

History 6684: Historiography Fall 2016
TLC 3205 Wednesdays 5:30PM-8PM

Professor: Dr. Colleen A. Vasconcellos
Office Hours: TLC 3208—Wednesday 3p-5p

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Course Description

This course is meant to do two things: First, this course serves as an introduction to some of the basic theories, practices, and problems of historiography—that is, the history of historical writing and inquiry. In other words, this course will focus primarily on how historians do history. So, over the course of the semester, we will read a wide variety of monographs taken from various fields and time periods, all of which examine their subjects through various methodological approaches in an effort to sample a range of perspectives on the writing of history and consider a number of theoretical approaches that have been influential in the discipline. That leads us to the second goal of the course, a goal that involves you the students: As historians, we are constantly challenged with the objective of placing ourselves within the historiography of our own field of study. So, over the course of the semester and through a number of writing assignments, you will all begin sharpening those skills you learned as an undergraduate so that you can begin to master the historiography of your own research, clarify how that research adds to what has already been written in your field, and begin to study and write history as a historian in your own right.

Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete the course will be able to demonstrate:

- a knowledge of historiography and its changes over time
- the ability to identify and critique the arguments of professional historians
- the ability to critically evaluate a historical monograph both orally and in writing
- the ability to undertake advanced historical research that culminates in a 15-20 page historiographical essay on a topic of the student's choosing

Special Note

Students, please carefully review the following information at this link:

http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf

This link contains important material pertaining to your rights and responsibilities in this class. Because these statements are updated as federal, state, university, and accreditation standards change, you should review the information each semester.

Course Readings:

- Carolyn Kay Steedman, *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History* (Rutgers)
- Marjane Satrapi, *The Complete Persepolis* (Pantheon)
- Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Verso)
- Marcus Rediker, *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age* (Beacon)

- Richard Handler and Eric Gable, *New History in an Old Museum: Creating the Past at Colonial Williamsburg* (Duke)
- Tony Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War* (Vintage)
- Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (Houghton Mifflin)
- Alfred Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe* (Cambridge)
- Donald R. Wright, *The World and a Very Small Place in Africa: A History of Globalization in Niimi, the Gambia* (Routledge)
- Kathryn Sloan, *Runaway Daughters: Seduction, Elopement, and Honor in Nineteenth-Century Mexico* (New Mexico)
- James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (Yale)
- Trevor Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire: Thomas Thistlewood and His Slaves in the Anglo-Jamaican World* (UNC)
- Wim Klooster, *Revolutions in the Atlantic World: A Comparative History* (NYU)
- Additional Supplemental Readings can be found in the Supplemental Readings Folder in CourseDen

Course Requirements and Evaluation

COURSE EVALUATION AND GRADE DISTRIBUTION

The course will be evaluated on a 10-pt scale: A=90-100; B=80-89; C=70-79; D=60-69; F=59-0.

Emphasis will be on clarity of ideas, reading, writing, analytical and critical thinking skills, class participation, and overall presentation. Participation in class discussions and lectures is encouraged and will form a component of the written assignment grades. There will be no extra credit offered in this class, so don't ask. Grade calculations are as follows:

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|------------------------------------|--|
| • Class Participation 20% | • Topic Proposal and Preliminary Bibliography 5% |
| • Leading Class Discussion 10% | • Annotated Bibliography 10% |
| • Review of Reviews 10% | • Historiography Draft 1 20% |
| • Journal Article Review Essay 10% | • Research Presentation 5% |
| • Historiography Final Draft 10% | |

Please note that I cannot discuss grades or course progress with any student via email or over the phone. It must be in person or via video chat. Furthermore, I cannot discuss grades or your progress in the course with anyone but you without a signed FERPA waiver. That said, I am happy to discuss your progress in the course at any time. Just make an appointment and we'll talk.

