ANTH 327/IS 322: Ethnohistory (writing-intensive)

Time and Location: MWF 10:30-11:20 a.m., Gartley Hall 101

Instructor: Emanuel J. Drechsel, Interdisciplinary Studies
Office: Krauss Hall 116; Tel. 956-7297; E-mail: drechsel@hawaii.edu
Office hours: after class on Mondays or Fridays and on Tuesdays and Thursdays by appointment, for which please call 956-7297

Course Description:

When examining the past of non-Western and especially indigenous peoples, the study of history has all too often taken a narrow perspective with respect to its available resources, methodologies, or perspectives, not to mention profound European prejudices with strong colonial tinges. An alternative however is available through ethnohistory, which draws on a critical interpretation of historical documents by ethnological criteria, as they have emerged especially in studies of frontier colonial North America and in land-claim cases by Native Americans in the eastern United States as a result of the Indian Claims Commission Act of 1946. That legislation has permitted Native Americans to reclaim appropriated land from the U.S. federal government, requiring extensive historical documentation and, with it, elaborate research for their validation. In the process, historical documents have often proved like hostile witnesses – full of valuable information, but in need of careful cross-examination against independent comparable data from alternative sources, including findings from other historical disciplines such as archaeology, linguistics, and geography, whence the need for an interdisciplinary approach. No longer limited to frontier studies or Native American land-claim cases, ethnohistory has meanwhile diversified successfully to other social domains and geographic areas, including the Pacific Islands, and has extended even to the history of industrialized societies, especially their own non-European traditions.

This course offers an introduction to ethnohistory, i.e. the interdisciplinary, holistic, and inclusive investigation of the histories of non-European peoples drawing in part on the analysis of documented sources, in part on other disciplines to help interpret these sources in a culturally appropriate manner. What has distinguished ethnohistory from conventional history is its focus on culture contact and sociocultural conflict, requiring explicit notions of other societies, concepts of cultural relativism, and ethnological models of crosscultural interactions. Unlike Eurocentric historians, who focus on their own past, ethnohistorians have been primarily interested in crosscultural relations and in exchanges between members of different societies. ANTH 327/IS 322 examines central questions of ethnohistorical analysis applicable to any culture-contact situation, and addresses key methodological and theoretical issues in relation to history, anthropology, and other disciplines. For exemplary cases, the class explores how some of these issues have emerged in the eastern United States, but also considers instances of how ethnohistory applies to other culture areas and how it can contribute to a global understanding of the past. Not bound solely to methodological concerns, discussions encompass broader theoretical concerns raised by ethnohistorians about the relationships between history and social science.
Prerequisites:

Basic understanding of social science, an elementary knowledge of American and global history

Requirements:

To guarantee success, this class presumes not only interdisciplinary cooperation, but depends on the active participation and regular contributions by every class member. For this purpose, ANTH 327/IS 322 specifically requires:

- **regular, timely attendance of classes and active participation in discussions.** Excessive absences will weigh negatively in your final grade. As a courtesy to your fellow class members, please turn off all electronic devices, including pagers and cellular telephones! Notebook computers are permissible for taking notes, however. Please remember also to keep your voices low within university facilities, and use your electronic devices only outside of the classroom building.

- **two mid-term exams and a final,** consisting of essay questions to examine your understanding of readings and class discussions. The precise format of these exams is open to discussion within obvious limits. If you miss either mid-term exam for a good reason, you will have an opportunity to make it up outside of class. You cannot however make up the final exam or for that matter take it earlier than on the scheduled date and time.

- **one informal interview about your research** with the instructor at his office in Interdisciplinary Studies, Krauss Hall 116, after submitting a detailed outline or first draft of your paper, i.e. preferably before Thanksgiving (see Tentative Course Outline below). For appointments, please call Interdisciplinary Studies at 956-7297.

- **timely submission of four major writing assignments** on an ethnohistorical topic of your choice, consisting of: (1) a succinct descriptive title, an abstract of your paper of no more than 200 words, an accompanying list of key words, and a list of ten relevant references; (2) a detailed outline of your paper, including subdivisions and one-sentence summaries for each subdivision; (3) a first draft of no less than 2000 words; and (4) an expanded revision of the same essay of no less than 4000 words to meet the requirements of UHM Arts and Sciences writing-intensive courses. For minimal formal requirements, please consult the next entry; for deadlines, see the schedule below! No written assignment accepted by electronic transmission for reasons of computer safety!

- **minimal formal requirements of writing assignments:**
  
  **Title, abstract, key words, and list of ten references:** Keep the title of your essay concise but descriptive. Offer an abstract of 150 to 200 words following the format of abstracts used in academic and especially social-science journals. Look for samples in class, and be sure to include key words! In your list of references, you must include no less than five (5) non-electronic entries. Internet resources are acceptable only as entries in addition to the minimum of five books and articles!

