

## HISTORY 590.001 Historiography and Theory

Fall 2012  
T 7.20 – 10.00 pm  
SS 150

**Instructor:** Prof. Kuracina

**Office location:** Ferguson Social Sciences 104

**Office hours:** Tuesday & Thursday, 3.30pm to 4.30pm; Wednesday, 12.00pm to 3.00pm; *and by appointment*

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### COURSE INFORMATION

#### **Course Materials:**

**Books:** The following books are required for this course and can be purchased at the bookstore. These monographs are a broad selection of approaches that afford insights into historiography and historical methodologies. Please ensure that you obtain the correct edition listed here:

- Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (New York: Verso, 2006).
- Fernand Braudel, *The Structures of Everyday Life: The Limits of the Possible*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).
- R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, revised edition, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).
- William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists and the Ecology of New England*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983).
- John Demos, *The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from Early America*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1995).
- Richard J. Evans, *In Defense of History*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1999).
- Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, eds., *Selected Subaltern Studies*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).
- David Landes, *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations: Why Some Are so Rich and Some so Poor*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1999).
- Gerda Lerner, *Why History Matters: Life and Thought*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).
- E.P. Thompson, *Customs in Common: Studies in Traditional Popular Culture* (New York: The New Press, 1993).
- Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *Good Wives: Image and Reality in Northern New England, 1650–1750*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).
- Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1976).

Reference (suggested):

- Anthony Brundage, *Going to the Sources: A Guide to Historical Research and Writing*, fourth edition, (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 2008).
- Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, seventh edition, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

*Note:* It is imperative that you complete the assigned readings; the material contained therein will drive classroom discussion, a very crucial course requirement. You are responsible for all the material contained in the readings; if you do not read them, you will have a difficult semester.

#### **Course description:**

A study of selected research materials of significance in history with emphasis on investigative and verification techniques.

*Note:* The student is required to demonstrate competence in systematic research procedure. This course is required of all MA and MS students in history. It is recommended that this course be taken as early as possible in the student's graduate career.

The objective of this course is to introduce graduate students to the methodologies of the discipline of history and to engage students in ongoing philosophical and historiographical debates. By studying the "history of history," this course will investigate the structure of facts, the use of sources and the construction of narrative as well as its relation to historical time. This course seeks to enable students to organize and analyze historical facts as they relate to issues of interpretation by approaching these issues from a philosophically-informed perspective.

The critical techniques and concepts learned in this course will be applied to a final research project focusing on time and narrative. The project will be directed toward a professional audience and of publishable quality.

### **Student Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

- Identify major interpretive and methodological trends in history

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### **Instructional, Methods, Activities Assessments:**

Attendance policy: Students are expected to attend every class session; attendance will be taken. Each unexcused absence beyond two (2) instances will result in a 10% reduction in the attendance grade; excessive unexcused absences (more than 4) may be cause for a failing grade in this course, at the instructor's discretion.

Students should inform the instructor if there is a legitimate reason (e.g., illness or emergency) for missing an exam. Students should contact the instructor within 48 hours of the missed exam to schedule a make-up; failure to do so may forfeit the possibility of making up the exam. Non-documented excuses are not generally acceptable, but can be accepted at the instructor's discretion. If you must travel on school business (with an athletic team or for another reason), then let me know ahead of time.

Students are expected to do the reading as noted in this syllabus and to be prepared to participate in classroom discussions. Occasional in-class writing assignments or short quizzes may be assigned and will contribute towards your participation grade; these may not be made up. Although lectures, readings and discussions will overlap significantly, the readings will also include materials that may not be covered in class; nevertheless, students are responsible for all content covered in reading assignments.

Discussion and participation: You are encouraged to bring questions with you to class and to the discussion to ask your questions should some point require further explanation. Students are expected to create and sustain an open intellectual classroom environment which fosters discussion – students should listen to each others' comments and questions with an open mind and to respect viewpoints other than their own. Students must also be open to understanding why people of the past did what they did, and should not dismiss these actors' views because they might be perceived as "wrong." Your participation grade will be based on the following criteria:

- A = Student is always prepared; makes frequent voluntary contributions to classroom discussion
- B = Student is generally prepared; makes occasional voluntary contributions to discussion or participates only when called on
- C = Student is usually prepared but rarely voluntarily speaks
- D = Student is generally unprepared and does not contribute to discussion
- F = Student is unprepared and appears disinterested in contributing to discussion

Participation will be based on weekly critiques and discussions of the reading material. For each week, there will be an assigned “discussion leader” who will be responsible for summarizing the book in question and for guiding the overall discussion of the monograph. All students are expected to complete the weekly assignments and to participate actively in class discussion.

