

Fall 2010

HIST 700.2 – History as a Field of Knowledge

M: 19:00 – 21:45

Office: SCI 267A

Office Hours: M 12-1; 3-5, or by appt.

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SCI 268

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IDEAS FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Baud, Michael and Van Schendel, William. "Toward a Comparative History of Borderlands." *Journal of World History*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (Fall 1997), pp. 211-242.

Gary Leupp, *Male Colors: The Construction of Homosexuality in Tokugawa Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997)

This course is an introduction to the graduate study of history that engages with current historiographical debates and presents students with methodological and theoretical approaches that will facilitate their remaining graduate coursework.

Learning Goals

1. Develop an understanding of how History, the discipline practiced by professional historians, differs from history, or events as they have occurred in the past.
2. Develop an understanding of recent trends in historiography and begin the process of incorporating these developments into the student's own work.
3. Develop and improve the ability to participate in seminar discussions critically and productively.
4. Develop and improve the ability to read and analyze academic texts at the professional level. This will include the ability to identify a book's thesis, its place in the historiography, its organizational structure, its use of sources, and its theoretical and conceptual framework.

Reading List

1. Brooks, James F. *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands*. Illustrated edition. The University of North Carolina Press, 2002.
2. Brown, Callum. *Postmodernism for Historians*. Longman, 2005.
3. Canizares-Esguerra, Jorge. *How to Write the History of the New World: Histories, Epistemologies, and Identities in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World*. 1st ed. Stanford University Press, 2002.
4. Foner, Eric. *Who Owns History: Rethinking the Past in a Changing World*. Wang and Hill, 2002.
5. Geary, Patrick J. *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe*. Princeton University Press, 2003.

6. Ginzburg, Carlo. *The Night Battles: Witchcraft & Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth & Seventeenth Centuries*. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992.
7. Lyons, Clare A. *Sex among the Rabble: An Intimate History of Gender and Power in the Age of Revolution, Philadelphia, 1730-1830*. The University of North Carolina Press, 2006.
8. MacCormack, Sabine. *On the Wings of Time: Rome, the Incas, Spain, and Peru*. Princeton University Press, 2008.
9. Nirenberg, David. *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages*. Princeton University Press, 1998.
10. Fuchs, Eckhardt and Benedikt Stuchtey. *Across Cultural Borders: Historiography in a Global Perspective*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002.
11. Thompson, Emily. *The Soundscape of Modernity: Architectural Acoustics and the Culture of Listening in America, 1900-1933*. The MIT Press, 2004.
12. Vansina, Jan. *How Societies Are Born: Governance in West Central Africa before 1600*. University of Virginia Press, 2005.

Grades and Assignments

Book Reviews: 6 Reviews each worth 5% for a total of 30% of the grade—the reviews can be on any of our readings (your choice) except Brown, Fuchs and Stuchtey, or Fonner. Each book review must conform to the following guidelines.

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 pt. 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 during which we are reading the book in question. Late reviews will be penalized 5% for each day that they are late.

No two books are alike so guidelines for book reviews must be general. 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. Finally, make sure that you review the book the author has written and not the one you wish she had written.

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. The questions do not need to be answered in the order given, but they all need to be addressed clearly and specifically.

1. What is the author's thesis?
2. What is the author's purpose in writing the book?
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 links to 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. 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.

Sets of Discussion Questions and book reviews: 10 sets, each worth 2% for a total of 20% of your grade. Sundays by noon you must submit to me by e-mail a set of discussion questions for the next day's class. Each of these sets must include one discussion question that you come up with on your own and one discussion question that you formulate after reading at least one academic book review of the book in question. For the second question, make sure to cite the review that inspired it and bring a copy of the review to turn in on Monday when you come to class.

Class Participation and Discussion: 15% of your grade

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. 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" above. Always come to class prepared to answer the questions in relation to the book under discussion.

Historiography Essay: 35% of your grade.

