

# GENEALOGY AND HISTORY

## Course Syllabus

### General Information:

- (1) **Course title:** Genealogy and History
- (2) **Semester:** Fall
- (3) **Professor:** L. J. Andrew Villalon (Dr. V; Professor V; Mr. V)
- (4) **Course number:** 350L (40270)
- (5) **Course Section:** Only one
- (6) **Days/Time of meeting:** M and W: 3:30-5 p. m.
- (7) **Classroom:** Benedict Hall (BEN) 1.108
- (8) **Campus Office:** GAR 4.120
- (9) **History Departmental Office, First Floor of GAR (To the right of the Main Entrance)**
- (10) **Office Phone:** (512) 475-8004
- (11) **Departmental Phone:** (512) 471-3261
- (12) **Office Hours:** M: 2-3 pm, 5:10-5:45 pm W: 2-3 pm 5:10-5:45 pm F: by appointment only
- (13) **Email Address:** avillalon@austin.rr.com
- (14) **Name of professor's website on which all UT course materials appear:** WIRE PALADIN  
**URL:** <http://www.webspace.webring.com/people/ca/avillalon/>
- (15) **Webpage URL for this course:** <http://www.webspace.webring.com/people/ca/avillalon/c-MedHist-index.html>

*(If you do not have available the URL to my website, you can still find it easily by typing into Google "Andrew Villalon Wire Paladin". The website should come up as the first entry on the list. You can then click through to it.)*

*(If you arrive for a meeting after 5 pm, the controlled access to the 4th floor requires phoning the professor's office either before or upon arrival in order to have the locked door opened.)*

### Course Description:

Genealogy is that part of history that traces family relationships over time. Most people are interested in finding out where they have come from, who their ancestors were, and what those ancestors did. In the past, such a search often required extensive effort, including widespread travel or considerable expense or both. The most readily available sources of information were those in possession of the family itself, including such things as letters, diaries, diplomas, birth and death certificates, inscribed family bibles, old photographs or home movies, newspaper clippings,

and, of course, word of mouth. Other sources such as court records, social security information, police reports, city registries, passenger manifests, and records of military service were housed in libraries, archives or government repositories, many of them far removed from the locale in which the researcher was working. At the very least, this necessitated time-consuming correspondence by snail mail. Often it was necessary to travel far and wide or alternatively to hire genealogical consultants. Today, thanks primarily to the web and email, it has become far easier to conduct a genealogical search into the history of one's family. This course will teach students who have an interest in learning about their families the principles of genealogical research in the twenty-first century. Each student will apply those principles to researching his or her own family history and where possible, placing family members into a larger historical context.

### **Course Goals:**

- (1) To provide students with an adequate understanding of how genealogical research (a branch of historical research) is conducted.
- (2) To provide an understanding of the various types of evidence available to scholars when they undertake to reconstruct a family's past.
- (3) (Hopefully) To inspire in the student a further interest in the study of genealogy, which, for some, becomes a lifelong obsession.

### **Contacting the Professor:**

There are three very reliable ways to contact this professor:

- (1) Speak with him after class. If the subject requires a lengthier conversation, an appointment can be made to meet during office hours or communicate by means of email.
- (2) Come to his office during office hours (for the schedule, see above).

No appointment is needed; I am almost always available in my office (or very nearby) during office hours. If you do not at first find me, try (1) the third floor room restricted to faculty where the printer and photocopying machines are located; (2) the main office on the first floor.

- (3) Contact him through email.

I check and respond to my email regularly. I will try to reply to your message as soon as I see it. Emails should be sent to my home address given above.

Other means of getting in contact are much less certain. I have purposely omitted my home telephone number from this syllabus for the simple reason that I do not wish to receive student phone calls at home. Email serves the same purpose, more reliably and less obtrusively.

### **Course Webpage:**

A webpage for **Genealogy and History** appears on the teaching section of my website, **Wire Paladin** (see above for the URL). Like the rest of my teaching materials, it can be reached by accessing the site's main index, then clicking on the chess knight entitled **University of Texas**

## Courses taught by Dr. Villalon.

Throughout the term, the webpage will undergo updating. You are responsible for periodically consulting the website to see if anything new has been posted. If you are reading this syllabus, you are already aware that it is also posted on the webpage. Your first assignment is to **READ THIS SYLLABUS CAREFULLY.**

### Required Course Materials:

#### A. To Purchase:

1. Matthew Helm, et al., *Genealogy Online for Dummies*.

Despite its very "un-academic" title, this is an excellent, inexpensive, and easily available book that will serve as the required text in this course. As the title indicates, it centers around how to do genealogy on the web, which is where all students will start.

