

# HISTORY 421: ENGLISH LANGUAGE PALEOGRAPHY

**Christopher Jones**  
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Office: 2109 JFSB  
Office Hours: M, 10:15-11:45 am; F, 10:30-11:30 am

Fall 2019  
128 MARB  
MWF 2:00-2:50 pm

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course is designed to help students develop the ability to read, analyze, and contextualize written documents in the English language. Students will study the history of English language paleography and gain hands-on experience reading, transcribing historical and genealogical documents. The course covers the basic scripts, alphabets, and documents used in Britain and America between 1500 and 1850.

## **COURSE FORMAT:**

Class time will consist of short lectures, long discussions, group work, transcription exercises, visits to BYU Special Collections, and student presentations. Because practice is the only way to become proficient in reading and transcribing old handwriting, much of the reading will be original documents, which students are expected to also transcribe and analyze.

## **REQUIRED READING:**

The following book is available at the BYU Bookstore and from various online retailers.

- Aileen Douglas, *Work in Hand: Script, Print, and Writing, 1690-1840* (Oxford University Press, 2017)

In addition, we will also be listening to the following audiobook, which is available for purchase through various online retailers [here](#):

- Kevin Stroud, *The History of the Alphabet*

Additional readings will be available via Learning Suite.

## **ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING:**

**There are six graded components to this course:**

### **I. ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION – 10%**

Students are expected to attend class and actively participate. This necessitates reading the assigned material before class and coming prepared to participate in class discussions and other in-class activities. I will take roll regularly throughout the semester.

Students may miss two class periods without their attendance + participating score being penalized, though you are responsible for any material missed in case of absence and *cannot make up any assignments missed as a result of your absence*. **Your final (total) grade will be penalized one percentage point for each class period missed after that.** In addition, I **reserve the right to adjust borderline grades up or down based on attendance and participation in class discussion.**

**2. IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS – 5%**

There will be several opportunities over the course of the semester to write short responses to assigned readings and/or transcribe documents in class. Your lowest score will be dropped.

**3. FAMILYSEARCH INDEXING – 5%**

Complete FamilySearch indexing for at least 30 names and reports its completion. Additional details are available on LS.

**Report completion of indexing via LS by Monday, December 2 at 11:59 pm.**

**4. BAXTER LETTERS – 10%**

Working in pairs, you will transcribe one letter from Richard Baxter, the noted 17<sup>th</sup> century English Puritan church leader and theologian. You will also verify the transcription of another pair's transcription. Additional details, including the transcription guidelines, are available via LS.

**Transcription due via LS by Friday, October 18 at 11:59 pm.**

**Peer review of transcription due via LS by Friday, October 25 at 11:59 pm.**

**5. NATIVE NORTHEAST RESEARCH COLLABORATIVE DOCUMENTS – 25%**

You will each transcribe three documents for the Native Northeast Research Collaborative (<https://www.thenativenortheast.org>), a digital humanities project at Yale University that collects, digitizes, transcribes, and annotates primary source materials by, on, or about Northeast Indians from repositories around the world.

For each document you transcribe, you will also search original records on FamilySearch, Ancestry, and other online repositories/databases to find birth, baptism, marriage, burial/death, and/or probate records for anyone mentioned in the document. This does not need to be an exhaustive search, but it should be a good-faith effort to identify the relevant information, which will be submitted as a detailed list, complete with citations (footnotes).

In addition to your transcription of each document, you will peer review one of your classmates' transcription, noting any discrepancies and explaining your reasoning.

**Transcriptions and review of transcriptions are due on a rolling basis throughout the semester. Please see course schedule below for due dates.**

**Final transcriptions for all NNRC documents + research list + research log due via LS by Friday, November 22 at 11:59 pm.**

**6. LAND INDENTURE TRANSCRIPTION PROJECT – 30%**

Choose a document from HBLL Special Collections Land Indenture Collection (MSS 1779). You need to select a secretary hand (generally pre-1750) document to work with.

Using a document of your choice, create two files: the transcription (with a cover sheet including the full call number) and the analytical components.

The document must be ~1000 words long and be in secretary hand, court hand, or some combination of the two.