The purpose of this assignment is to provide students an opportunity to synthesize the various readings on the discipline of history into a coherent essay focused on a single historiographical theme. Themes can include, but are not limited to, race, gender, class struggles, imperialism, resistance, modernity, etc. If you choose a theme that is not listed above, please double check with me. You will select at least 4 of our readings (at least 2 of which must be books) and in an argumentative essay discuss how each of them articulates a specific vision about your chosen theme. Your essay should flow coherently and you should draw connections between the different readings that you are using. The essay should NOT be a collection of thoughts on the different readings with little to bind them together. You may of course consult additional readings, but not in lieu of the course readings. All your points should be cited and the paper should include a bibliography. The essay should be a minimum of 15 pages and a maximum of 20 and I will hold you to these ranges.

Weekly Reading Assignments

Week 1 – Aug 30
Class Introduction – No Readings

Week 2 – Sept 6

LABOR DAY – No Class

Week 3 – Sept 13

What is History?

Readings:

Foner, *Who Owns History?*

Thomas Haskell, "Objectivity is not Neutrality: Rhetoric vs. Practice in Peter Novick's *That Noble Dream*," *History and Theory* 29:2 (1990) 129-157 [JSTOR]

Forum: "Peter Novick's *That Noble Dream*: The Objectivity Question and the Future of the Historical Profession," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 96, No. 3. (Jun., 1991), pp. 675-703 [JSTOR]

Week 4 – Sept 20

Global Historiography

Readings:

Fuchs & Stuchtey, *Across Cultural Borders*

Jerry Bentley, "Myths, Wagers, and Some Moral Implications of World History," *Journal of World History* 16:1 (2005) 51-82 [JSTOR]

Week 5 – Sept 27

Reading and Writing History

Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write the History of the New World*

Hayden White, "The Structure of Historical Narrative" in *The Fiction of Narrative: Essays on History, Literature, and Theory, 1957-2007* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010) 112-125 [e-reserve]

Week 6 – Oct 4

History, Heritage and the Nation-State

Readings:

Geary, *The Myth of Nations*

Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1993) chs. 1-2

Week 7 – Oct 11

Memory and Imperialism

Readings:

MacCormack, *On the Wings of Time*

Louis S. Warren, "Buffalo Bill meets Dracula: William F. Cody, Bram Stoker, and the Frontiers of Racial Decay," in *American Historical Review* 107 (2002) 1124-1157 [JSTOR]

Week 8 – Oct 18

Borders and Frontiers

Readings:

Brooks, *Captives and Cousins*

Palmira Brummett, "Visions of the Mediterranean: A Classification," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 37:1 (2007) 9-55 [e-reserve]

Week 9 – Oct 25

Microhistory

Ginzburg, *The Night Battles*

Richard Brown, "Microhistory and the Post-Modern Challenge," *Journal of the Early Republic* 23:1 (2003) 1-20 [JSTOR]

Lara Putnam, "To Study the Fragments/Whole: Microhistory and the Atlantic World," *Journal of Social History* 39:3 (2006) 615-630 [JSTOR]

Week 10 – Nov 1

Social History

Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence*

Robert Darnton, "Workers Revolt: The Great Cat Massacre of the Rue Saint Séverin" in Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Basic Books, 1984) 75-106 [e-reserve]

Week 11 – Nov 8

Gender and Sexuality

Lyons, *Sex Among the Rabble*

Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Analysis," *The American Historical Review*, 91:5 (1986) 1053-1075 [JSTOR]

Week 12 – Nov 15

Modernity and its Implications

Thompson, *The Soundscape of Modernity*

——— Jorge Larrain, *Identity and Modernity in Latin America* (Cambridge, UK: Blackwell, 2000) 12-42 [e-reserve]

Week 13 – Nov 22

THANKSGIVING BREAK – No Class

Week 14 – Nov 29

Postmodernism

Callum, *Postmodernism for Historians*

David D. Roberts, "Postmodernism and History: Missing the Missed Connections," *History and Theory* 44:2 (2005) 240-52 [JSTOR]

Week 15 – Dec 6

Interdisciplinary History

Vansina, *How Societies are Born*
Michael McCormick, "Toward a Molecular History of the Justinianic Pandemic" in
Lester Little, ed. *Plague and the End of Antiquity: The Pandemic of 541-750* (Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press, 2006) 290-312 [e-reserve]

Week 16 – Dec 13
No Class – Work on Papers

Week 17 – Dec 20
Submit Historiography Papers
Papers Due by 7:00 PM – Submit by e-mail to jarbel@sfsu.edu.