

The Seward Family in Peace and War

HIS 279/479 🍏 Fall 2018 🍏 M/W 11:50-13:05



Course Description:

This is a history class in history and digital studies. It is a hands-on introduction to the history of the family, gender, and the antebellum and Civil War eras in the United States, to historical editing, and to website design and creation, using the [Papers of William Henry Seward](#) (1801-1872), Governor of New York, US Senator, and Secretary of State under Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War. This semester, we will transcribe and annotate some of the family's correspondence from the early 1850s, when Seward was a private citizen living in Auburn with his family and practicing law, but eager to return to public life, traveling, speaking, and remaining closely attentive to national and state politics. This will bring the family's story to the end of a decade-long interlude, between when Seward completed his second term as governor in 1843 and when he returned to politics as a U. S. Senator in 1854.

The course will include discussion of assigned reading, technical instruction on documentary editing, transcription and annotation of original nineteenth-century manuscripts, and the opportunity to learn text encoding or to explore more deeply the meanings of family letters as objects. This course is a pre-requisite for paid internships working on the Seward family editorial project, and a requirement for a graduate student research fields in historical editing and the history of the family.

Resource people for class:

Professor Thomas Slaughter: 369B Rush Rhees Library; office hours: W 9-10:00 A.M and by appointment. thomas.slaughter@rochester.edu (585) 273-2799

Camden Burd, TEI lab instructor, TEI and Technology Manager, Seward Family Archive Project. camden.burd@gmail.com

Elizabeth Call, Special Collections Outreach Librarian, Department of Rare Books, Special Collections, and Preservation, River Campus Libraries.
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Corinna Hill, Special Projects Manager, Seward Family Archive Project.
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Emily Sherwood, Director Digital Scholarship Lab, Technical Director, Seward Family Archive Project.
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Evaluation:

10% attendance, preparation, and participation in discussions of reading assignments. [2% of course grade deducted for each unexcused absence.]

10% attendance, preparation, and participation in computer labs. [2% of course grade deducted for each absence.]

25% productivity and accuracy in transcriptions of manuscripts. (base = 40-50 pages transcribed and annotated; 40-50 pages markup).

25% completeness and accuracy in annotation of manuscripts. (base = 40-50 pages transcribed and annotated; 40-50 pages markup).

30% essays (three short essays—approximately 5 pages each—based on research assignments in the sewardproject.org website).

Students are also responsible for transcribing and annotating approximately 40-50 pages of manuscript letters on the schedule included in the syllabus, and for the markup (TEI) of 40-50 pages. **The final revisions of all transcriptions, annotations, and essays must be submitted by December 12.**

Books: The required reading for the course includes: [*available for purchase in bookstore]

George E. Baker, ed., *Works of William H. Seward*, vol. 1 (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1884).

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.b3025542;view=1up;seq=1>

*Deborah Lutz, *The Brontë Cabinet: Three Lives in Nine Objects* (NY, 2015).

*Margaret Leech, *Reveille in Washington, 1860-1865* (NY: Harper and Brothers, 1941; NYRB, 2011).

*Phyllis Rose, *Parallel Lives: Five Victorian Marriages* (NY: Random House, 1983).

William Henry Seward and Frederick Seward, *Autobiography of William H. Seward 1846-1861* (NY: Derby and Miller, 1891).

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015043521817;view=1up;seq=7>

*Lyndall Gordon, *Lives Like Loaded Guns: Emily Dickinson and Her Family's Feuds* (NY: Viking, 2010).

Syllabus:

August 29: Introduction; penmanship practice.

September 5: Meet in Seward Room, RBSCP; registration and introduction to use of manuscripts. Introduction to website, tools, transcription; small groups work on one paper letter.

*Read before class and be prepared to discuss in class website guidelines for transcription and annotation. sewardproject.org

September 10:

*Read before class and be prepared to discuss in class Baker, ed. *Works*, "Memoir," xiii-xc.

*Transcription and annotation of letters 1-2 from your file due (in Box) before class.

September 12:

*Discuss Seward, *Autobiography*, chapters 1-10 (1846-1848). Also read before class and discuss in class Wikipedia articles on William Henry Seward, Frances Seward, Fanny Seward, Augustus H. Seward. Frederick Seward, and William H. Seward, Jr.

September 17:

*Discuss Seward, *Autobiography*, chapters 11-22 (1849-1851).

