COURSE DESCRIPTION:

History 440, "Senior Research Project," is a one credit course which is required of all senior History Majors taking either option #1 or option #3. The university catalog describes this course as "an historical inquiry culminating in a capstone project that demonstrates command of historical research methods."

Students should be requesting a 440 professor with whom they have previously taken a class—generally an upper-level class--and therefore should be working in the professor's area of specialization. Professors may require this to be the case.

REGISTRATION:

In order to register for HIST 440 the History Department requires that the student:

- 1. discuss the intended project with a professor whom the student asks to supervise the project,
- 2. obtain that professor's agreement to supervise and evaluate the student's work,
- 3. fill out the "Senior Research Project (History 440) Request Form" available at http://www.bsu.edu/history (click on "Current Students" and then on "History 440 Senior Research Project" to find and download it) **as directed**

The assistant chair and chair must approve. Most approvals are pro forma; one "red flag" is a student seeking to work with a faculty member on a topic that is not in their area of specialization but is in another faculty member's area of specialization.

4. Once they approve and the departmental secretary enters online permission, the student can register.

OPTIONS:

To fulfill the Hist. 440 requirements the student may choose to:

- 1. Write a new research paper on a topic determined by the professor or student. Such a paper would generally be somewhere between 3000 and 6000 words in length, not including the footnotes and bibliography.
- 2. Extensively revise or reshape a research paper which the student had previously written for a course taken with that professor. This could involve:
 - a. A more specific focus on one aspect of the earlier paper, doing more research to answer some specific questions about the topic that may have arisen in reviewing professor's comments. This would involve additional research, not just correcting grammatical and factual errors in the original paper. This might include use of primary sources.
 - b. Analysis of the recent published scholarship (including books, articles in scholarly journals, and reviews of the books) about the original topic or a related topic if the original paper did not have a significant historiographical element.
- 3. If agreeable to the professor, the student may prepare some other multimedia/digital presentation that will be based on historical research techniques and will be the equivalent of the prior options in terms of intellectual rigor and the amount of work involved.

4. Students <u>must</u> also write a brief essay (300-400 words) on what they have learned about historical thinking and methodology while engaging in their project. **No final grade can be assigned for HIST 440 without completion of the reflective essay.**

SEMESTER SCHEDULE:

This can be variable. One model follows:

- 1. The student meets with the professor sometime during the first two weeks of the semester to discuss and define the project. It is the student's responsibility to contact the professor to schedule all meetings.
- 2. At least one further meeting should be scheduled by the seventh week of the semester.
- 3. The student must submit a rough **first draft** of the paper by the end of the eleventh week of the semester.
- 4. The professor and student should meet at least once thereafter to discuss intellectual revisions and any other questions.
- 5. The final version is due to the professor by the Friday preceding the final week of the semester. (Faculty set policy on accepting late papers without a legitimate and documented medical or other emergency excuse.) This allows time for grading and discussion as desired.

FORMAT for paper:

The paper must include the standard features of a history research paper, including a **title**; page numbers; **footnotes** to identify the sources for all specific information, all ideas and interpretations written by other scholars, and all direct quotations; and a **bibliography.** The student should consult a variety of sources of information and not depend heavily upon just one; a string of several dozen footnotes, all citing the same source, is a symptom that the student needs to consult some additional sources to avoid reliance on one author who may be biased or who may have neglected important aspects of the topic.

The text of the paper should include an explanatory introduction, a logically organized body of the paper, and a conclusion which summarizes findings. The student may include maps, illustrations, charts, appendices, or other features if these provide useful and relevant information. (If such features were found in a book, article, or website, then they should be footnoted to indicate that source to the reader.)