

The History of Metropolitan Washington

History 417. George Mason University. Fall 2006

MW, 11:30-12:20 Robinson B224 + walking tours

Professor Zachary M. Schrag

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Office Hours: Wednesdays, 2-4 pm, and by appointment.

Course website: <http://mason.gmu.edu/~zschrag/hist417fall06/home.htm>

Course wiki: <http://metropolitanwashington.pbwiki.com/>

Syllabus revised: August 21, 2006

Metropolitan Washington, D.C., is worthy of study as the nation's fifth-largest metropolitan area, the seat of the federal government, and the home of George Mason University. In this course, we will explore the history of the region from the eighteenth century to the present. We will pay particular attention to two questions. First, how have Americans sought to resolve the tensions between Washington's role as national capital and its role as home to its residents? And second, how can the study of particular places help us understand the past?

Administrative information

All assignments are governed by the George Mason University **honor code**, online at <http://www.gmu.edu/departments/unilife/honorcode.html>. You are expected to work independently and to acknowledge all sources, including assigned texts and materials found online.

Gordon Harvey's *Writing with Sources* is required reading and should answer most questions about **citation**, but ask me if you need clarification. In general, any sentence in your work that can be traced to a single sentence in someone else's work should bear a footnote. Any collaboration, such as consultation with the Writing Center, should also be acknowledged. Violations of academic integrity will be reported to the administration and may result in grade penalties, including failure of the course.

In case of **inclement weather**, please call the main switchboard at 703-993-1000 or consult the main web page at <http://www.gmu.edu/> to see if classes are cancelled. I expect to cancel class only when the university cancels all classes.

If you are a student with a **disability** and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the DRC.

All students are expected to check their **gmu.edu e-mail** regularly and are responsible for information sent to their GMU addresses.

Requirements

Participation (15 percent)

Much of this course is discussion based, which means that each student's learning depends on the other students' being prepared, punctual, and active. The participation grade is designed to encourage you to help other students learn, and to prepare you for a lifetime of meetings. You are expected to attend class twice a week and each walking tour. The participation grade is based on your prompt arrival and active participation in discussions. You should be in your seat, ready to take notes at 11:30 am; chronic tardiness will lower your grade. To be counted as on time, you must sign in by 11:30. To be counted present, you must sign the late attendance sheet.

Basic classroom rules:

- Bring the appropriate book to class on the day we discuss it.
- Do not eat in the classroom, before or during class.
- Turn off all cell phones, pagers, and other noisemakers.
- Wait until the end of class to begin packing up your belongings.

Essays (15 percent each; 45 percent total)

Four essays are assigned over the course of the semester in response to the lectures and assigned readings, and your best three grades will count toward your final grade. Each essay should run five paragraphs (500-750 words or roughly two double-spaced pages). Specific assignments will be handed out in class and posted on the course website.

For each day that reading is due, you will be asked to answer a question in an electronic journal entry. Your entries will not be graded individually, but their presence will factor into your essay grades.

Your essays must be brought to the start of class (or, on one occasion, a tour). Late papers, including papers brought late to class, will be penalized a full point on a ten-point scale and an additional half point for each additional 24-hour period or fraction thereof. Late papers should be sent by e-mail to zschrage@gmu.edu, with "417" in the subject header. Paste the text of your paper into the body of the e-mail in case your attachment does not go through.

Tour Quizzes (5 percent each; 15 percent total)

On four Fridays at 10:30 am class will meet at a Metro station in downtown Washington for a 90 – 120 minute walking tour. Please bring a notepad.

Please consult the course website —

<http://mason.gmu.edu/~zschrage/hist417fall06/home.htm> — for exact meeting places.

If you arrive late and cannot find the group, please call my cell phone at 703/593-6903. Please do not use this number for any other reason.

Within 24 hours of the end of each tour, please e-mail me three multiple-choice or fill-in-the-blank questions (with their answers) based on the information presented in the tour. On the Monday after each tour, you will have a quiz based on your classmates' questions and my own. To get credit, you must attend the tour, send in thoughtful questions, and pass the quiz. Your top three scores count.