This course is intended to investigate the significance of historical objectivity and the critique specific historiographical methods and approaches, an objective that will enable students to transcend mere narrative and enable them to integrate historical facts into a broader historical and analytical context.

Written assignments: There are two main objectives to this course: 1) to provide students with a fundamental understanding of broad historiographical trends; and 2) to afford students opportunities to interpret the history in response to more general historiographical questions. The following assignments are designed to facilitate these general goals.

*Weekly analyses:* students will write short critiques of each reading assignment. This book review will be 3–4 pages in length, double-space and 12-point font and it must conform to proper citation formatting. Additionally, it must incorporate at least two external reviewers’ assessments of the monograph in question. External reviews generally can be found in JSTOR journals, online publications, in-print reviews, etc., but the source of these reviews must be a professional scholarly journal; if there are any questions about what constitutes a scholarly journal, please ask.

*Proposal:* students will prepare a short description of your research topic. This proposal must include a structured thesis statement or research hypothesis, as well as a commentary on what trends do or might dominate the literature in question. It must be accompanied by a working bibliography.

*Historiography paper:* students in this class are not expected to merely learn history, but to *do* history; consequently, students will write a comprehensive historiography paper on a topic of his/her choice. This assignment will be due at the beginning of the fourth quarter of the semester. The final paper will be approximately 6000 words (20 pages) in length (including text and notes but excluding the bibliography and title page). The paper must use footnotes according to Turabian style and must also include a properly-formatted bibliography and a title page that (at least) includes the student’s name and the title of the paper. The text must be double-spaced, the pages must be numbered, all margins will be set at 1 inch and the paper should be written in Times New Roman 12pt or its equivalent. This paper may not be submitted in more than one class.

Written assignments will be graded according to the following criteria (as applicable):

- Compliance with the assignment
- The presence, strength and originality of a thesis
- The proper use of evidence to support that thesis
- The degree to which the paper is analytical and evaluative rather than narrative
- Evidence that the sources used and listed in the bibliography were read and understood
- Organization of the paper and logical progression of the argument
- Mechanics (spelling, grammar, syntax and punctuation)

Grading criteria for written work holds true for exams, written quizzes or occasional written “homework” assignments. It is based on the following:

- A = Mastery of content and reading material; factual accuracy; thoughtful interpretation or argument that synthesizes original thoughts and ideas with content; technically clean
- B = Good-to-excellent command of the majority of content and reading material; competent factual accuracy; a generally solid historical argument backed with adequate evidence
- C = Fair command of content material; reasonable factual accuracy; ability to articulate a specific thesis or argument even if it is not original or is poorly supported by the evidence

D = Poor command of content; factual errors; no real argument driving the essay

General letter grades correspond to the following scale:

A = 90–100

B = 80–89

C = 70–79

D = 60–69

F = less than 59

**Grading:**

Student performance will be evaluated as follows:

- Discussion and participation (30% of final grade)
- Weekly analyses/critiques (20% of final grade)
- Proposal and bibliography (10% of final grade)
- Historiography paper (30% of final grade)
- Attendance (10% of final grade)

**All of the requirements must be completed to pass this course**

<b>TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS, ACCESS AND NAVIGATION</b>
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The following information is provided to assist students in preparing to use technology in this course:

Word processing: Students will need access to a word processor and a printer to access and print out reading assignments, to write research papers, to prepare for debates and written exams and to complete type-written response assignments. Students' word processors must enable them to read and insert footnotes into a Microsoft Word document.

Internet: Students will need email access to receive reading assignments and for course-related correspondence.

Turnitin: Turnitin is a web-based plagiarism detection software site that scans student papers into a database of all such papers and check submitted papers against those in the database and virtually every website on the Web to determine whether or not paper content was "lifted" or fabricated in any fraudulent way. Students must submit their papers in Microsoft Word format after creating an account tied to this course. To submit a paper to Turnitin, go to [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) and click on "new user." Choose "student" and click "next." Enter the Class ID and Password (details on ID and password are forthcoming). Once you input your information into the system, you should see History 590 "Historiography and Theory" listed in your classes. Click on the appropriate assignment, click on the icon under "submit" and follow the instructions to upload your paper. Please let me know if you have any problems (and do not wait until the very last minute to upload your paper). Submissions to Turnitin are due by 12.00 pm on the same date the hard-copy work is submitted to the instructor.