  **Detailed outline of your paper:** Incorporate not only the paper’s title, abstract, and key words, but also subtitles as headings of your paper’s subdivisions and one-sentence summaries for each of these sections to offer an indication of your line of argumentation! Let the organization of your essay make your argument. Be sure that all these items are consistent with
each other, and make revisions where they already become necessary! Again remember to offer as much information with as few words as possible.

First draft of your paper: Length of no less than 2000 words with a concise but descriptive title, an abstract and accompanying key words, an introduction, clearly identified middle sections (including subtitles), a preliminary conclusion, and a list of applicable bibliographic references with no less than five (5) non-electronic entries in addition to any texts used in this course. Include further revisions as you develop your essay.

Expanded, revised version of your first draft: Length of no less than 4000 words with a concise but descriptive title, an abstract and accompanying key words, an introduction, clearly identified middle sections (including subtitles), a conclusion, an acknowledgement of those who contributed to your paper in some fashion, and a list of applicable bibliographic references with no less than ten (10) non-electronic entries and with no fewer than five (5) books in addition to any texts used in this course. 

NOTE: Success in selecting a suitable topic requires considerable planning in advance in order to meet the deadlines for submission of your writing assignments, whence I strongly suggest that you first confer with me to assure sufficiency of appropriate resources, especially regarding any poorly documented areas. Please remain aware that, as you develop your research paper, you may find a need to revise it substantially, which is very much part of this exercise and will help improve your skills in research and writing. Feel free to consult with me early in the semester and regularly if you need assistance.

Write in a formal but non-pompous style (see Appendix), and follow the in-text, author-date referencing style of The Chicago Manual of Style, 15th or later edition, including specific page numbers unless your reference applies to the entire book or article that you are citing (see http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html and further information to be made available in class)! To help reduce unnecessary waste, I welcome your papers in a single-spaced format and two-sided printing. Alternatively, you can use clean “waste” paper; but please make sure that the backside does not include any personal or other sensitive information. Preferred font: Times New Roman Size 12 for easy reading!

Grade Distribution:

The mid-term and final exams will amount to 10% and 20% of your final grade for a total of 40%. The interview with me about your paper will count 5%. The remaining 55% of your final grade will come from your writings assignments: 5% for your title, abstract, and list of references and for your outline each; 15% for your first draft of no less than 2000 words; and 30% for your expanded revision of no less than 4000 words.

NOTE: Any student who fails to submit an acceptable first or final draft as part of his or her assignments will automatically receive a grade no higher than a D-, which will have the effect of denying him or her WI credit for this class.

Excursions:

Depending on need, we can consider an “excursion” to Government Documents and Maps as well as to the Hawaiian and Pacific Collections in Hamilton Library.
Student Learning Outcomes:

- To develop an appreciation of the interdisciplinary relationships between history and cultural anthropology (ethnology) plus other historical methods of anthropology (such as archaeology) and of “out of the box” thinking at large
- To acquire a critical understanding of ethnohistory as a discipline as well as its methodological and theoretical fundamentals, including a culture-sensitive appreciation of history that specifically draws on ethnological and other anthropological principles of analysis of “the other”
- To gain a broad appreciation of colonial history and its manifestations with eastern North America and other culture areas as exemplary cases
- To improve critical thinking skills
- To develop basic research skills on an acceptable ethnohistorical topic
- To cultivate skills in organization of an acceptable ethnohistorical research topic by systematic revision and in semi-formal written presentation, useful for purposes other than just academic ones

Texts:


There will be a few additional, short readings on selected topics, of which some will be provided in class and others are available on line.

Tentative Course Outline (subject to revision):

25-29 August Introduction: Review of Syllabus; Barber and Berdan, Part I (Chapters 1 and 2)
(1 September Labor Day)
3 and 5 September Methods of Ethnohistory II: Barber and Berdan, Chapters 3 and 4
15-19 September Methods of Ethnohistory IV: Barber and Berdan, Chapters 7-9
22-26 September Methods of Ethnohistory V: Barber and Berdan, Chapters 10-12
29 September  

First mid-term exam

1 and 3 October  


6-10 October  


13-17 October  


17 October  

Title of paper, abstract, key words, and list of references due

20-24 October  

“Home” of American Ethnohistory: Colonial Eastern North America III on Conversions: Axtell, Chapters 6-8

27-31 October  

“Home” of American Ethnohistory: Colonial Eastern North America IV on Clashes: Axtell, Chapters 9-11; videotape on the French-Indian War of 1754-63 or what some historians now consider the first world war

3 November  

Second mid-term exam

5 and 7 November  


10-14 November  

Macro-History: Wolf, Part I, Connections: Chapters 1 and 2

14 November  

Detailed outline of your paper due

17-21 November  

Macro-History: Wolf, Part I, Connections: Chapters 3 and 4

24 and 26 November  


26 November  

First draft of your paper due

(27-28 November  

Thanksgiving Break)

1-5 December  

Macro-History: Wolf, Part II, In Search of Wealth: Chapters 7 and 8

8 and 10 December  

Macro-History: Wolf, Part III, Capitalism: Chapters 9 and 10
12 December, 4:00 p.m.  

