History 389 Research [Seminar]: Early America  
Fall 2018  
Tuesdays 3:30-6:30  
Gar 1.122  

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This course is a graduate-level research seminar. Our principal purpose will be directed toward the design, research, writing (and revising) of a conference length (i.e., 15-20 page) paper based primarily on primary sources. In designing the syllabus for the class I have decided to take full advantage of the rich archival holdings on campus held at the Harry Ransom Center (HRC) and the Briscoe Center for American History (BCAH). This, combined with my own interest and curiosity (to be honest), has induced me to define the “Early” part of “Early America” rather broadly – from 1600 to about 1940 say - and the “America” part somewhat narrowly, focusing on the Southern States (in particular Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana). This region and time, especially the 1840-1940 era, will be the subject of our readings and archival investigations in the first half of the semester. While I hope most students will find a topic that engages them sufficiently in these weeks to become the subject for their own paper, I am open, as always, to allow people to follow their own initiative and pursue other topics within the broadest confines of “early America.” At the end of the semester, students will present their papers to each other and to other graduate students at an in-house conference.
Readings:

The following books have been placed on reserve at the PCL. I have not placed any orders for them at the University Co-op, so if you wish to purchase your own copies you are on your own.

William Faulkner, \textit{Absalom, Absalom!} (1936)
James Agee and Walker Evans, \textit{Let Us Now Praise Famous Men} (1941)

Schedule:

September 4 – Introductions, etc..

September 11 – No Class meeting


October 2 – A Visit to the HRC [Faulkner Papers, Agee and Evan collections], (3-5 pm).


October 30 – A Visit to the Briscoe Center [Natchex Trace, Southern History, and Lomax collections] (3-5 pm).

November 6 - Reading UT History Dissertations (Research Proposals due)

November 13 – Individual meetings

November 20 and 27 – No Class meetings

December 4 – No Class meeting (first draft of papers are due)

December 7 – Papers will be presented at an in-house conference (drafts will be returned)

December 11 – Final versions are due.