History 203 L   Michael R. H. Swanson, Ph.D.
Dimensions of History Lab   Office: CAS 110
Wednesdays, 5:00 - 7:50 p.m.   Hours: T, 10:00 - 11:00
CAS 128   M, F, 1:00 - 2:00, W: 2:00-3:00
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Spring, 2008   e-mail: dimensionsofhistory@msn.com

Introduction to the Lab.

The object of the laboratory section of History 203 is to give you a series of tools and experiences which will enhance the study of history for you. It complements the class section of History 203 taught by Professor Mulligan, but it will not always be rigidly tied to the work therein.   The lab will center on a series of projects which will be introduced through tutorials and practice in the lab room and at home. All the specific projects are not set in stone as yet.

Here's a preliminary list:

Lab Exercises for History 203 (Not necessarily in this order)

1.   Internet tutorials. We'll be doing two of them: The Internet Detective, and the Online Tutorial for Historians from the Intute Virtual Training Suite
2.   Blackboard Tutorial and Journal Project
   a.   You'll be introduced to features on Blackboard rather like a Journal or Weblog.
   b.   You will be asked to keep a diary of "meditations" on history, stimulated by your various history classes. This kind of intellectual Diary or "Commonplace Book" was kept by such thinkers as Thomas Jefferson. You can write anything you choose (knowing that other students will have access to read it)
      I.   For example: "The most interesting thing I learned about history today," or
      ii.   "Thoughts on the value of studying history stimulated by _____" or
      iii.   "A fragment of my philosophy of history," etc. etc. The idea is to get them to be introspective about what they're learning and how it is influencing their intellectual growth, and to *consistent* in applying a little time to introspection.
3.   Building a Website using Homestead, or other web building tool, on which will be accommodated research related to specific persons, movements, or incidents in the historical novel, London, by Edward Rutherfurd.
4.   Bibliography Project.
   a.   Each student will choose a single History or American Studies class from the Roger Williams University Catalog. Faculty must approve the course chosen.

        b.   Students will create an annotated bibliography of web resources appropriate for that particular course, using a number of Web Portals:

              I.   The Librarian's Guide to the Internet
              ii.   The Internet Scout Report
              iii.   Research Buzz
              iv.   The Open Directory Project
              v.   Library-Based Data Bases such as J-Stor and Lexis-Nexus.

N.B.   A number of these announce updates on a weekly basis via E-mail. Students will subscribe and update their bibliography regularly.

5.   Historians' Skills: Accuracy in Proofreading.

        a.   I'll introduce you to Project Gutenberg and the process whereby books are prepared for electronic editions.

        b,   You will enrol in Distributed Proofreaders, Take a demonstration Walkthrough, and let them browse to find books which they'd like to proofread. Each student will be required to proofread a minimum of **five pages** to receive a passing grade © for this exercise. Higher grades will be available for proofreading a larger number of pages. There will be a prize for the "Proofreading Prince or Princess". This project has a secondary benefit. It allows us to pay back the hard work others have done to provide materials for us by preserving and providing rare books for the rest of the world.

6.   Historians' Skills: Accuracy in transcribing handwritten documents.

        a.   There are a number of websites with facsimile documents on them—letters from people like Thomas Jefferson, or former slaves. There is also a website on the evolution of English Handwriting.

        b.   I will provide you with individual facsimiles, have you transcribe them and post them where the rest of the class can see your work.

7.   Introduce different kinds of search engines, strengths and weaknesses of each.

        a   You will do a comparative search of some historical term or person using such tools as: Google, Clusty, Dogpile, Ask, and perhaps one or two others. This follows on the training given through the internet tutorials.

        b.   Introduce Web Directories, as well, a follow-up to the Open Directory Project.

        c.   Introduce the newest web research tools: Del.icio.us, Stumble Upon and Zotero.

8.   Descriptive skills. You will learn to analyze, describe, and interpret a variety of illustrations, including maps, paintings, cartoons, photographs, and three-dimensional objects.

9.   Using these skills to write better, more convincing, more interesting, and more eloquent history. I do not plan to spend lab time in class discussing elementary rules of grammar. I do intend that you critique each other's work--including the

assignments given in the class section of this course, and that upon my suggestion or that of your peers, you revise your work, using the Writing Center as necessary.

Some of these will be on-going projects, others will be accomplished in a week, with the understanding that you continue practicing the skills until mastery.

GRADING for the LAB and its relationship to your grade for the course. The Lab does not have an independent grade: Your work in the lab will be averaged into the grade for the course as a whole. It will contribute approximately 40% to your grade for the class.

The three most important projects will be the research project based on London, your research bibliography (described under number four above) and the reflective journal I'm calling your Commonplace book. Together these will count approximately 60% of your lab grade. The rest of the projects will contribute 40% together.

Attendance Policy:

Each Session counts a week's work. ***Unexcused*** absences will have a negative effect upon your grade. Three Unexcused absences counstitues failing the lab section of the course.   Having said this, I'm fairly liberal in granting excuses, *provided* I'm notified in advance, and *provided* you make an appointment to see me during office hours.

Academic Honesty.

The University Academic Honesty Policy will be scrupulously adhered to in this class. One of the tutorials is based upon proper citation methods for web-based materials, and we'll use that method in here.