If you are unable to attend a tour, you will be required to take a tour offered by a reputable guide, chosen in consultation with the instructor, and write a review of that tour. This may be considerably more work than taking the class tour.

Guidebook Contribution (25 percent)

The capstone assignment for this course is a contribution to an online guidebook to Metropolitan Washington, hosted at <http://metropolitanwashington.pbwiki.com/>. Your contribution will include an introductory essay, an descriptions of 6-8 sites in the Washington area, and an annotated bibliography. A topic proposal is due on September 27, a list of sites on October 18, and a rough draft on November 15. The final project should be posted to the class website by December 4 and presented in class on December 4 or December 6. More detailed instructions are attached.

Readings

Required—available at the university bookstore in the Johnson Center

The following books have been ordered at the university bookstore. The bookstore also has a **course pack** that is required. If you do not see it on the shelf, please ask a member of the staff.

- Catherine Allgor. *Parlor Politics: In Which the Ladies of Washington Help Build a City and a Government*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2002.
- Lucy G. Barber. *Marching on Washington : The Forging of an American Political Tradition*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.
- Howard Gillette, Jr. *Between Justice and Beauty: Race, Planning, and the Failure of Urban Policy in Washington, D.C.* 1995. Reprint, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006.
- Gordon Harvey. *Writing With Sources: A Guide for Students*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998.
- Sarah Luria. *Capital Speculations : Writing and Building Washington, D.C.* Durham, N.H.: University of New Hampshire Press ; Lebanon, N.H. : University Press of New England, 2006.

Required—available online

- Zachary M. Schrag, "Guidelines for History Students," <http://www.schrag.info/teaching/teaching.html>.
These guidelines offer suggestions for reading efficiently, building strong thesis statements, and organizing essays. Following them closely will improve your grade.

Schedule

Week 1

August 28. Introduction

UNIT 1: Washington's Washington

August 30. Lecture: George Washington's dream

Week 2

September 4. NO CLASS (Labor Day)

September 6. Lecture: The L'Enfant Plan

Week 3

September 11. Discussion 1.

- *Between Justice and Beauty*, ix-xi; 2-43.
- *Capital Speculations*, 3-37.

September 13. Lecture: Washington City

September 15. **TOUR 1: Foggy Bottom**

Week 4

September 18. Discussion 2.

- *Parlor Politics*, 48-146.
 - **TOUR 1 QUIZ**
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UNIT 2: Lincoln's Washington

September 20. Lecture: Slavery debates

- **ESSAY 1 DUE**

Week 5

September 25. Discussion 3.

- READER: "Imaginary Cruelties"? *Washington History* 13 (Fall/Winter 2001-2002), 4-27.
- READER: *The Pearl: A Failed Slave Escape on the Potomac*, 48-70; 260-264.
- Stanley Harrold, "On the Borders of Slavery and Race: Charles T. Torrey and the Underground Railroad," *Journal of the Early Republic* 20 (Summer, 2000): 273-292. [Available on JSTOR: <http://mutex.gmu.edu:2048/login?URL=http://www.jstor.org>]

September 27. Lecture: Sword and shield

- **GUIDEBOOK: TOPIC PROPOSAL DUE**

Week 6.

- October 2. NO CLASS
October 4. Discussion 4
- *Capital Speculations*, 38-68.
 - Library of Congress, Civil War Maps.
- October 6. **TOUR 2: East End**
- **ESSAY 2 DUE**

Week 7.

- October 9. NO CLASS (Columbus Day)
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UNIT 3: Imperial Washington

- October 10. Lecture. Engineering Washington
- **TOUR 2 QUIZ**
- October 11. Discussion 5.
- *Between Justice and Beauty*, 46-87
 - *Capital Speculations*, 71-98.
- Week 8.**
- October 16. Discussion 6.
- *Between Justice and Beauty*, 88-129.
 - *Capital Speculations*, 99-142
- October 18. Lecture: The Secret City
- **GUIDEBOOK: PRELIMINARY BIBLIOGRAPHY AND LIST OF SITES DUE**

Week 9.