Since *Genealogy Online for Dummies* is updated virtually every year, the book has gone through a number of editions, many of which are still available on the web. While no specific edition is being assigned, try to get as recent an edition as your pocketbook will allow.

A word to the wise: If you are particularly interested in the exciting new procedure of genealogical DNA testing, the 2009 edition of *Genealogy Online for Dummies* is the first one to devote a chapter to the subject.

2. Recent version of a major genealogical program.

While there are several on the market, the most widely-known is **Family Tree Maker**, a product of the same company that has created Ancestry.com.. A very useful instruction book and access to several critical genealogical sites comes with the package.

To find an alternate program, go to one of the major genealogical sites, Cyndi's List (URL: <http://www.cyndislist.com>), and access the section on Software and Computers. From there, browse the appropriate links, in particular Genealogy Software Programs.

If you are a Mac user, you will have to find a different genealogical program since Family Tree Maker does not produce a Mac-friendly version. Again, go to Cyndi's List (URL: <http://www.cyndislist.com>), access Software and Computers, then follow the link to Macintosh Software. Alternatively, type into Google "Genealogical software for Mac".

3. A subscription to **Ancestry.com**.

This is the major commercial genealogical site on the web. It supplies fairly easy access to a list of web sources that is growing every day. Students who take this course almost always rank it as the most valuable site that they use.

Unfortunately, there is no such thing as an institutional membership; consequently, you will not be able to get it through the University of Texas libraries. You will have to purchase a membership (or, if you know someone who has already done so, arrange to use theirs.) Memberships can be purchased for various time periods; for example, by the month. I would recommend for students taking a semester course a 3-month subscription. Perhaps several of you can make arrangements to "double-up."

**B. Assorted FREE web sources on genealogy either posted directly on the professor's website or freely accessible on the web**

For required (but free) Web Texts, access URL:

<http://webspaces.webring.com/people/ca/avillalon/c-Genealogy-Readings.html>

**Important Genealogical Web Sources**

To aid students in their search, a web sources page has been compiled, containing some of the most useful websites

See: <http://webspaces.webring.com/people/ca/avillalon/c-Genealogy-Websources.html>

**Criteria for Grading:**

See the section of the website entitled [Paper and Portfolio](#).

In addition to the written requirements listed in that section, participation will be of considerable importance in this class. This can take the form of contributing relevant information, asking good questions, helping your fellow students find their family information, discussing in office hours, etc. This course will be what all scholarship should be--cooperative rather than competitive.

**Retaining Copies of Work and Work handed back:**

It is a good practice in any course to keep copies of everything that you have handed in. It is also a good practice to retain any work that is handed back **until you have received your (correct) final grade in the course**. Mistakes happen, and even though they are more frequent in a large class, they happen in small classes as well. Items get lost and errors are made in recording grades. In such instances, the student cannot merely claim to have done the work. He/she must be able to produce it.

**Instructions for Students Who do not receive a grade:**

This is almost certainly the result of a failure to complete some part of the course work. The student should contact the professor as soon as possible and arrange a meeting in order to determine what can be done about the problem. In most cases, something can be done.

## **Concerning the Finality of Grades:**

In most cases, final grades are indeed final. The obvious exception: if I have made a mistake in computing your grade, in which case you should contact me immediately. In rare instances, usually where a student's grade is borderline, I may let that individual something to improve the grade.

## **Attendance:**

### **Attendance is required!!!**

Attendance in any course is important, but it is particularly important when that course is based heavily upon in-class lectures and discussion and where participation plays an important role. Failure to attend will be taken into consideration in assigning the final grade; and the professor reserves the right to deny a student a passing grade if the attendance is poor enough..

Consequently, students who wish to have their attendance correctly recorded have two responsibilities.

- (1) They must sign the attendance sheet for the class.
- (2) If the professor forgets to circulate an attendance sheet (as sometimes happens), students should raise their hand and remind him. (Such an interruption will always be most welcome.)

Students should never skip a class simply because they feel unprepared. After all, you might miss something interesting or useful! Besides, there are no unannounced quizzes and I never seek to embarrass unprepared students.

## **Cheating or Plagiarism:**

Everybody knows what cheating is, so there is no need for a definition.

On the other hand, some of you may not be familiar with the word plagiarism. It refers to any attempt to pass off as your own work something done by somebody else. Even when only part of a paper is copied from the work of another person, this is still plagiarism. While it is perfectly acceptable to quote from another person's work, such passages must be carefully footnoted.

Both the university and I regard cheating and plagiarism as extremely serious; as a result, I would recommend that you avoid them like the plague throughout your college career and, for that matter, afterwards. Although I shall treat both cheating and plagiarism on a

## **Withdrawal from the Course:**

As far as I am concerned, a student wishing to withdraw from the course for whatever reason will be allowed to do so without penalty, even if he/she is failing the course at the time of the withdrawal. It has always been my belief that losing time and tuition is enough of a penalty to pay for doing poorly in a course.

