

HISTORY AS A FIELD OF KNOWLEDGE

"History is not the prerogative of the historian, nor even, as postmodernism contends, a historians 'invention'. It is, rather, a social form of knowledge; the work, in any given instance, of a thousand different hands." Raphael Samuel, Theatres of Memory, Volume I, Past and Present Contemporary Culture (Verso: 1994), 8. This course is a graduate level survey of recent developments in the research and writing of history as practiced by professional historians. Time limitations require that the course be selective rather than comprehensive, and students should bear in mind that the course will raise many questions that cannot be answered during a particular class meeting or possibly even during the semester.

Required Texts:

John Tosh, The Pursuit of History: aims, methods and new directions in the study of modern history, revised third edition, Longman/Pearson paperback, 2002, 0-582-77254-0 Anthony Molho and Gordon S. Wood, Imagined Histories: American Historians Interpret the Past, Princeton,

1998, 0-691-05811-3 Peter Burke, New Perspectives on Historical Writing, second edition, 2001, Penn State, 0-271-02117-9 Michael Shermer & Alex Grobman, Denying History: Who Says the Holocaust Never Happened and Why Do

They Say It?, University of California, 2000, 0-520-23469-3

William V. Harris, Restraining Rage: The Ideology of Anger Control in Classical Antiquity, Harvard, 2001, 0-674-01386-7 Matthew Connelly, A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria's Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold

War Era, Oxford, 2002, 0-19-517095-4

James F. Brooks, Captives and Cousins: Kinship and Community in the Southwest Borderlands, North Carolina, 2002, 0-807-85382-8 Mary A. Renda, Taking Haiti: Military Occupation & the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915-1940, University of

North Carolina, 0-8078-4983-3 Ada Ferrer, Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868-1898, North Carolina, 1999, 0-8078-4783-6 Timothy Burke, Lifebuoy Men, Lux Women: Commodification, Consumption, and Cleanliness in Modern

Zimbabwe, Duke, 1996, 0-8223-1762-1

Paul A. Cohen, History in Three Keys: the Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth, Columbia, 1998, 0-231-10651-3

Mike Davis, Late Victorian Holocausts: El Nino Famines and the Making of the Third World, Verso,

2001,

1-85984-382-4

Recommended Texts:

Peter Barry, Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory, Manchester University Press paperback 1995 0-7190-4326-3 Patrick Baert, Social Theory in the Twentieth Century, New York University Press paperback, 1998 0-8147-1339-4

Ernst Breisach, On the Future of History: The Postmodernist Challenge and its Aftermath, University of Chicago Press paperback, 2003 0-226-07280-0

Jonathan Clark, Our Shadowed Present: Modernism, Postmodernism, and History, Stanford University Press paperback, 2003 0-8047-5149-8

Course Requirements and Grading:

Eight book reviews 36%

One Historiography essay 30%

One Seminar presentation 20%

Participation in discussions 14%

Evaluation of Student Performance:

Thorough and critical reading of assigned materials is an essential first step for successful work in this course.

Students should also come to class prepared to discuss larger issues of the discipline of history raised in the assignments. Students are urged to read all the articles scheduled for seminar presentations, in order to be prepared to discuss issues raised in the articles. Questions and comments should be posed in a spirit of constructive criticism, i.e. analytical in substance and supportive and collegial in style.

Seminar presentations and historiography essays will be evaluated on the basis of the effectiveness of the structure, style, analysis, and use of sources. Guidelines for the book reviews are detailed below. See chapter eight of Lichtman and French, Historians and the Living Past (on reserve) for a useful discussion of historical writing generally.

Participation in seminar discussions is mandatory, not optional, and will be evaluated according to criteria listed below. Students should be prepared to play active roles in both initiating and guiding discussion during class meetings.

Assignments: Class Discussion Dynamics

Regular class attendance and active participation in discussions is a requirement in this course. The quality of your class participation is obviously important, and the ideal would be frequent, high quality, participation. We will always be guided by the questions of critical reading and analysis mentioned above and outlined below, and the following points tend to characterize effective participation.

- 1 Are the points made substantive and relevant to the discussion? Are they linked to the comments of others?
- 2 Do comments show that the participant has been listening?

