must force yourself to set your own schedule of work.

… employ, from the very beginning, a systematic and organized fashion of collecting data, preferably one that is searchable.

… break up your reading/researching/writing into manageable pieces; this way you can set yourself achievable goals and reward yourself for smaller scale accomplishments within the large project.

… seek out the advice and guidance of your august professor and other professors with questions/problems big and small.

… talk to one another about your experiences: what works, what doesn’t; what have you done/found that is particularly helpful?

DON’T …

… be afraid. Fear seems to be the common denominator among many of you—if you apply yourself, stay in communication with the instructor, and give the project the attention it deserves, there should be no reason to be afraid.

… worry about writing over 20 pages of text; if you carry out a comprehensive research project, 20 pages will appear before you even know it. Writing too much might become the issue.

… procrastinate; this is one of those projects where you simply cannot make up for ground lost due to procrastination.

… underestimate yourself and your ability; in most cases, students surprise themselves with what they prove capable of doing, and producing.

… treat this course as just any other course (apart from the necessity of regular work). It is different, and is designed to be.

… hesitate to learn and borrow methods and techniques from others; every historian’s approach is a combination of those she has been exposed to. As long as the content is your own, be open to what the work of others can teach you.

… plagiarize. Ever.