However, I would strongly recommend to all students that once they have decided to withdraw, they should do so as soon as possible. It is always best to get this unpleasant task out of the way.

First of all, it is better to drop a “loser” and concentrate one’s energies where they will they will do the most good, i.e. in courses where one is doing well.

Secondly, in putting off the inevitable, some students wait too long and pass withdrawal dates mandated by the university, after which withdrawing may become far more complicated, if not impossible. While I am always willing to approve a withdrawal, after a certain point in time, the university may not accept it.

### **Grading Procedures and Student Complaints:**

Within any academic discipline, a teacher tries to design a course which will present a body of knowledge, while developing critical thinking and skills in research and writing. He or she then evaluates carefully each student's performance in order to arrive at a grade, which will count toward college credit. Factors which a professor may take into consideration when defining student performance include such things as exams (either in-class or take-home), other written work (papers, book reviews, journals), and various forms of classroom participation (discussion, oral presentations, answering questions). Each individual teacher will determine which of these factors to employ in arriving at a grade, as well as their relative importance. The student should also be aware that classroom deportment may be taken into consideration; in other words, anyone who habitually acts in a manner which tends to disrupt the learning process may well find that fact reflected in his or her grade.

In any class worth the name, a grade is earned by the student, for demonstrating the required knowledge and ability and performing the work within the deadlines set by the instructor. Failure on the part of a student to demonstrate adequate knowledge and/or to meet reasonable academic guidelines (as defined by the instructor) may result in a failing grade and the withholding of academic credit for the course. Again, let me emphasize: grades are earned, not given or negotiated!!

On the other hand, for students who believe that they have been unfairly evaluated, the University of Texas has established grievance procedures. Grade appeals must be made in accordance with that procedure, which mandates as its first step an attempt by the student and professor to resolve the grievance without any outside interference. At this point in the procedure, intervention by third parties such as parents, boyfriends, attorneys, department heads, administrators or other faculty members is inappropriate. If, after consultation with the faculty member, the student wishes to pursue the grievance, he or she should contact the department head. [For further information concerning the grievance procedure, see the university handbook which should be available at every college office.]

### **Brief Biography of this Professor:**

L. J. Andrew Villalon did his undergraduate work at Yale University where he earned honors in history and was elected a member of Phi Beta Kappa. He received his PhD. from that institution in 1984. After many years at the University of Cincinnati, where he is now a professor emeritus, Villalon is currently a senior lecturer at the University of Texas at Austin. A specialist in late

medieval and early modern European history, he has delivered numerous conference papers on such topics as Pedro “the Cruel”, Don Carlos “the unhappy prince of Spain,” Spanish involvement in the Hundred Years War and the battle of Najera, Sir Hugh Calveley, the political ideas of Niccolo Machiavelli, English military pardons in the Hundred Years War, and academic editing. His articles have appeared in collections and various academic journals including *The Catholic Historical Review*, *Sixteenth Century Journal*, *Mediterranean Studies*, and the *Proceedings of the Ohio Academy of History*. Currently, he is working on two book length studies, one on the canonization of San Diego, the other on the life of Sir Hugh Calveley, an English knight and mercenary soldier in the Hundred Years War. Villalon has co-edited with Donald J. Kagay five collections of medieval essays—*The Final Argument: The Imprint of Violence on Society in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (The Boydell Press, 1998); *The Circle of War in the Middle Ages: Essays on Medieval Military and Naval History* (The Boydell Press, 1999); *Crusaders, Condottieri, and Cannon : Medieval Warfare in Societies around the Mediterranean* (Brill, 2002); *The Hundred Years War: A Wider Focus* (Brill, 2005); and *The Hundred Years War: New Vistas* (Brill, 2008). At present, the pair are working on a third volume of their Hundred Years War collection and are collaborating on a joint monograph concerning the battle of Najera (1367). In addition to research in his major field, Villalon has published on automotive history and the history of World War I. He has held several grants for study in Spain, including a Fulbright; received two awards from the American Association of University Professors for defending academic freedom; and in 2001, was presented the Professional-Scholarly Activity Award for the University College at the University of Cincinnati. Villalon was the vice president of the Texas Medieval Association (TEMA) in 2007-2008 and president of that organization in 2008-2009. While serving as president, he organized TEMA’s annual conference which was held that year in Austin. He is an associate editor of the *Encyclopedia of Medieval Warfare and Military Technology* put out by Oxford in 2009. (A [complete c.v.](#) is available on the website.)