- October 23. Discussion 7.
- **READER: *Alley Life in Washington*, 100-142.**
 - **READER: *Leading the Race: The Transformation of the Black Elite in the Nation's Capital, 1880-1920*, 1-9; 51-70.**
- October 25. Lecture: New Deal and Home Front Washington
- October 27. **TOUR 3: Pennsylvania Avenue**

Week 10.

- October 30. Discussion 8.
- *Between Justice and Beauty*, 132-150
 - *Marching on Washington*, 75-140
 - **TOUR 3 QUIZ**

UNIT 4: Postwar Washington

November 1. Lecture: Suburbs and Highways

- **ESSAY 3 DUE**

Week 11

November 6. Discussion 9.

- *Between Justice and Beauty*, 151-169.
- **READER: *Suburban Alchemy***, 153-178, 184-205, 208-219.

November 8. Lecture: Riots and Home Rule

Week 12

November 13. Discussion 10.

- *Between Justice and Beauty*, 170-189.
- *Washington Post* riot coverage (ProQuest).

November 15. Lecture: Barry's Washington

- **GUIDEBOOK: ROUGH DRAFT DUE**

November 17

Tour 4: Southwest

Week 13

November 20. Discussion 11. [Washington History Matters]

- **TOUR 4 QUIZ**

November 22. NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)

Week 14

November 27 Lecture: Washington Today

November 29. Discussion 12.

- *Between Justice and Beauty*, 190-214
- *Capital Speculations*, 143-155
- **ESSAY 4 DUE**

Week 15

December 4 Presentations

- **GUIDEBOOK CONTRIBUTION DUE**

December 6. Presentations

Essay Assignment

Deadlines

Essay 1: September 20.

Essay 2: October 6.

Essay 3: November 1.

Essay 4: November 29.

Task

Please visit the class website

<<http://mason.gmu.edu/~zschrag/hist417fall06/assignments.htm/>>

for specific assignment questions.

Please write an essay of roughly 500-750 words (two or three double-spaced pages) answering the assignment question. Support your answer with evidence from the assigned readings, quoting from them when appropriate. Your essay should follow the standards of formal academic writing, as stated in *Writing with Sources* and my “Guidelines for History Students,” <http://www.schrag.info/teaching/teaching.html>

Goals

This assignment requires you to

- read assigned texts critically and carefully.
- think about the sources analytically, so that you present an interpretive argument rather than just a list of facts.
- become familiar with the norms of academic writing, with particular attention to thesis statements, topic sentences, and citation.

Process Stages

- Read the materials for the relevant unit and review your lecture notes and journal entries. You may also wish to read your classmates’ entries. As you read, consider how each document might help you answer the essay question.
- Write out several potential answers to the question. Choose the most surprising answer you can support with evidence and use it as your thesis statement.
- Outline your essay, with the thesis statement in the introduction and a series of points to support your argument.
- Build your essay by turning each outline point into a paragraph consisting of a topic sentence supported by evidence.
- As you write, cite all your sources, including lecture notes and classmates’ journal entries.
- Compare your essay to the pre-submission checklist at <http://www.schrag.info/teaching/checklist.html> and correct any lapses.

Submission

Submit the following, collected in a folder:

- One copy of your paper
- A printout of your journal entries for the unit.
- For essays after the first, a process memo explaining how each essay improves on the one that came before.

Grading Criteria

Journal entries: 20 percent

I will review your entries to make sure they were submitted on time and addressed the question posed.

Final essay: 80 percent

When I read your paper, I will look for interpretive arguments supported by evidence from primary sources. Your grade will be based on:

- The interpretive power of your **thesis statement**. The more surprising your finding, the more it is worth.
- Your ability to support your thesis statement with **evidence** from primary sources, especially direct quotations. This includes the **accuracy** of your accounts of events and your summaries of the sources you use.
- The **quality of your writing** and its conformity to academic norms. I will look for topic sentences that support your thesis, complete sentences, appropriate grammar, spelling, punctuation, and Chicago-style citation.