- 3 Do comments clarify and highlight the important aspects of earlier comments and lead to a clearer statement of the concepts being covered?
- 4 Is the participant willing to interact with other class members?
- 5 Do comments show evidence of analysis?
- 6 Do comments add to our understanding?
- 7 Does the participant distinguish between facts, opinions, beliefs, and between positive and normative analysis?
- 8 Is there a willingness to test new ideas?

Constructive class participation is an essential part of this seminar. I will monitor discussion during each class period. If I come to believe that a particular student is not participating as actively as I think he or she should, then I will make a point of calling on the student in hopes of eliciting a more satisfactory level of class involvement.

Assignments: Discussion of Assigned Books

When we discuss assigned books, we shall organize our work in relation to the seven-point guide given on the Book Review sheet, as well as in relation to the Critical Reading guide sheet. At the very beginning of the course be sure to read these materials carefully and be prepared to answer the questions in relation to the book under discussion.

Assignments: Book Reviews

Your reviews should be no longer than 1000 words in length, typed and double-spaced. Include a word count at the end of the review. Use a type font no smaller than 12. A review that does not meet these requirements will be returned without a grade for revision. All reviews must be turned in at the beginning of the class period on which they are due. Late reviews will be discounted one full grade except in cases of documented illness. For the specifics of this assignment see the instructions on my webpage: <http://bss.sfsu.edu/issel/reviews.htm>

Assignments: Historiography Essay

The purpose of this assignment is to provide students an opportunity to synthesize the various readings on the discipline of history in a format similar to that used in professional journal articles. You will write a 7,500 to 10,000 word essay on "New Perspectives in History" (type font no smaller than 12). In writing your essay, you should draw primarily on the required course reading, and secondarily on the collateral reading listed in the syllabus. You may of course consult additional readings, but not in lieu of the course readings. For the specifics of this assignment, consult my webpage: <http://bss.sfsu.edu/issel/reviews.htm>

Assignments: Class Presentation

This assignment is designed to afford students an opportunity to prepare and deliver a presentation that in all respects except for length approximates a professional lecture. Please follow these guidelines in preparing and delivering your twenty-five minute report. Prepare an outline of your report, including a bibliography of works consulted, for distribution (maximum two pages).

1. Address the Following Questions Explicitly

- A. What is the author's purpose?
- B. What is the author's thesis and how is the thesis developed?

(Points A and B should be covered in no more than five minutes)

C. What can we learn about the topic of the class meeting from this particular article; how does the article contribute to an understanding of this particular field of historical research and writing? Spend a minimum of 10 minutes on this section, and show how the article compares and contrasts with the other readings assigned for the class meeting, as well as to relevant collateral reading.

D. What insights about trends in the discipline of history can be derived from this article? Devote at least 10 minutes to this section, placing the article in the context of its time, and referring explicitly to The Pursuit of History and relevant collateral reading.

2. Rehearse your Report

Rehearsal will allow you to improve your presentation. If you do not rehearse, you will probably have trouble keeping your report within the time available. Rehearsal will also help you keep eye contact with the audience. It is vital that you do not read your report. Be prepared, also, for questions from the class and from the instructor. Think ahead about the kinds of questions that relate your work to the theme of the class meeting and to the course generally. Finally, remember that both the class and the instructor are on your side; stay calm, relax, and don't rush through your presentation.

3. Consult Collateral Reading for Reports, Reviews, and Essays

The following reference works contain useful background information on concepts, theories, and methodologies. These should be used in preparing your oral reports, book reviews, and historiography essays.

Lloyd Kramer and Sahah Maza, eds. COMPANION TO WESTERN HISTORICAL THOUGHT (2002)

Harry Ritter, DICTIONARY OF CONCEPTS IN HISTORY (1986) RBR D13R49

Adam & Jessica Kuper, THE SOCIAL SCIENCE ENCYCLOPEDIA (1996)

Second edition, reference stacks, first floor H41S631996.

David Sills, ed. INTERNATIONAL ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES (1968), Vols. 1-15, reference stacks, first floor H40A15

Raymond Williams, KEYWORDS: A VOCABULARY OF CULTURE AND SOCIETY revised edition (1976), RBR

Ernest Breisach, HISTORIOGRAPHY (1983) D13B6861983

William Outhwaite & Tom Bottomore, THE BLACKWELL DICTIONARY OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY SOCIAL THOUGHT (1993) reference stacks, first floor H41B531993

Michael Groden & Martin Kreiswirth, THE JOHNS HOPKINS GUIDE TO LITERARY THEORY & CRITICISM

(1994) reference stacks, first floor PN81J5551994

Richard Wightman Fox and James Kloppenberg, A COMPANION TO AMERICAN THOUGHT (1995) reference stacks, first floor E69.1C6851995

Alan Munslow, THE ROUTLEDGE COMPANION TO HISTORICAL STUDIES (2000) RBR.