This project will be completed in several stages over the course of the semester. Due dates for each are below. Additional details, including requirements for both the transcription and the analytical component, are available via LS.

**Proposal due via LS by Friday, September 27 at 11:59 pm.**

**Transcription due via LS by Wednesday, December 4 at 11:59 pm.**

**Peer review of transcription due via LS by Friday, December 6 at 11:59 pm.**

**Final transcription + analytical materials due via LS by Wednesday, December 11 at 11:59 pm.**

**7. FINAL EXAM – 15%**

Take home. **Due via LS by Wednesday, December 18 at 11:59 pm.**

**POLICIES AND REMINDERS:**

Please feel free to ask questions and offer opinions during class (in fact, your grade depends on it!), but always treat your classmates, your professor, and the individuals we discuss (both living and dead!) with respect. Disagreement is allowed, but personal attacks and insults are not. Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated. If you experience a problem, please report the situation to the professor immediately.

**A NOTE ON TECHNOLOGY AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

You are welcome to use laptops, tablets, and other electronic devices in class for taking notes, viewing reading materials, and/or completing in-class assignments. Each of us learns differently and takes notes differently. Regardless of how you take notes, please do your best to not distract

the class or your fellow students. To that end, please silence your electronic devices and use them only to take notes or access course materials. As a former student and a current instructor, please rest assured that I can tell when you are browsing the internet, facebooking, tweeting, snapchatting, instagramming, TikTok-ing, or using any other social media app or game, or reading material not relevant to this class. I reserve the right to ask you to put your electronic devices away at any point.

### **A NOTE ON CHILDREN IN CLASS**

As part of my commitment to helping all students succeed, I have implemented the following policies regarding children in class:

- 1) All breastfeeding babies are welcome in class as often as necessary.
- 2) Non-nursing babies and older children are welcome whenever alternate arrangements cannot be made. As a parent of three young children, I understand that babysitters fall through, partners have conflicting schedules, and other issues arise that leave parents with few other options.
- 3) In all cases where children come to class, I invite parents/caregivers to sit close to the door so as to more easily excuse yourself to attend to your child's needs. Non-parents in the class, please reserve seats near the door for your parenting classmates.
- 4) All students are expected to join with me in creating a welcoming environment that is respectful of your classmates who bring children to class.
- 5) Finally, I understand that among the most difficult aspects of parenting young children is sleep deprivation and exhaustion. The struggles of balancing school, work, childcare, and other day-to-day activities is tiring, and I will do my best to accommodate any such issues while maintaining the same high expectations for all students enrolled in the class. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

**Honor Code:** In keeping with the principles of the BYU Honor Code, students are expected to be honest in all of their academic work. Academic honesty means, most fundamentally, that any work you present as your own must in fact be your own work and not that of another. Violations of this principle may result in a failing grade in the course and additional disciplinary action by the university. Students are also expected to adhere to the Dress and Grooming Standards. Please call the Honor Code Office at (810) 422-2847 if you have questions about those standards.

**Preventing + Responding to Sexual Misconduct:** In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Brigham Young University prohibits unlawful sex discrimination against any participant in its education programs or activities. The university also prohibits sexual harassment—including sexual violence—committed by or against students, university employees, and visitors to campus. As outlined in university policy, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking are considered forms of "Sexual Misconduct" prohibited by the university.

University policy requires all university employees in a teaching, managerial, or supervisory role to report all incidents of Sexual Misconduct that come to their attention in any way, including but not limited to face-to-face conversations, a written class assignment or paper, class discussion, email,

text, or social media post. Incidents of Sexual Misconduct should be reported to the Title IX Coordinator at [t9coordinator@byu.edu](mailto:t9coordinator@byu.edu) or (801) 422-8692. Reports may also be submitted through EthicsPoint at <https://titleix.byu.edu/report> or 1-888-238-1062 (24-hours a day).

BYU offers confidential resources for those affected by Sexual Misconduct, including the university's Victim Advocate, as well as a number of non-confidential resources and services that may be helpful. Additional information about Title IX, the university's Sexual Misconduct Policy, reporting requirements, and resources can be found at <http://titleix.byu.edu> or by contacting the university's Title IX Coordinator.