For more information, see my Grading Standards,
<http://www.schrag.info/teaching/gradingstandards.html>

Your essays must be brought to the start of class. Late papers, including papers brought late to class, will be penalized a full grade and 1/3 of a grade (e.g, B to B-) for each additional 24-hour period or fraction thereof. Late papers should be sent by e-mail to zschrag@gmu.edu. Include the term “417” in the subject line of your message and paste the text of your paper into the body of the e-mail in case your attachment does not go through.

Guidebook Assignment

Deadlines

- September 27: Topic proposal
- October 18: List of sites and annotated bibliography
- November 15. Rough draft.
- December 4: All tours are due in class. Please come to class with a printed copy of your tour.
- December 4 or December 6. You will present your tour to the class.

Goals

This assignment requires you to

- explore a theme in the history of metropolitan Washington in more depth than we can cover in class
- use libraries, the Internet, and your own exploration to learn more about your subject
- learn how to find historical images on the World Wide Web and elsewhere
- think about the images analytically
- think about the relationship between history and tourism
- practice public speaking

Task

The tour assignment requires you to build an online guide to some element of the history of metropolitan Washington. My inspiration for this assignment is the “Building Stones of Washington Walking Tour” presented by the U.S. Geological Survey <<http://pubs.usgs.gov/gip/stones/tour.html>>. Like “Building Stones,” your tour should teach readers something about the city by guiding them through descriptions of individual sites.

You have a fair amount of latitude in choosing a theme. Your theme might relate to an ethnic group (e.g., Salvadorans in Washington), a building type (e.g., markets), a type of activity (e.g., science), an architectural style, etc. Just be prepared to explain what common thread links the sites you choose.

In doing research, tour guides and reference books will be helpful in identifying sites, but I expect you to find and use available secondary and, in some cases, primary sources. I have assembled links and a bibliography on the course website <<http://mason.gmu.edu/~zschrage/hist417fall06/resources.htm>>; see me or a librarian for help locating additional sources.

Your completed project will consist of three components:

Introductory Essay

An essay of roughly 500-750 words describing a theme in the history of metropolitan Washington.

Annotated Bibliography

A list of printed works, websites, and other sources of information you used to construct your tour, with comments on what you learned from each.

See Roger D. Launius and J.D. Hunley, "An Annotated Bibliography of the Apollo Program," *Monographs in Aerospace History*, Number 2, July 1994, <http://history.nasa.gov/Apollobib/contents.html>, for an example of what an annotated bibliography should look like.

Site Pages

Roughly 6-8 pages showing specific places (buildings, monuments, intersections, etc.). Each page should include:

1. A public-domain image of the place. There are three ways you can acquire such an image:
 - a. Take a photograph yourself. If you do not have a digital camera, you can borrow one from the STAR Lab <http://tac.gmu.edu/workshops/image_general/resources/star_cameras.htm> Posting a photograph to the course wiki requires that you agree to place the image in the public domain.
 - b. Locate a public-domain image online. See our class Resources page <<http://mason.gmu.edu/~zschrage/hist417fall06/resources.htm>> for starting places. Keep in mind that any image created by the federal government, any image published before 1923, and any image published without a copyright notice before 1978.
 - c. Scan a public-domain image from a printed work. The STAR*T lab has a scanner for student use <<http://media.gmu.edu/start/whatsat.html>>
2. A description of the site, including basic information about who built it and when.
3. An analysis of the site, explaining its significance to your theme.

NOTE: A site may fit into more than one thematic tour. For example, if one student includes the Government Printing Office as an example of the information economy of Washington, and another student includes it as an example of a blue-collar workplace, they should collaborate on elements 1 and 2, then each write an analysis section explaining how the GPO fits their tour.

Grading Criteria

I want this assignment to be fun, but still rigorous. I will look for:

- Thematic coherence. You need not prove a thesis as rigorously as in an essay, but you should show that you have chosen sites thoughtfully, rather than choosing the first few you stumbled across.
- Thorough research. You should show that you have found the most authoritative scholarship on your theme.
- Detailed analysis. Your analysis of each site should explain how a visit to that site illustrates your theme.
- Enthusiastic presentation. Each group should keep the rest of the class awake and interested.