Michael Bentley, COMPANION TO HISTORIOGRAPHY (1997) RBR.

Eric Foner, THE NEW AMERICAN HISTORY (1997) RBR.

COURSE AGENDA AND READING ASSIGNMENTS:

INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE, Aug. 25

Personal Introductions

Seminar Report

Assignments

HISTORICAL PRACTICE SINCE WORLD WAR II, PART 1, Sept. 1

The Pursuit of History, chapters 1-6

Reports:

Thomas Cochran, "The Presidential Synthesis in American History," AHR, 53 (1948), 748-59.

Bernard Bailyn, "The Challenge of Modern Historiography," AHR 87, (1982), 1-24.

HISTORICAL PRACTICE SINCE WORLD WAR II, PART 2, Sept. 8

The Pursuit of History, chapters 7 – Conclusion

Peter Burke, "Overture: The New History" in New Perspectives, 1-24.

Reports:

Allan Megill, "Recounting the Past: Description, Explanation, and Narrative in Historiography," AHR, 94 (1989),

627-653.

William H. Sewell, Jr., "Whatever Happened to the 'Social' in Social History?" chapter 13 in Schools of Thought: Twenty-Five Years of Interpretive Social Science (Princeton: 2001), pp. 209-226.

THE QUESTION OF "REVISIONISM" IN HISTORY: Sept. 15 and Sept.

22 Denying History SUBMIT BOOK REVIEW

Reports:

Dorothy Ross, "The New and Newer Histories: Social Theory and Historiography in an American Key" in

Imagined Histories (9/15) Anthony Molho, "The Italian Renaissance, Made in America," in Imagined Histories

Volker Berghahn and Charles Maier, "Modern Europe in American Historical Writing" in Imagined Histories

(9/22)

EUROPEAN HISTORY BEFORE 1500: Sept. 29 and Oct.

6 Restraining Rage SUBMIT BOOK REVIEW

Reports: Richard Saller, "American Classical Historiography," in Imagined Histories Gabriel M. Spiegel, "In the Mirror's Eye: the Writing of Medieval History in America," in Imagined Histories

EUROPEAN HISTORY SINCE 1500: Oct. 13

A Diplomatic Revolution SUBMIT BOOK REVIEW

Burke, "History of Events and the Revival of Narrative," in New Perspectives Reports: Charles Tilly, "Retrieving European Lives," chapter 1 in Reliving the Past: The Worlds of Social History, edited by

Olivier Zunz (University of North Carolina Press, 1985).

Charles S. Maier, "Consigning the Twentieth Century to History: Alternative Narratives for the Modern Era," in American Historical Review, 105, 3 (June 2000), 807-831.

UNITED STATES HISTORY BEFORE 1877: Oct.

20 Captives and Cousins SUBMIT BOOK

REVIEW

Giovanni Levi, "On Microhistory," and Jim Sharpe, "History from Below" in New Perspectives

Reports: Gordon S. Wood, "The Relevance and Irrelevance of American Colonial History," in Imagined Histories

David A. Hollinger, "Amalgamation and Hypodescent: The Question of Ethnoracial Mixture in the History of the United States," in American Historical Review, 108, 5 (December 2003), 1362-1390

UNITED STATES HISTORY SINCE 1877: Oct.

27 Taking Haiti SUBMIT BOOK REVIEW

Joan Scott, "Women's History," in New Perspectives Reports: Joan Wallach Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Analysis," in Joan Scott, Gender and the Politics of History

(1988) and William Sewell, "Review Essay: Gender and the Politics of History," History and Theory, 29 (1990), 71-82
Linda K. Kerber, "Gender" in Imagined Histories

LATIN AMERICAN HISTORY: Nov. 3

Insurgent Cuba SUBMIT BOOK

REVIEW

Steve J. Stern, "Africa, Latin America, and the Splintering of Historical Knowledge: From Fragmentation to Reverberation," chapter 1 in Confronting Historical Paradigms (Wisconsin: 1993), pp. 3-20.

Reports:

Alan Knight, "Latin America" in Companion to Historiography, 728- 758.

