

Highlighting History 498

All University of Arizona History majors undergo a rite of passage—the capstone seminar known by its course number, 498. Nervously anticipated, welcomed and/or feared by students, the required seminar introduces undergraduates to original historical research; it challenges them to join the ranks of historians with their own contributions.

Each semester, ranked faculty members teach sections of 498 with small enrollments (always under 15 students per section) allowing close supervision and instruction. The topical focus of each section varies according to the faculty member's expertise. Recent 498 topics include: The History of National Parks; World War II; Histories of Memories; Middle Ages; History Lab-Creating and Researching Museum Exhibits; and Sports History as U.S. History.

Students delve into the archives, extend their knowledge of the past, and develop their analytical and organizational skills. They work on their writing and arguments as they revise drafts and undergo peer review.

In the Fall of 2016, Dr. David Ortiz led his 498 section on an exploration of biography and public intellectuals. How does a historian evaluate one individual's life? What is the influence of public intellectuals? Students selected specific individuals, read their works, evaluated their influence, and developed an argument. To give a sense of the undergraduates' journey, here is a sampling of some of his students' work.

--Dr. Katherine Morrissey