

HIST*3480, Workplace Learning: Miscreants & Rascals

Department of History, Winter 2019

Instructor & Workplace Supervisor: Dr Kris Inwood

Course Synopsis:

This independent study course provides direct experience in the creation and analysis of data describing Canadians imprisoned during the 19th and early 20th. The lives of these people are documented in admission registers for the Kingston Penitentiary, Stony Mountain (Manitoba) Penitentiary, two Saskatchewan jails (Prince Albert and Regina) and three British Columbia jails (Victoria, Nanaimo and New Westminster). Your experiential learning opportunity will involve transcribing the prison registers from images of the pages online in order to make rare but highly useful documents more accessible for researchers now and in the future. In connecting this work experience to your academic discipline you will write a series of short critical reflections and a research paper analyzing what can be learned about the patterns of offences and offenders using the prison register as a primary source.

Course Format:

Independent work with scheduled meetings.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Critical Understanding of 19th & 20th-century criminal justice systems and prisons.
2. Ability to understand 19th & 20th-century handwriting & vocabulary.
3. Knowledge of transcription practices.
4. Knowledge of research practices.
5. Ability to critically reflect upon your own work.
6. Ability to critically assess the strengths and weaknesses of criminal justice records as sources

Methods of Evaluation:

Transcriptions 40%

Weekly Critical Reflections 20%

Final Essay 40%

Texts and/or Resources Required:

No Required Textbook

Project Timeline

Week of Jan 7: Receive instructions for transcription, digital images of a first set of pages and an already prepared transcription of these pages. You investigate the challenges of transcribing including conventions that have been designed to minimize inconsistency between transcribers.

Meeting Monday Jan 14: Pre-arranged group meeting with Professor Inwood via Skype (or equivalent communications software) to learn about the questions and quantitative methods with which to mine the prison records for meaning. We review the instructions, discuss challenges of transcription and distribute a new set of images to be transcribed.

Week of Jan 21: Your first set of transcriptions is due. No grade will be assigned to your work at this point. This is an opportunity for Dr. Inwood to see how you are doing and address any issues early in the semester. Dr. Inwood provides written feedback on sample pages. New images are distributed.

Meeting Monday Feb 4: The first collection of weekly Critical Reflections is due covering weeks 1-4. Pre-arranged group meeting with Professor Inwood in his office. You will discuss challenges encountered in the transcription and verbally report on the topic you will do for your essay.

Meeting Monday March 4: The second collection of weekly Critical Reflections covering weeks 5-8 is due. At this meeting, we also will discuss the final essay/document analysis.

Meeting Monday April 1: Your complete set of transcriptions is due. Pre-arranged group meeting with Professor Inwood in his office for final discussion of essay/document analysis.

Monday April 8: Essay/document analysis is due.

Please note: This is a preliminary web course description only. The department reserves the right to change without notice any information in this description. The final, binding course outline will be distributed in the first class of the semester.