COURSE SYLLABUS
Texas History online
HIS5384.01 * CRN 81016
FALL 2015
3 credit hours

Professor: Ty Cashion (PhD, TCU, 1993)
Contact Info: his rtc@shsu.edu
Offices: Main Campus: AB4 463
The Woodlands Center (TWC), 3d Floor, Faculty Suite
History Dept. 936-294-1475

Office Hours: N/A
Since this is an online course, we will routinely conduct all of our business via cyberspace.

Correspondence
Please use your university-issued email address exclusively. The class will be receiving information regularly through Blackboard (henceforth, Bb). It is incumbent upon each of you to keep up—and in a timely manner. Do not let your account go over its usage limit! If you have an emergency during business hours, please call the history department office.

Important Note Regarding TECHNICAL ISSUES
The number for Bb support is 936-294-2780. Otherwise, be aware of two useful items in your Bb course menu. The “Need Help?” tab will let you know whom to contact. The Technical Support icon located just above the course menu will lead you to additional Bb support.

Another important note...never use the “digital drop box!”
Request for Personal Information

Personally, I find it rewarding to receive introductory messages from my online students. By sharing this information collectively, perhaps you will be able to cultivate a sense of camaraderie among your fellow classmates in an otherwise impersonal setting. Go to Bb, click on the "Getting Started" tab, and introduce yourself to the class. Any of you who have ever enjoyed a pen pal can appreciate developing a fondness for someone you may never meet in person. Let’s not get too intimate—no revealing photos, or maudlin expressions of getting your jollies from starry nights and long walks along the beach and such. If you are so inclined, do share with us how you make a living; how you became interested in history; what you plan to do with your master’s degree, etc. In a separate email message, please forward to me an alternate email address and a contact number in the event I cannot reach you through your university-issued account, or I need to reach you on short notice.

Required Material

You will need to acquire copies of the textbook and historiography. See the note below for accessing the style guide. Please know that SHSU has a well-stocked library. If you wish to check out a book, contact the library and let them know you are an online student, so they can expedite the process.

Textbook


The latest edition of the textbook (hereafter C&D) includes some important revisions, but you can still get by with an earlier edition. That said, a prerequisite for every graduate course is a survey knowledge of the subject. In my experience, this is an unrealistic expectation. For that reason, I have assigned The History of Texas. This volume covers the entire range of Texas history and is designed to give you a sense of context, that is, the “big picture” into which every reading assignment will fit.

You will also find it useful in preparing for your written and oral comprehensive examinations. When that day comes, and, if I am on your committee, I will draw from the pool of questions on THIS LINK. Answer each question to your satisfaction, that is, to the point where you feel that you have covered the ground adequately. I will not ask you to submit them. For each question, it is important to know something about the historiographical context. In fact, that is what distinguishes graduate-level understanding from the commanding, but pedestrian knowledge a history buff might know. Typically, for each topic there will be a “classic” work as well as revisions that are notable for their interpretations, or for contributing previously unknown information. Where applicable, the material you read during this course will best suffice, because you should be able to discuss various aspects at some length.

Historiography

Buenger & De León, eds. Beyond Texas through Time: Breaking away from Past Interpretations (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2011)

Publisher’s description: In 1991 Walter L. Buenger and the late Robert A. Calvert compiled a pioneering work in Texas historiography: Texas through Time, a seminal survey and
critique of the field of Texas history from its inception through the end of the 1980s. Now, Buenger and Arnoldo De León have assembled an important new collection that assesses the current state of Texas historiography, building on the many changes in understanding and interpretation that have developed in the nearly twenty years since the publication of the original volume. This new work, Beyond Texas through Time (hereafter BTtT) departs from the earlier volume’s emphasis on the dichotomy between traditionalism and revisionism as applied to various eras. Instead, the essay chapters in this book consider the topical and thematic understandings of Texas historiography embraced by a new generation of Texas historians as they reflect analytically on the work of the past two decades. The resulting approaches thus offer the potential of informing the study of themes and topics other than those specifically introduced in this volume, extending its usefulness well beyond a review of the literature. In addition, the volume editors’ introduction proposes the application of cultural constructionism as an important third perspective on the thematic and topical analyses provided by the other contributors. BTtT offers both a vantage point and a benchmark, serving as an important reference for scholars and advanced students of history and historiography, even beyond the borders of Texas.

**Important note:** To receive a discount for BTtT, order it directly from Texas A&M Press, via their marketing manager, Gayla Christiansen. Be sure to tell her, “Dr. Cashion sent me,” and that you would like to get the same break she has so graciously extended to my graduate students in the past. You may reach Gayla by email at gayla-c@tamu.edu; the main number is 979-845-1436.