Expanded revision of your paper due at my office, 116 Krauss Hall

Friday, 19 December, 9:45-11:45 a.m.  

Final examination
Appendix: A Few Suggestions for Good Writing:

- Give yourself plenty of time for writing your papers. Do not wait until the weekend or evening before an assignment is due, for very few people can “whip it out just like that” and do a good job. Good writing relies on substantive information, the collection of which in turn requires a considerable amount of planning, research, and careful documentation. You should also commit quite a bit of effort to editing and revising your writing for both content and form.
- Carefully organize your thoughts. Good organization is the prime essence of clear expression. Make your writing flow by developing a foundation for your arguments in early sections and by incorporating transitions between your ideas. Avoid getting lost in details; instead focus on essentials, and illustrate your arguments with selected but revealing examples. Give structure and depth to your writing by pruning, winnowing, and consolidating your text. Incidentally, what we know by the derogatory term of “rehashing” constitutes a valuable skill that you will find useful in other circumstances.
- Be concise, and avoid wordy or pompous expressions, which however does not mean a simplified or casual style as if you were writing for children or in texting. Use a quasi-formal style appropriate to professional authorship as employed in academic writing, which permits a fairly free use of subordination to clarify complex relationships of your subject. Always write in complete sentences; incomplete sentences lack an essential element, which usually leave the reader dangling in doubt or confusion.
- For a general rule, keep in mind that a sentence should begin with old or implicit information, and end with new one. Give your readers something that they already know or can assume before you introduce them to new ideas. New information at the beginning of a sentence has the dramatic effect of surprise usually of little use in academic writing. By observing this suggestion, you can often make your writing flow much better and solve the problem of transition at the same time.
- Usually, it is a good practice to refrain, whenever possible, from using passive constructions, which make cumbersome reading and – counter to widespread misconception – do not constitute a more objective form of expression. Active constructions, in which the grammatical subject and the actor are identical, make your writing not only more concise, but also livelier. Thus, change a passive sentence like “Washoe was given an apple by Jane.” into an active construction such as “Washoe received an apple from Jane.” or “Jane gave an apple to Washoe.” depending on what you wish to present as old and new information!
- Distinguish between essential, restrictive and non-essential, non-restrictive relative clauses, which permit a delightful semantactic differentiation in English not possible in so many other languages. Keep in mind the divergent implications of a restrictive relative clause as in “Washoe received an apple that was red.” and the analogue non-restrictive construction in “Washoe received an apple, which was red.” To distinguish them, note the use or absence of a comma as well as the different relative pronouns.
- Pay attention to appropriate punctuation. Whereas there are few hard rules in English, again keep your reader in mind; insert a comma where you can expect him or her to take a pause for breath taking, when reading your text. Apply extra care in replacing a comma with a semicolon. In general, it is safer to use the semicolon as a weak period separating two complete, independent sentences that reveal a closer semantic relationship to each other than either does to the preceding or following text. The semicolon as a kind of comma is appropriate only in extensive listings, including subordination within single items.
- Be consistent in your use of pronouns, tenses, numbers, etc., and watch out for subject-verb disagreements and other conflicts in grammar. Also, make an effort to use scientific or technical terms correctly; “linguistics” is not the same as “language.” Moreover, check your spelling, not only with respect to obvious typographical errors but also in regard to words and phrases with another meaning pronounced alike yet spelled differently; for instance, “it’s” differs from “its” grammatically and semantically. Contrast foreign terms or examples in another language by applying quotation marks ("..."), **bold print**, or *italics*.
- When documenting a source, use the format of referencing used in our principal readings, including page numbers unless the entire source supports your argument. For the documentation of an internet source, give the document’s title, the name of the source, its full address, and the date (e.g. “The WWW Virtual Library: Graphic Literature (1.0),” DIE ZEIT, http://www3.zeit.de/zeit/tag/vl-gf/index.html, 26 August 1999). If in doubt about how much referencing to incorporate, do more than less; keep in mind your reader who wants to pursue your leads. Remember also that citing another author’s writing without proper documentation is plagiarism!