*Discuss Baker, ed., *Works*, pages 409-515, "Defence of William Freeman" and "Fugitive Slaves."

*Letters 1-2 returned (in Box).

September 19:

*Discuss Seward, *Autobiography*, chapters 23-31 (1851/52-1855), pages 173-244.

*Revisions of letters 1-2 due (in Box).

September 24:

*Discuss Phyllis Rose, *Parallel Lives*, pages 5-140.

*Letters 3-4 due (in Box).

September 26:

*Letters 3-4 returned (in Box).

*Discuss Rose, *Parallel Lives*, pages 141-270.

October 1:

*Revisions of Letters 3-4 due (in Box).

*Discuss Gordon, *Lives Like Loaded Guns*, pages 3-113 (chapters 1-4).

October 3: NO CLASS.

*Letters 5-6 due (in Box).

October 5: field trip to Seward House Museum on Friday, October 5. Meet at Library Road entrance to RR Library at 9:00 A.M. Return to campus by 4:00 P.M.

October 8: NO CLASS.

*Letters 5-6 returned (in Box).

October 10:

*Revisions of letters 5-6 due (in Box).

*Discuss Gordon, *Lives Like Loaded Guns*, pages 114-196 (chapters 5-8).

October 15: fall break.

October 17:

*Letters 7-8 due (in Box).

*Discuss Gordon, *Lives Like Loaded Guns*, pages 197-298 (chapters 9-12).

October 22:

*Discuss Gordon, *Lives Like Loaded Guns*, pages 299-405 (chapters 13-17 and conclusion).

***First essay due.**

*Letters 7-8 returned (in Box).

October 24:

*Discuss letters about the illness and death of the Seward's baby that you find on the sewardproject.org website (fall 1836-spring 1837).

*Discuss Leech, *Reveille in Washington*, chapters 1-5.

October 29:

*Discuss Leech, *Reveille in Washington*, chapters 6-10.

*Revisions of letters 7-8 due (in Box).

*Discuss the Seward family's life in 1860 based on what you find on the sewardproject.org website.

October 31:

*Letters 9-10 due (in Box).

*Discuss the Seward family's experience in Washington, D. C. in 1861 based on what you find on the sewardproject.org website.

*Discuss Lutz, *Brontë Cabinet*, chapters 1-3.

November 5:

*Discuss letters between Frances M. Seward and her sister, Lazette Miller Worden, that you find on the sewardproject.org website (compare the earliest one you find to one you find for the year 1842 and a third one from the 1860s).

*Letters 9-10 returned (in Box).

*Discuss Lutz, *Brontë Cabinet*, chapters 4-6.

November 7:

*Revisions of letters 9-10 due (in Box).

*Discuss Lutz, *Brontë Cabinet*, chapters 7-9.

November 12: The letter as object; class meets in Seward Room, RBSCP.

***Second essay due.**

November 14: NO CLASS.

November 16: CLASS TRIP to Stone-Tolan House and Buckland Farmhouse in Brighton, NY. Leave from Library Road entrance to RRL at 9:00 A.M.; will return before noon.

November 19: NO CLASS.

November 21: The letter as object; class meets in Seward Room, RBSCP.

November 23: NO CLASS.

November 28:

*Discuss the experience of the Seward family in Washington, D. C. from March 1865-June 1865 based on what is on the sewardproject.org website.

*Discuss Leech, *Reveille in Washington*, chapters 11-15.

November 30:

*Discuss Leech, *Reveille in Washington*, chapters 16-19.

***Third essay due.**

December 5:

*Discuss third essays.

December 7: NO CLASS; work on revisions of third essays. Talk to me if you need help.

December 12:

*Final version of third essays due and all ten letters due before class.



Short essays (about five double-spaced pages each):

Essay #1: Compare the Seward and Dickinson families: what is similar about them?

Essay #2: Using one or more Seward family letters, and/or one or more Seward family objects that you saw in their house, and the model that Lutz provides in *The Brontë Cabinet*, discuss the use of objects to explore the history of this family in this time and place.

Essay #3: Based on your knowledge of 19th c. marriages, how does the Seward's compare? You'll need to focus on a range of years and/or compare two different points in time. (For any undergraduates taking this course for "W" credit and for any graduate students, this is a research paper [20-25 pages plus notes and bibliography]—principally based on primary sources placed in the context of secondary sources, with an argument.)