

MEMS 3600: Writing the Past
Spring 2023
TTh 1230-1:45, Norman Mayer 101

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Catalog/Course description.

Writing the Past is a writing intensive course that focuses on critical, analytical, instructive, and creative writing about the world before 1800. Specific topics will vary, but the course will ask students to critically examine writings about the past (which may include but are not limited to old manuscripts or printed books, modern scholarship or journalism about the past, creative adaptations of the past, and exhibits or events focusing on the past) and learn to write about the past with a critical eye. Writing about the past can and very often does mean learning to look critically at how the past is represented in our world and to think critically about how we ourselves represent it. In this special "team taught" section of Writing the Past, you will hear about writing the past from twelve world-renowned scholars, some members of Tulane's faculty and some invited guests. This class fulfills the Tier-2 writing intensive requirement and will oblige each student to write 5000 words (about 20 pages) of academic prose and to revise their writing after peer and instructor feedback.

Course Goals

The course is designed to teach students to think and write critically about the world before 1800 and about how the world before 1800 is represented in scholarship and popular culture.

Course Learning Objectives

After completing this course, students will be able to analyze the representation of the past, will become familiar with the theoretical and critical vocabulary of many different Liberal Arts disciplines, and will learn how to situate their own critical representation of the past within a larger scholarly discourse or contextual frame. Students can demonstrate their knowledge through written assignments (including essays, annotated bibliographies, and research papers), exams, oral presentations, and online postings. Each course type will be assessed at the degree of competence expected for that level by a committee dedicated to each course type.

Program-Level Outcomes (Major/Minor)

This course counts toward the English major and minor, the Medieval and Early Modern Studies major and minor, and Tier-2 Writing Intensive requirement

Core Curriculum Outcomes

This course fulfills the Textual and Historical Perspectives requirement.

Required Student Resources

This course will rely entirely on material that can be access online (open source) or through Howard Tilton. For Milton readings, please use The Dartmouth Milton Reading Room at https://www.dartmouth.edu/~milton/reading_room/contents/text.shtml

Evaluation Procedures and Grading Criteria

Midterm Project Draft	20% of final grade
Midterm Writing Project	20% of final grade
Final Writing Project Draft	20% of final grade
Final Writing Project	30% of final grade
Lecture Attendance and Conduct	10% of final grade

A	> 95	C+	77-80
A-	91-95	C	74-76
B+	87-90	C-	71-73
B	84-86	D	60-70
B-	81-83	F	< 60

Attendance Statement

Students are expected to attend all classes unless they are ill or prevented from attending by exceptional circumstances. Instructors may establish policies for attendance and making up missed work in their classes, which are announced at the beginning of the semester. Student who find it necessary to miss class are responsible for obtaining notes on material covered in lectures or other class sessions.

Students are responsible for notifying instructors about absences that result from serious illnesses, injuries, or critical personal problems. Medical excuses are issued by the Student Health Center in the following instances: illnesses or injuries that involve hospitalization, a partial or complete withdrawal due to medical reasons, or a missed final examination for a medical condition being treated by the Student Health Center. In all of these instances, medical information will be released only with the student's written permission.

Instructors are authorized to lower the grades of students who are absent excessively without a satisfactory excuse or do not make up work missed because of absences. With the approval of the Newcomb - Tulane College dean, an instructor may have a student who has excessive absences involuntarily withdrawn from a course with a WF grade after written warning at any time during the semester.

ADA/Accessibility Statement

Any students with disabilities or other needs, who need special accommodations in this course, are invited to share these concerns or requests with the instructor and should contact Goldman Center for Student Accessibility: <http://accessibility.tulane.edu> or 504.862.8433.

COVID-19 Related Policies

Faculty and students must comply with University policies on COVID-19 testing and isolation, which are located here [<https://tulane.edu/covid-19/health-strategies>]. Faculty and students must wear face coverings in all common areas, including classrooms, and follow social distancing rules. Failure to comply is a violation of the Code of Student Conduct and students will be subject to University discipline, which can include suspension or permanent dismissal.

If a student cannot attend class for any reason, the student is responsible for communicating with their instructors to make up any work they may miss. Faculty will provide online options for class participation, outlined in this document, and unless a student is seriously ill, they are expected to use this option. The University Health Center will provide documentation verifying a student is ill, as well as verification that a student may return to class. With the approval of the Newcomb - Tulane College dean, an instructor may have a student who has excessive absences involuntarily withdrawn from a course with a WF grade after written warning at any time during the semester.

CODE OF ACADEMIC CONDUCT

The Code of Academic Conduct applies to all undergraduate students, full-time and part-time, in Tulane University. Tulane University expects and requires behavior compatible with its high standards of scholarship. By accepting admission to the university, a student accepts its regulations (i.e., [Code of Academic Conduct](#) and [Code of Student Conduct](#)) and acknowledges the right of the university to take disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion, for conduct judged unsatisfactory or disruptive.

ACCESSIBILITY

Tulane University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability, please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. I will never ask for medical documentation from you to support potential accommodation needs. Instead, to establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with the Goldman Center for Student Accessibility. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion.

Goldman Center contact information: goldman@tulane.edu; (504) 862-8433; accessibility.tulane.edu.

RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION POLICY

Both Tulane's policy of non-discrimination on the basis of religion and our core values of diversity and inclusion require instructors to make reasonable accommodations to help students avoid negative academic consequences when their religious obligations conflict with academic requirements. Every reasonable effort should be made to allow members of the university

community to observe their religious holidays without jeopardizing the fulfillment of their academic obligations. It is never acceptable for an instructor to compel a student to choose between religious observance and academic work. Absence from classes or examinations for religious reasons does not relieve students from responsibility for any part of the course work required during the period of absence. It is the obligation of the student to provide faculty within the first two weeks of each semester their intent to observe the holiday so that alternative arrangements convenient to both students and faculty can be made at the earliest opportunity. Students who make such arrangements will not be required to attend classes or take examinations on the designated days, and faculty must provide reasonable opportunities for such students to make up missed work and examinations. Exceptions to the requirement of a make-up examination must be approved in advance by the dean of the school in which the course is offered. A [religious calendar](#) is available.

TITLE IX

Tulane University recognizes the inherent dignity of all individuals and promotes respect for all people. As One Wave, Tulane is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences gender-based violence, know that you are not alone. Learn more at onewave.tulane.edu.

Campus Resources:

Strictly Confidential	Mostly Confidential
<i>Except in extreme circumstances, involving imminent danger to one's self or others, nothing will be shared without your explicit permission.</i>	<i>Conversations are kept as confidential as possible, but information is shared with key staff members so the University can offer resources and accommodations and take action if necessary for safety reasons.</i>
Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) (504) 314-2277	Coordinator of Violence Prevention (504) 314-2161
Student Health Center (504) 865-5255	Tulane University Police (TUPD) (504) 865-5911
SAPHE Hotline (504) 654-9543	Office of Institutional Equity (504) 862-8083

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION SYSTEM: TU ALERT		RAVE GUARDIAN	
<p>In the event of a campus emergency, Tulane University will notify students, faculty, and staff by email, text, and phone call. You were automatically enrolled in this system when you enrolled at the university.</p> <p>Check your contact information annually in Gibson Online to confirm its accuracy.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Download the RAVE Guardian app from the App Store • Communicate with dispatchers silently by selecting "Submit Tip" feature in the app • Use the Safety Timer feature to alert your "guardian" (TUPD, family, friend) when travelling alone at night <p>For more information, visit publicsafety.tulane.edu/rave-guardian</p>	
ACTIVE SHOOTER / VIOLENT ATTACKER		SEVERE WEATHER	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RUN – run away from or avoid the affected area, if possible • HIDE – go into the nearest room that can be locked, turn out the lights, silence cell phones, and remain hidden until all-clear message is given through TU ALERT • FIGHT – do not attempt this option, except as a last resort <p>For more information on Active Shooter emergency procedures or to schedule a training, visit emergencyprep.tulane.edu</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow all TU Alerts and outdoor warning sirens • Seek shelter indoors until the severe weather threat has passed and an all-clear message is given • Do not attempt to travel outside if weather is severe • Monitor the Tulane Emergency website (tulane.edu/emergency/) for university-wide closures during a severe weather event 	

Zoom and Recording Policy: Classes will not normally be conducted on Zoom. Zoom classes will be recorded.

Class Schedule

- Tu 17 Jan Course Introduction
- Th 19 Jan Workshop: "How do we know what happened and how do we write about it?"
- Tu 24 Jan Leslie Geddes, Tulane, Department of Art and Art History
Leonardo da Vinci and the Problem with Water
- Th 26 Jan Workshop: "The stories objects and buildings tell"
- Tu 31 Jan
- Th 2 Feb Workshop: "Bringing old papers to life"
- Tu 7 Feb Dale Shuger, Tulane University, Department of Spanish and Portuguese
Murder in the Monastery: Archives of Early Modern Crime

Th 9 Feb Workshop: "Writing the past without an archive"

Tu 14 Feb

Th 16 Feb Workshop: "The challenge of racism in representing the past."

Tu 21 Feb Mardi Gras Break

Th 23 Feb Draft of Midterm Project Due

Tu 28 Feb

Th 2 Mar

Tu 7 Mar [Eileen Reeves, Princeton University](#) *Galileo Galilei: What to Do with a Wise Guy.*

Th 9 Mar Midterm Project Due

Tu 14 Mar Richard Velkley, Celia Scott Weatherhead Professor of Philosophy, Tulane
The Philosophy of G. W. Leibniz: A Baroque Curiosity or Remarkably Modern?

Th 16 Mar

Tu 21 Mar [Patrick Butler, Tulane University, Department of English](#)
[Elden Ring and Dark Souls: Medieval Resonances and Subversive Vulnerability in Open World Gaming](#)

Th 23 Mar Workshop: "Displaying the past."

Tu 28 Mar [Richard Rambuss, Nicholas Brown Professor of English, Brown University](#)
Comus Does Comus: Milton's Afterlife in New Orleans Mardi Gras Carnival

Th 30 Mar Workshop: "What do we gain and lose by making the past current?"

Tu 4 Apr Spring Break

Th 6 Apr Spring Break

Tu 11 Apr Linda Pollock, John Christie Barr Professor of History, Tulane
What did they feel, and how do we know?

Th 13 Apr

Tu 18 Apr [Detlef Haberland](#), The Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg (Germany)
The Thrill of Discovery. Early Modern Travel History and Modern Research. The Example of Engelbert Kaempfer (1651 – 1712)

Th 20 Apr Draft of Final Project Due

Tu 25 Apr Student Presentations: Student Conference

Th 27 Apr Student Presentations: Student Poster Exhibit

Tu 2 May Student Presentations: Student Production Launch

M 8 May Final Writing Project Due