

History 700.1

Trevor Getz

3 Units

Fall 2007

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Office Hours: T/Th 3-4

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.

Course Requirements and Grading:

Seven book reviews (out of eight)	35%
One Historiography essay	30%
One Article Presentation	20%
Participation in discussions	15%
Interview with an historian	(part of your participation grade)

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.

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.

Unexcused or excessive missed classes or unfinished readings will result in significant penalization!!!

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism is a form of cheating or fraud; it occurs when a student misrepresents the work of another as his or her own. Plagiarism may consist of using the ideas, sentences, paragraphs, or the whole text of another without appropriate acknowledgment, but it also includes employing or allowing another person to write or substantially alter work that a student then submits as his or her own. Any assignment found to be plagiarized will be given an "F" grade. All instances of plagiarism in the College of BSS will be reported to the Dean of the College, and may be reported to the University Judicial Affairs Officer for further action.

Schedule

August 30: Introductory Meeting

What's this class about? What is (H)istory? How do we 'do' it?

Guide texts to themes in modern (H)istory and historiography

Sept 6: Postmodernism and its discontents

Brown, Callum G., *Postmodernism for Historians*, Longman/Pearson, 2005, 0582506042

Epstein, Barbara, "Postmodernism and the Left", *New Politics*, 6 (1997).

Sept 13: World History and world history

Anthony Molho and Gordon S. Wood, eds., *Imagined Histories: American Historians Interpret the Past*, Princeton, 1998.

Edward Said, "The Idea of Palestine in the West", *MERIP Reports*, 70 (1978), 3-1.

Sept 20 : Interdisciplinarity and History

John Edward Philips, ed., *Writing African History*, Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2005/2006.

Hunt, Lynn, "The Virtues of Disciplinarity", *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 28 (1994), 1-7.

Sept 27: No class. Instructor giving paper at conference.

Oct 4: The 'American' Academy and the world

Fuchs, Eckhardt, and Benedikt Stuchtey, *Across Cultural Borders: Historiography in Global Perspective*, New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002.

Christian, David, Potukuchi Swarnalatha, Marilyn Lake, and Patrick Manning, "Report on the World History Research Agenda Symposium", released 24 January 2007.

Monographs

Oct 11: Archaeology/classical history

Woolf, Greg, *Becoming Roman : The Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul*, Cambridge University Press; New Ed edition, 2000. (If this book is not available in the bookstore, order it immediately online)

Fountain, Daniel L., "Historians and Historical Archaeology: Slave Sites", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 26 (1995), 67-77.

Oct 16: Linguistic evidence/ African history (Note: Class meets on Tuesday this week only!!)

Vansina, Jan, *How Societies are Born: Governance in West Central Africa before 1600*, University Press of Virginia, 2004.

Bent, J. Theodore, "On the Finds at the Great Zimbabwe Ruins (with a View to Elucidating the Origin of the Race that Built Them), *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, 22 (1893), 123-136.

Oct 25: The Art of reading/ trans-atlantic Europe

Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write the History of the New World: Histories, Epistemologies, and Identities in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World*, Stanford University Press, 2001.

Darnton, Robert, "In Search of the Enlightenment: Recent Attempts to Create a Social History of Ideas", *The Journal of Modern History*, 43 (1971), 113-132.

Nov 1: Borders and interaction/ social and economic histories of slavery

James F. Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Kinship and Community in the Southwest Borderlands*, North Carolina, 2002.

Morgan, Philip D., "Work and Culture: The Task System and the World of Lowcountry Blacks, 1700 to 1880", *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 39 (1982), 563-599.

Nov 8: Identity/ Imperial History

Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830-1867*, University of Chicago Press, 2002, 0226313352. (If this book is not available in the bookstore, order it immediately online)

Breen, T.H., "Baubles of Britain": The American and Consumer Revolutions of the Eighteenth Century", *Past and Present*, 119 (1988), 73-104.

Nov 15: Post-colonial histories/Colonial History

Mary A. Renda, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation & the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915-1940*, University of North Carolina.

Zimmerer, Jürgen, "The birth of the *Ostland* out of the spirit of colonialism: a postcolonial perspective on the Nazi policy of conquest and extermination", in *Patterns of Prejudice*, 39 (2005), 197-219.

Nov 29: Oral history and popular memory/ the Black Atlantic

Bailey, Anne, *African Voices of the Atlantic Slave Trade: Beyond the Silence and the Shame*, Beacon Press, 2006.

Confino, Alon, "Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method", *The American Historical Review*, 102 (1997), 1386-1403.

Dec 6: Revisionism and evidence for two Holocausts

Michael Shermer & Alex Grobman, *Denying History: Who Says the Holocaust Never Happened and Why Do They Say It?*, University of California, 2000.

