

HISTORY 204

Dickinson College // Spring 2025
Mon / Thu 130pm
Classroom: Stern 12
URL: <https://blogs.dickinson.edu/hist-204pinsker/>

Historical Methods

Matthew Pinsker
Office: 61 N. West Street
Hours: Mon. 10am to 1pm
Email: pinskerm@dickinson.edu

“Facts are stubborn things.”
--John Adams, December 4, 1770

Required Text

- Zachary M. Schrag, *The Princeton Guide to Historical Research* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2021)

Additional Readings

- 1619 Project, Intro by Nikole Hannah-Jones, *New York Times*, August 19, 2019.
- David W. Blight, “For Something beyond the Battlefield”: Frederick Douglass and the Struggle for the Memory of the Civil War,” *Journal of American History* 75 (March 1989): 1156-1178 [JSTOR]
- DeNeen Brown, “[Angela’s Story]: A Symbol of Slavery –And Survival,” *Washington Post*, April 29, 2019.
- Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center, Dickinson College (2023) [WEB]
- Cornelia Hughes Dayton, “Taking the Trade: Abortion and Gender Relations in an Eighteenth-Century New England Village.” *William & Mary Quarterly* 48 (Jan. 1991): 19-49 [JSTOR]
- Dickinson student projects: [Sarah Goldberg](#) // [Shayna Herzfeld](#) // [Gracie Perine](#) // [Colin Macfarlane](#) // [Rachel Morgan](#) // [Maeve Thistle](#)
- Anna Dickinson, *Perils of the Hour* (1864), Knowledge for Freedom (2022) [WEB]
- Dickinson & Slavery, House Divided Project at Dickinson College (2019) [WEB]
- Timothy B. Huebner, “Roger B. Taney and the Slavery Issue: Looking Before –and Beyond—*Dred Scott*,” *Journal of American History* 97 (June 2010): 17-38 [JSTOR]
- Wendy K. Moffat, “Political Metaphors: Teaching on a Cold-War Campus,” *John & Mary’s Journal* 14 (2001): 31-51.
- Esther Popel Shaw, *Personal Adventures in Race Relations* (1948) [WEB]
- Underground Railroad Online Handbook, NPS / House Divided Project (2023) [WEB]
- US Constitution on Slavery, Knowledge for Freedom seminar (2022) [WEB]

Course Policies

For details on course policies, especially those regarding attendance, participation, accommodations for disabilities, plagiarism, and general learning objectives, please consult the course website: <https://blogs.dickinson.edu/hist-204pinsker/course-policies/>

Research Journal

Students will submit four (4) research journal entries (2-4 pages each or about 500 to 1,000 words per entry), posted PRIVATE at the course website. These narrative essays will detail efforts to meet assigned research tasks. The first entry (**due by Mon. Feb. 10**) will describe book reviews from an academic historical journal provided by Prof. Pinsker. The second entry (**Mon. March 3**) will analyze the effectiveness of one or more historic wayside markers either on campus or in Carlisle. For the third entry (**Mon. March 31**), students will use either Ancestry.com or one of the library's historical newspaper databases (or both) to conduct targeted research on a possible subject for their final project. The final journal entry (**Mon. April 14**) must describe an archival research trip to the College Archives or elsewhere conducted for the biography project. Each journal entry should include Chicago-style footnotes and 2 to 3 images, properly captioned and credited. Additional information will be available on the assignment guidelines at the course site. Entries will be graded on research effort, depth of analysis and quality of prose. Late entries will be penalized up to 5 points each day.

Biography Project

The highlight of this semester will be a multi-media biography project that analyzes a significant figure from either Carlisle or Dickinson history. Students should begin by submitting an ungraded proposal for their project **by Monday, April 7**. Students will then submit a 10- to 12-page biographical research paper (**by Mon. April 21**) that describes the life and times of their subject as well as offering an assessment of how the college or local community has so far commemorated this figure (or not) and how the commemoration efforts might be improved with an updated wayside marker. These draft papers will receive provisional grades. The next week, students will also lead a short presentation in class on their subject that will count toward final participation grades. Students will finally revise and transform their various efforts on this project into a public history website on the free platform Weebly (**by Tuesday, May 6**). The site will include a home page and at least three content pages covering the life, times, and public memory of their subject. Each page should include a multi-media tool: short video, timeline, and draft wayside marker. Additional information will be available on the assignment guidelines at the course site. Projects will be graded on research and design efforts, depth of analysis, and quality of prose. Late submissions will be penalized 5 points per day.

Grade Distribution

Class Participation	30 percent
Research journal (4 entries x 10 pts each)	40 percent
Biography project	30 percent

Monday	1/20	Methods & Expectations	---
Thursday	1/23	LAB: Henry W. Spradley	Dickinson & Slavery + Macfarlane project
Monday	1/27	Defining Terms	Schrag, chap. 1-2
Thursday	1/30	LAB: Angela	1619 Project + Angela's story + [US Constitution & Slavery]
Monday	2/3	Framing Questions	Schrag, chap. 3
Thursday	2/6	LAB: Sarah Grosvenor	Dayton article
Monday	2/10	Historiography	Schrag, chap. 4
Monday	2/10	Journal #1: Book reviews	Due posted by 5pm
Thursday	2/13	LAB: William and Eliza Parker	UGRR handbook
Monday	2/17	The Politics of Evidence	Schrag, chap. 5 (Late start: 2pm)
Thursday	2/20	LAB: Roger Taney	Huebner article
Monday	2/24	Text Sources	Schrag, chap. 6
Thursday	2/27	LAB: Anna Dickinson	KFF seminar + Perine project
Monday	3/3	Other Sources	Schrag, chap. 7
Monday	3/3	Journal #2: Wayside markers	Due posted by 5pm
Thursday	3/6	LAB: Frederick Douglass	Blight article
Monday	3/10	NO CLASS (Spring Break)	
Thursday	3/13	NO CLASS (Spring Break)	
Monday	3/17	Databases and Archives	Schrag, chap. 8-9
Thursday	3/20	FIELD TRIP: College Archives	Library basement
Monday	3/24	Close Reading	Schrag, chap. 10
Monday	3/24	Bell Lecture: Evan Young	430pm, Denny 317
Tuesday	3/25	Wert Lecture (required)	7pm, ATS
Thursday	3/27	LAB: Tom Torlino	Carlisle Indian School database
Monday	3/31	Organizing	Schrag, chap. 11-12
Monday	3/31	Journal #3: Ancestry +	Due posted by 5pm
Thursday	4/3	LAB: Esther Popel	Popel Shaw memoir
Monday	4/7	Writing & Storytelling	Schrag, chap. 13-14
Monday	4/7	Project proposals	By 5pm via email
Thursday	4/10	LAB: Laurent LaVallee	Moffat essay + Herzfeld project
Monday	4/14	Style Guides	Schrag, chap. 15
Monday	4/14	Journal #4: Archival research	Due posted by 5pm
Thursday	4/17	LAB: Pierce Bounds	Goldberg project
Thursday	4/17	Pflaum lecture: Elisabeth Leake	630pm, Stern Great Room
Monday	4/21	Going Public	Schrag, chap. 16
Monday	4/21	Biography papers due	By 5pm via email
Thursday	4/24	LAB: John Cuddy and Mary Dillon	Thistle project + Morgan project
Monday	4/28	Student presentations	
Thursday	5/1	Student presentations	
Tuesday	5/6	Biography projects due	By 5pm via email