**Students With Disabilities:** Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere that reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability which may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the University Accessibility Center (2170 WSC). Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified, documented disabilities. The UAC can also assess students for learning, attention, and emotional concerns. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the UAC. If you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures by contacting the Equal Employment Office at (801) 422-5895, D-285 ASB.

**Mental Health:** Mental health concerns and stressful life events can affect students' academic performance and quality of life. BYU Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS, 1500 WSC, (801) 422-3035) provides individuals, couples, and group counseling, as well as stress management services. These services are confidential and are provided by the university at no cost for full-time students. For general information please visit <https://caps.byu.edu>; for more immediate concerns please visit <http://help.byu.edu>.

## CLASS SCHEDULE + READINGS

### WEEK 1

September 4      **Course Overview**

September 6      **Practice Transcriptions**

### WEEK 2

September 9      **History of English**

Read/Listen: Simon Horobin, *The English Language: A Very Short Introduction*, 1-32 (available via LS); Kevin Stroud, *The History of English* podcast, Episode 1: Introduction (available [here](#))

September 11     **Development of Writing + Writing Tools**

Read: Hilary Marshall, *Palaeography for Family and Local Historians*, 5-12 (available via LS); Denise Schmandt-Besserat, "The Evolution of Writing" (available [here](#)); Leonard Rosenbrand, *Papermaking in Eighteenth Century France*, 8-15 (available via HBLL [here](#))

**September 13**      **Native Northeast Research Collaborative Training**  
Read/listen: NNRC Editorial Guidelines (available [here](#))

**WEEK 3**

**September 16**      **Alphabets, Abbreviations, &c.**  
Read/listen: Kevin Stroud, *The History of the Alphabet*, chapters 1-6 (available [here](#)); "Alphabet" and "Techniques and Tools" at <https://script.byu.edu>; Marshall, *Palaeography for Family and Local Historians*, 18-39 (available via LS)

**September 18**      **Alphabets, Abbreviations, &c, contd.**  
Read: Stroud, *The History of the Alphabet*, chapters 7-14; "Secretary Hand Alphabet" and "Secretary Hand Abbreviations" (available [here](#))

**September 20**      **Dates + Calendars**  
Read/listen: Bruce Durie, *Understanding Documents for Genealogy and Local History*, 84-94 (available via LS); Stroud, *The History of English* podcast, Episode 18: Keeping Time with the Romans (available [here](#)); "Dating documents," University of Nottingham Special Collections (available [here](#))

**WEEK 4**

**September 23**      **Numbers + Currency**  
Read/listen: Durie, *Understanding Documents*, 95-104; Stroud, *The History of English* podcast, Episode 45: To Coin a Phrase (available [here](#))

**September 25**      **Manuscripts, Archives, Transcriptions, + Abstracts**  
Read: "Reading the Documents" at <https://script.byu.edu>; Durie, *Understanding Documents*, 143-49 (available via LS)

**September 27**      **Manuscripts, Archives, Transcriptions, + Abstracts, Part II**  
Read: Kristine Kowalcuk, *Preserving on Paper: Seventeenth-Century Englishwomen's Receipt Book*, 61-67 (available via LS); "Deeds in Depth," University of Nottingham Special Collections (available [here](#)); Phil Barber, "An Introduction to Collecting Vellum Indentures" (available [here](#))

**\*Proposal for Land Indenture Project due by 11:59 p.m.\***

## WEEK 5

September 30

**NO CLASS: Work on NNRC**

Read: Aileen Douglas, *Work in Hand*, 1-74

October 2

**Eighteenth-Century Script in Context**

Read: Douglas, *Work in Hand*, 75-151

October 4

**Eighteenth-Century Script in Context, Part II**

Read: Douglas, *Work in Hand*, 152-201

## WEEK 6

October 7

**NNRC Records**

\*Initial Transcription of first NNRC document due by 11:59 p.m.\*

October 9

**Probate and Property Records, Part I**

Read: Durie, *Understanding Documents*, 150-61, 210-19, 238-54

October 11

**NO CLASS: NNRC Work**

## WEEK 7

October 14

**Probate and Property Records, Part II**

Read: Christopher Marsh, "Attitudes to Will-Making in Early Modern England" in Tom Arkell, et al, *When Death Do Us Part* (available via LS)

\*Peer review of transcription of first NNRC document due by 11:59 p.m.\*

October 16

**Poor Law Records**

Read: Durie, *Understanding Documents*, 206-209; Sections 6 + 7 of "England and Wales Poor Law Records, pre-1834," FamilySearch Wiki (available [here](#))

October 18

**Church Records**

Read: Durie, *Understanding Documents*, 125-42.