**Style Guide**
Your work should conform to the rules detailed in the *Chicago Manual of Style* (henceforth, CMS). The library should have access to an online version. For routine matters, you might find the following link sufficient:

http://chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

**Course Objectives**
✓ Students will develop an understanding of the history and the historiography of Texas.
✓ Students will gain an appreciation that Texas history has grown beyond stereotypes of narrow parochialism, and that it is a contributing partner to the intellectual mainstream.
✓ Students will add resonance to that understanding by compiling and annotating recent works that are contributing to a new usable past relevant to twenty-first-century Texans.
✓ Students will also enhance their writing skills by composing a historiography based on their annotated bibliographies.

In the process, I will expect students...
✓ to polish their critical thinking skills;
✓ to able to form and defend opinions; and,
✓ to compose clear, concise, and expressive prose.

As in all graduate work, each student must gain the permission of the department before enrolling in this course. Another prerequisite is written competency. I expect written work to be well conceived, grammatically correct, and clearly stated. Work that does not meet this standard cannot earn a grade above a “C.”
**Course Description & Instructional Method**
This course approaches Texas from a historiographical perspective. Its range covers the contact period (i.e., when European and American Indian cultures first met) up to the present day. The instructional method will consist of guiding the class through a selection of readings, after which students will conduct historiographic research and compose a report of their discoveries.

**Assignments**
The assignments will be administered through Bb. Look for the tab “Units.” There, for each of the seven units, you will find learning outcomes, instructions, and links to discussion forums. The progression of assignments will involve 1) five readings, 2) the compilation of a bibliography, which will then be annotated and separated into genres, and 3) the composition of a historiographical paper.

**Note regarding discussion boards**
For each of the assignments you will find a corresponding discussion board. I expect every student to participate in each discussion, unless otherwise noted. Be aware of the opening and closing dates!

As you contribute to the discussion strings, please engage each other in civil, constructive exchanges. Know that I fully expect you to disagree with each other; at the same time, I also expect you to be respectful of opinions that differ from your own. If you find someone’s comments offensive, it may be fitting to let him or her know why. But, incline toward reason rather than condemnation in making your case, and as a goal try to seek common ground or at least some understanding. After all, we are examining issues that are often divisive, so let us strive to make it a learning experience.

The first person to weigh in should try and set the tone for the conversation. Do not feel as if you must cover every base; rather, the goal should be to provide some kind of insight for cultivating the discussion. Likewise, every follow-up does not have to address a prior commentator. Figuratively, try to produce a collective thread for each discussion that more resembles a tight rope than one which appears loose and frayed.

**Primer for Books & Reviews Search**
Our most able reference librarian, Erin Cassidy, put together the following instructions that will facilitate the kind of research you will be performing this semester: [LINK].

**Submitting Work & Grading**
Once again, *NEVER use the “Digital Drop Box.”* It is incumbent upon each student to follow this simple instruction, or suffer the consequences.

Please submit all work in Microsoft Word, single-spaced, with a 12-point, Times New Roman font and one-inch margins; double-space between paragraphs/entries.

I will calculate your course grade on your final paper as well as the timeliness, quality, and thoroughness of your contribution to the discussions. Those of you who have had me for other
courses know that I am fair to the point of being generous, and I am always willing to listen to any associated concerns you might have.

Please know that you will **not** receive a grade for your individual assignments, because I am not inclined to base your grade on an average. Figuratively, each of you will be coming out of the blocks from different lanes and running at various speeds. I have had students begin by submitting lousy work that improves only gradually until something goes “click,” and then they start running like a scalded dog—again, figuratively. No matter how you are doing from assignment-to-assignment, if you do everything you are asked, and you are producing “A” work when you cross the finish line, you will receive an “A” for the course.

**University Policies**

The following link will take you to the University policies regarding Academic Dishonesty,* Absences for Religious Holidays, Students with Disabilities, and Visitors in the Classroom. Many of these will not apply to online students, but be advised to make sure you know which ones obligate you. If you are unclear, please ask me: [http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/](http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/).

*Academic Dishonesty*

This particular policy merits elaboration. In that regard, I expect all of the work you submit to be the product of your own efforts (or in cooperation with any class group to which I may assign you). In particular, consult the CMS regarding quotations. Wanton plagiarism will result in a zero for the assignment and an “F” in the course. I reserve the right to interpret “wanton” at my discretion. Following then, is the university policy for academic dishonesty:

> All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. For a complete listing of the university policy, see: [http://www.shsu.edu/dept/dean-of-students/index.html](http://www.shsu.edu/dept/dean-of-students/index.html).

**Final Note:** Due to time constraints and/or unforeseen circumstances, I may modify the syllabus. If so, I will alert the class of the change by email.