Description: This seminar is designed to help students produce an original article-length research project (20-25 pages) that draws on both extensive primary and secondary sources on a topic of the student’s choosing. Therefore, the focus of much of the course will be aimed at the components of a successful writing process. While we will begin examining some recent and soon-to-be influential works in the fields of Middle Eastern and World History, the majority of the seminar will be given over to honing a successful researching and writing process for a project of the student’s choosing.

Objectives: Students will gain critical insight into the importance of the writing process in all of its forms for their own research and training. Sadly, good writing and editing is fast becoming a much-neglected skill despite its growing importance in securing employment and pursuing advanced study. This seminar can also contribute to the preparation of graduate students for either potential fields of study aimed at fulfilling their comprehensive exam bibliographies, or for a thesis process. The ultimate objective would be to have students complete a more substantial piece of work intended for presentation in a public forum. Therefore, the course will focus on student development of the necessary skills for both research and an interesting and effective public presentation of their future work.

Format: We will commence with an examination of key works in the field of World History that also touch upon important aspects of Middle Eastern history. In the process of examining what makes the history-writing on these topic compelling, your main goal in the early stages will be to develop, in consultation with the instructor, a feasible topic that has a clear plan for accessing primary sources (in translation if necessary) and can be completed within the time frame of the course. Although topics seeking to engage a global or cross-cultural historical framework are preferable, aspiring scholars from all fields of history willing to consider new perspectives are welcome. After the first several weeks, the emphasis of the course will shift primarily toward the research and writing process, including working with the staff at the Lied Library. Additional sessions will grapple with the issues of presenting your material effectively to a public audience, in addition to researching and writing a formal publication on a historical topic.

Important Caveats: Those of you who took the accelerated summer session colloquium may be continuing a process that commenced earlier with your bibliographical survey project from that class. If so, keep in mind that your research is expected to progress substantially beyond what has already been done, given the broader time frame and less onerous nature of the time frame. Also, please note that November 11, 18 and 25 are either holidays or conflicting with an annual conference attended by the instructor, which leaves a substantial gap in our meeting times. It is
highly advisable that you meet with the instructor to refine final projects during office hours on Tuesday or other alternate appointment times as we move toward the final stages of the course.

Assignments:

1) For each of the three required readings assigned, I will ask you to generate a précis (meaning, a short book review) of the required reading. However, for the purposes of this course, the areas of attention will diversify somewhat. While you should continue, when writing your précis, to pretend that you are reviewing it in a public forum, you should also focus on the following questions: a) How would you characterize the writing style of the author—does it enhance or detract from the value of the book, and why do you think so? b) What is the author’s primary argument (or arguments)? c) What are the most interesting parts of the book? d) Do you sense any flaws in the author’s argument or writing style?

2) Discussion and participation in the various aspects of the course, including the subsequent writing circles and presentations.

3) In the final week of the course, you will be required to make a public presentation of the evolution of your research topic over the course of the semester. Additional guidelines for this assignment will be forthcoming.

4) By the end of the course, I would like you to prepare an article-length, original research paper of at least twenty to twenty-five (20-25) pages (not including bibliography). This will probably take the form of inquiry into a topic related to your own field of research, graduate student field, or thesis (if a thesis candidate).

Grading:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Book Review Essays (3)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion and participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral presentation of Research</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>60%</td>
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</tbody>
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All assignments are due on the dates specified. Late work will result in a markdown. Failure to submit the research paper before the due date will result in a grade of incomplete, and you must inform me ahead of time if you cannot finish in time. I must stress that failure to attend and critique your colleagues’ presentations at the end of the session, in addition to being impolite, will result in a grade sanction.

Required Readings:

Note: I will try to place the preceding readings on reserve, but this may not be possible due to the novelty of several of these works. Those of you who are able may want to try and acquire your own copies from either the University Bookstore or online (a helpful website is http://www.bookfinder.com). It is recommended that you begin required readings as soon as possible.

COURSE SCHEDULE

August 26: Course Introduction and Logistics
Topics: What will we be working on this semester?

Important task for September 2: For next Thursday’s class, you are to draft a proposal statement. Pretend that you are applying for a grant to pursue a research project from the Social Sciences Research Council (SSRC); describe and outline your proposed project in a 2-3 page statement, while trying to keep in consideration the guidelines suggested by that organization at the website below: http://www.ssrc.org/publications/view/7A9CB4F4-815F-DE11-BD80-001CC477EC70/

September 2: Discussion of paper topics: Come prepared to discuss both your own proposal and to critique that of others as presented in class

Important task for September 9: For next Thursday’s class, you are to prepare at least one set of questions for History Librarian Priscilla Finley that will be aimed at finding additional materials to support your research.

September 9: Library Day—meeting in the Lied Library’s Pioche Room
In this session, our History Librarian Priscilla Finley will discuss various research and library tools that will help improve your research projects, and follow up on the work that some of you have already done in Hist. 738

Reading assignment for September 16: John Darwin’s After Tamerlane.
Assignment: Focus a short précis on the question of how Darwin structures his discussion of global history since the fifteenth century—what are his key arguments and how effectively does he present them in written form?

September 16: Writing World History in light of new evidence
Discussion of John Darwin’s work on global history since the fifteenth century

Reading assignment for September 23: Giancarlo Casale’s Ottoman Age of Exploration.
Assignment: Focus a short précis on the question of how Casale seeks to challenge what we thought we knew about the Ottoman Empire and the wider global scene—what are his key arguments, and how does he choose to present his narrative?

September 23: Writing the Ottomans back into World and European history
Discussion of Giancarlo Casale’s work on the Ottoman presence in the Indian Ocean system

Reading assignment for September 30: Richard Bulliet, Cotton, Climate and Camels.
Assignment: Focus a short précis on what Bulliet is attempting to do with his study of the Islamic medieval period—what are his arguments, and how does he seek to make this potentially controversial work interesting?

September 30: Writing the laws of unintended consequences into historiography
Discussion of Richard Bulliet’s work on early Islamic Iran and the impact of its structural foundations

Important task for October 7, 14, 21 and 28: For next Thursday’s class, you are to bring with you at least two (2) pages of draft writing that will become part of your paper to the class. Be prepared to share this with both a partner and the instructor.

October 7: WRITING CIRCLE DAY—Agenda TBA
October 14: WRITING CIRCLE DAY—Agenda TBA
October 21: WRITING CIRCLE DAY—Agenda TBA
October 28: WRITING CIRCLE DAY—Agenda TBA

November 4: Presentations Roundtable – In this session, we will discuss the progress of our research projects to date, and seek suggestions from instructor and colleagues on how to best proceed in the final month

November 11: VETERAN’S DAY HOLIDAY—NO CLASS
November 18: INSTRUCTOR CONFERENCE—NO CLASS
November 25: THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY—NO CLASS

December 2: Presentations – all members of the class will give their oral presentations today: pretend you are giving a discussion of your research in a public forum relevant to your field of study
Note: Depending on number of people taking the course, presentations may have to overflow into the standard class time on the afternoon of December 9 after papers have been submitted if time is insufficient.

TO ALLOW SUFFICIENT TIME FOR INSTRUCTOR READINGS, FINAL PAPER DRAFTS ARE DUE NO LATER THAN THURSDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2010 AT 12:00 NOON