\*Transcription of Baxter document due via LS by 11:59 p.m.\*

## WEEK 8

October 21

**Church Records, Part II**

Read: Karen Clifford, "Early American Church Records,"  
genealogy.com (available [here](#))

**October 23**

**Occupation and Tax Records**

Read: "Freedom of the City," City of London website (available [here](#)); James Horn, "Leaving England: The Social Background of Indentured Servants in the Seventeenth Century," Virtual Jamestown (available [here](#))

**October 25**

**Court Records**

Read: Durie, *Understanding Documents*, 228-37; "Manorial Records," University of Nottingham Special Collections (available [here](#));

**\*Peer review of Baxter document due via LS by 11:59 p.m.\***

**WEEK 9**

**October 28**

**Literary Documents, Letters, + Diaries, Part I**

Read: Freeborn Garrettson to John Wesley, September 25, 1786 (available via LS)

**\*Initial Transcription of second NNRC document due by 11:59 p.m.\***

**October 30**

**Literary Documents, Letters, + Diaries, Part II**

**November 1**

**Putting Land Indentures into Context**

Read: Durie, *Understanding Documents*, 238-54; "Table of Deeds and Documents," "Identification Flow Chart," + "Leasehold Land," from "Deeds in Depth," University of Nottingham Special Collections (available [here](#))

**WEEK 10**

**November 4**

**Early Modern Scottish Documents, Part I**

Read: Durie, *Understanding Documents*, 162-199 (available via LS)

**\*Peer review of transcription of second NNRC document due by 11:59 p.m.\***

**November 6**

**Early Modern Scottish Documents, Part II**

Read: Durie, *Understanding Documents*, 255-377 (browse Scottish terms)

**November 8**

**NO CLASS: Work on NNRC Document**

**WEEK 11**



**November 11**      **NO CLASS: Work on NNRC Document**

\*Initial Transcription of third NNRC document due by 11:59 p.m.\*

**November 13**      **Court Hand**

Read: Durie, *Understanding Documents*, 20-21; Court Hand (available via LS); Stroud, *The History of English* podcast, Episodes 112: Northern Messenger + 113: A Zouthern Accent (available [here](#))

**November 15**      **NNRC Records**

\*Peer review of transcription of third NNRC document due by 11:59 p.m.\*

**WEEK 12**

**November 18**      **Latin Remnants in English Language Documents**

Read: Durie, *Understanding Documents*, 31-83.

**November 20**      **Latin Vocabulary + Abbreviations**

Read: Allen, Embry, and Mehr, *Hearts Turned to the Fathers*, 167-205, 265-298; Tad Walch, "LDS Church's FamilySearch database to add same-sex families to Family Tree feature," *Deseret News*, June 14, 2018 (available [here](#))

**November 22**      **Property + Probate Records with a Splash of Latin**

\*NNRC Final Transcriptions + Research List + Research Log due via LS by 11:59 p.m. \*

**WEEK 13**

**November 25**      **Land Indentures**

**November 26**      **NO CLASS: Thanksgiving Holiday**

**November 27-29: Thanksgiving Holiday**

**WEEK 14**

**December 2**      **Land Indentures**

\*Report completion of FamilySearch Indexing by 11:59 p.m.\*

\*Land Indenture Transcription due by 11:59 p.m.\*

**December 4**      **Land Indentures**

December 6      Land Indentures, contd.

\*Peer review of Land Indenture Transcription due by 11:59 p.m.\*

**WEEK 15**

December 9      Land Indentures, contd.

December 11     Review

\*Final transcription of Land Indenture + Analytical Materials due via LS by 11:59 p.m.\*

**\*FINAL EXAM: Take Home – due to LS by 11:59 pm on Wednesday, December 18\***