Steve Stern, "Feudalism, Capitalism, and the World-System in the Perspective of Latin America and the Caribbean," chapter 2 in Confronting Historical Paradigms.

8. AFRICAN HISTORY: Nov. 10 Lifebuoy Men, Lux Women SUBMIT BOOK REVIEW

Gwynn Prins, "Oral History," and Henk Wesseling, "Overseas History" in New Perspectives

Report:

Joseph C. Miller, "History and Africa/Africa and History" in American Historical Review, 104, 1 (Feb. 1999), 1-32.

ASIAN HISTORY: Nov. 17 History in Three Keys SUBMIT BOOK REVIEW

Carol Gluck, "House of Mirrors: American History-Writing on Japan," in Imagined Histories Report: Yukio

Koshiro, "Eurasian Eclipse: Japan's End Game in World War II," American Historical Review, 109, 2 (April

2004), pp. 417-444.

WORLD HISTORY: Dec. 1 and 8 Late Victorian Holocausts SUBMIT BOOK REVIEW

Eugen Weber, "Western Civilization" in Imagined Histories Reports: Daniel A. Segal, "'Western Civ' and the Staging of History in American Higher Education," American Historical

Review, 105, 3 (June 2000), pp. 770-805. (12/1)

Gale Stokes, "The Fates of Human Societies: A Review of Recent Macrohistories," in American Historical Review, 106, 2 (April 2001), pp. 508-525.

(12/8)

HISTORIOGRAPHY ESSAY DUE 12/15

CRITERIA FOR GRADING ESSAYS

EXCELLENT

Outstanding work

Structure: Clear focus on the question; clear indication of definitions and the direction of the argument;

coherence within and between sections; clear conclusion arising from preceding material.

Style: Well written; good vocabulary; attention to spelling, punctuation, grammar; well presented.

Argument: Clear analysis of the key issues; fully developed and complex argument that shows synthesis of

material and independent judgment; all statements supported by evidence; familiarity with and manipulation of

theoretical perspectives; originality.

Sources: Selections of material wide and relevant; assimilation of class work; reading well beyond course outline; good use of collateral material; all sources properly referenced.

VERY GOOD

Good to very good work, in the upper range containing elements of excellent work.

Structure: Focus on the question; some indication of progress of argument; attention to definitions; generally

clear and coherent; adequate conclusion.

Style: Well presented; attention to spelling, grammar punctuation; reasonable vocabulary.

Argument: Good level of analysis; indicates some complexity, though not always fully developed; theoretical

perspectives handled with some competence; sound rather than original.

Sources: Fairly wide selection of material; assimilation of class work; some reading beyond outline and class discussion; collateral material not always fully integrated; adequate referencing.

GOOD

Reasonable to good work

Structure: Needs greater focus on the question; needs clearer direction to the reader; better organization would

give more coherence; introduction and conclusion could be more developed; lacks clear definitions.

Style: Adequate presentation; spelling, grammar and punctuation could be improved; vocabulary could be wider.

Argument: Needs better balance of analysis and description; point of argument needs to be clearer; relies too

heavily on unsupported assertions and generalizations; more theoretical consideration needed.

Sources: Rather limited range of material; mostly class texts and discussion; needs better use of collateral material; over-reliance on class materials; incomplete referencing.

FAIR

Poor or barely acceptable work.

Structure: Very limited reference to question; difficult to follow; very loose definitions; poorly organized;

inadequate conclusion.

Style: Spelling, grammar, punctuation need much more attention; vocabulary not appropriate; poor presentation.

Argument: Very simplistic or badly constructed argument; tending to the descriptive; unsupported assertions;

point of argument not at all clear; little use of theoretical perspectives.

Sources: Very limited range of material; too much irrelevant material; very little evidence of reading outside class outline and discussion; over-reliance on secondary sources; incomplete or incorrect referencing.

FAIL

Unacceptable Work

Structure: Ignores question; no sense of construction; no indication to reader of line of argument; no introduction

or conclusion.

Style: Careless spelling, grammar, punctuation; poor presentation; inappropriate use of vocabulary.

Argument: No sense of argument; no analysis; over-descriptive; unsubstantiated assertions; generalizations;

lack of theoretical perspective.

Sources: Extremely limited range of sources; over-reliance on unanalyzed course material; little or no referencing to collateral reading; no indication of assimilation of class discussion.