Lovejoy, Paul E., "Autobiography and Memory: Gustavus Vassa, alias Olaudah Equiano, the African", (freely distributed paper), 2005 [printed in *Slavery and Abolition*, 27 (2006), 317-347.]

Dec 13: Discussion of papers

Dec ??: Final papers due... class 'party'

Evaluation

Assignments: Classroom Discussions

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.

When we discuss assigned books, we shall organize our work in relation to the seven-point guide given under 'Book reviews' below, 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.

No two books are alike so guidelines for book reviews must be general. There is, however, one basic rule: in order to write a good review you must think carefully about the book and about your report. Since reviews are 1,000 words, you must take pains to organize and present your thoughts with maximum precision, clarity and conciseness.

Begin your review with the author, title, and facts of publication, using a standard [CMS] bibliographical form, e.g.:

Phythian-Adams, Charles. *Local History and Folklore: A New Framework*. London: Bedford Square Press, 1975.

Here are seven questions the answers to which *must* form the substance of your review. Answer each of them in the order given. Devote a separate section to each and *number your sections to correspond with the number of the question*.

1. What is the author's purpose in writing the book?
2. What is the author's thesis?
3. How does the author organize his or her material? What is the logic behind the topics of the chapters and how do the chapters go together to make a book? You should be aware that there is almost always a "fit" between the thesis of the book and its organizational logic. Each points to the other. Thus, if you are in doubt about the thesis, pay attention to the organizational logic, and vice versa. In your review *include an explicit statement about the fit between the book's organization, its thesis and its purpose*.
4. What theories guide the author's work? Sometimes you will have to dig out the answer to this question. Do *not* give a laundry-list of theories. Discuss leading and secondary ones, explicit and implicit ones. This section can include a brief summary of the book, as well as the material describing theories. But make sure that the summary is tied into the primary issue of theories.
5. What sources does the author use to develop the thesis of the book and why are they used? Do *not* give a laundry-list of sources. Discuss types of sources used, types not used, and the reasons for turning to some kinds of sources rather than others. *Include an explicit statement about the pertinence of types of sources in light of the author's thesis and theory*.
6. How well is the author's purpose accomplished? In this section you have an opportunity to make an original, critical evaluation of the book. You will want to address the issues of what is well done, poorly done, and originally done.
7. Here you must relate the book to the subject of the course. How does it fit in with the issues raised and discussed in the course to the date of writing?

N.B.: Be sure to *cite exact pages* in your answers to each question and to *number the pages of your review*. Use *nothing smaller than a "12" (pica) font*. Keep a one inch margin on the top, bottom and right side of the paper and a one and a half inch margin on the left side.

You may abandon the structure above (while continuing to address all of these issues) with the instructor's permission

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 20 page (double spaced, times new roman 12) essay on "New Perspectives in History". 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.

Assignment: Article Presentation

Each monograph or guide text is accompanied by an article that relates to the book in some way. It may engage its findings, or contest its theoretical underpinnings. It may make use of similar evidence in a different way, or different evidence in a similar way. It may be an antecedent of some type. The articles

are downloadable from the course page at iLearn. <https://ilearn.sfsu.edu/login/index.php> . Enter your ID# and pin and you should find them under History 610, Fall 2007 (use the “files” function on the left hand side to find the readings).

Every student is required to read (at least briefly) the article and be prepared to answer the following questions:

- 1) How does this article relate to the book we are reading this week? Why do you think we’re reading it? How does it change the way we relate to the text and its findings?

One or possibly two students will be required to analyze the article in depth to answer the following questions explicitly in a 10 minute review presentation:

- a. Who is the author of the review? What is his/her experience, expertise, etc.
- b. What is the purpose of the article?
- c. In what journal or place is this article published? What does that tell us about its purpose or audience?
- d. How would you describe the author’s approach? What theories does he/she mobilize?
- e. What is the author’s argument?
- f. What kind of evidence does the author mobilize? How does he or she use evidence?
- g. Evaluate the author’s argument critically.
- h. Finally, what can we learn about the topic of the class meeting from this particular review; how does the article contribute to an understanding of this particular field of historical research and writing?

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.

Assignment: Interview with an historian
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One of the great strengths of this department is that it reflects the diversity of approaches, themes, and specializations in the discipline as a whole.

During the course of the semester, you will be asked to present the information you have gathered from an interview with a member of the department (or other historian on *this* campus). Each interviewee must be unique (no double interviewing), and you will sign up to interview a department member.

You may ask any questions you would like, but you *must* ask the following and *be prepared to present using best practices for oral history interviews* as discussed in class:

- 1) what is the historian’s “task”?
- 2) what are the most significant changes in the discipline of history and in how we “do” history in the last 20-50 years?