<b>COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT</b>
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Students are encouraged to contact the instructor whenever the need arises; clear lines of communication enable the instructor to better assist your learning processes and provide any necessary support. Outside the classroom, the best way to contact the instructor is by email and during posted office hours. Do not hesitate to talk to me about any

concerns you may have or any problems or issues you may experience during the semester – I can only assist you if I am aware of what is going on with you.

## COURSE AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### **Classroom Behavior:**

To avoid being a distraction to either other students or the instructor, please take care of personal needs before class begins and turn off cell phones. Do not send text messages, chat on IM or post Facebook updates during class; although you think you can do these things subtly, you can not – it is a distraction.

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment.

### **Written Assignment Format and Late Assignment Policy:**

Papers must be typed and double-spaced with one-inch margins. Pages must be numbered. Your name, the course number and the due date must appear at the top of the first page; no cover page is necessary. Pages should be stapled. Any authors' quotations or ideas that are derived from another writer must be cited; footnote citations are preferred, but not mandatory. We will briefly discuss citations in class, but if there are any questions about how to cite or what to cite, please ask. Any papers that do not conform to these guidelines will be returned to the author for resubmission and will be penalized for being submitted late.

All writing assignments will be turned in at the beginning of class on the due date. Late papers will only be accepted with advance permission and will be penalized 5% for each day it is late.

### **Academic Honesty:**

In all our courses, history faculty members expect that all work turned in by students for grades is their own work. It is the policy of the university, the history department and the instructor that no form of plagiarism, cheating, collusion or any other form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated. Plagiarism is defined as taking the words or ideas of someone else and passing them off as your own. Cheating is defined as obtaining unauthorized assistance on any assignment. Collusion is defined as selling or purchasing academic products with the intention that they be submitted to fulfill an academic or course requirement. Students are expected to uphold and support the highest possible academic standards at all times. Any student found guilty of violating academic integrity policy will fail the assignment in question, will automatically fail the course and will be subject to disciplinary action by the university (see Texas A&M University-Commerce Code of Student Conduct 5.b. [1,2,3]). Further information on the history department's plagiarism policy can be found on the department webpage. If you are unclear about what constitutes academic dishonesty, ask.

### **Writing Center:**

Students are encouraged to take advantage of the Writing Center's resources for assistance with drafting their written assignments. Although the center will not write your paper for you, it may help you to improve your writing skills. If you use the Writing Center, plan in advance because it can only help you if there is adequate time to incorporate their suggestions into your paper. Additionally, I am willing to read rough drafts (and even multiple drafts) of your written work so long as the drafts are submitted at least one week prior to the due date.

### **Students with Disabilities:**

Students requiring special accommodations for learning disabilities must work with the Academic Support Committee. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities.

If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Gee Library, Room 132,

Phone: (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax: (903) 468-8148

Email: [StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu).

*Note:* This syllabus is your contract with the instructor for the semester. By enrolling in this course you agree to abide by all the policies and requirements set forth below. The terms of this contract are non-negotiable, apply equally to each student, and remain in effect throughout the semester; only the instructor may alter the terms of this agreement. Please contact the instructor if there are any questions about this syllabus or the terms herein.

## COURSE OUTLINE AND CALANDAR

### **Tentative course schedule (and themes):**

The following schedule is meant to be a guide for students throughout the semester and indicates when reading and written assignments are due. Please refer to the schedule frequently. I will do my best to keep to this schedule, but I reserve the right to change it as the semester progresses and as such circumstances arise.

August 30 – Introduction

September 6 – Lerner, *Why History Matters* and Evans, *In Defense of History*

September 13 – Collingwood, *The Idea of History*

September 20 – Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*

September 27 – Cronon, *Changes in the Land*

October 4 – Braudel, *The Structures of Everyday Life*

- **Paper proposal due**

October 11 – Ulrich, *Good Wives*

October 18 – Landes, *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations*

October 25 – Guha and Spivak, *Selected Subaltern Studies*

November 1 – Thompson, *Customs in Common*

November 8 – Demos, *The Unredeemed Captive*

November 15 – Anderson, *Imagined Communities*

- **Historiography paper due**

November 22 – **Thanksgiving: no class**

November 29 – peer reviews

December 6 – peer reviews