Class Participation and Attendance (25%)

All classes center on discussion of the assigned readings; so, doing the readings and coming prepared to discuss the readings is essential. Class participation and attendance is mandatory. All graduate courses have a heavy reading load, and this one is no exception. Read carefully, take notes, and organize your thoughts before class, and come prepared to discuss. Keep in mind that class participation is not attendance, but actual participation in the class discussion of the day. Students who do not participate in daily class discussions will not receive an A in this course. While you are

expected to speak up in class and ask questions, you are also expected to respect your fellow students' opinions. I will not tolerate disrespect of any kind, and you will be asked to leave. If disruptive behavior continues, you will be asked to leave for the remainder of the course, and you will not be allowed to finish any assignments. In other words, you will fail the course.

A Note on Attendance and Tardiness:

Although it is not my normal policy, **I am taking attendance in this class.** The reason why is that you are graduate students and you need to attend in order to get the most out of your classes. I will allow one absence *for properly documented reasons*. Any absences after that without proper and accepted documentation will result in the deduction of one letter grade from your final grade.

- ❖ What constitutes proper and accepted documentation you ask? A doctor's note, conference programs, internship meetings, a speeding ticket, an accident report, a locksmith bill, etc.
- ❖ **Vacations, ball games, having to wait for the repair man or cable guy, moving to a new place, DragonCon, trips to Vegas, your participation in theatrical productions, or the like will not be accepted excuses for any absences including your first. Your answer when scheduling such events should be "Darn it...I can't; I have class, guess I will have to pick another day."**
 - Miss two classes, you get a B; three will get you a C. Miss four and you fail the class.
 - Please note that any graduate student who earns a C in a course will not receive credit for that course. Two C's will result in expulsion from the program, as does an F.

Leading Class Discussion (10%):

Beginning in Week 3, one student will introduce and lead class discussion of one of the required monographs for the class. You should focus on identifying and critiquing the arguments, themes, methods, presentation, and other issues in the week's readings. Above all, you should aim to foster lively and respectful discussion among your classmates. A sign up sheet will be provided in Google Docs and you can sign up there for your preferred date. Sign ups will be taken on a first come first serve basis, so act quickly. **If there are more students than monographs, we can double up, but you must work together as a team.** The presenter(s) must mail discussion questions to the instructor no later than 9pm on Saturday evening of the week before the presentation.

Journal Article Review Essay (10%)

Find a journal article in your field or on a topic of special interest that is published in a reputable journal like *The American Historical Review*, *The Journal of Social History*, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, *Slavery and Abolition*, etc. Read the article and then analyze it in a 500-750 word essay, double-spaced. It must be at least 500 words and no more than 750. Consider the following: what is the author's argument and how does he or she represent it; what types of methods did the author use to come to his or her conclusion; what is the article's historiographical contribution or significance; and what are its strengths and weaknesses? This will be excellent preparation for your annotated bibliography and your historiographical essay. Articles listed on the syllabus are off limits.

Review of Reviews (10%):

Peer review is an important component of our profession, and one of the most common types of historical writing for professional historians is the book review. One of the features of a good book review is an explanation of the book's contribution to the field, achieved through a brief

historiographical overview of the field and how the new book fits into this historiographical context. For this assignment, please select any of the monographs assigned for this class, find at least TWO reviews of this monograph on JSTOR, and write a 750-1000 word essay reviewing the reviews of the monograph, responding to the reviews, and contributing your own review of the monograph in question. This paper must be a minimum of 750 words and no more than 1000 words. Your paper is due on the day that the monograph in question is to be discussed in class. No late papers will be accepted – you will simply write the paper on a later book. If you have not turned in a paper by the last discussion, you will receive a 0 on this assignment.

Annotated Bibliography (10%):

This assignment is designed to get you thinking about your historiographical essay. While it is not required, it is a good idea to do your bibliography and historiographical essay for this class in the same field as you want to write your thesis. Doing them on the same topic as your thesis is even better. Each student will compile an annotated bibliography of secondary sources that would be used for a projected substantial research project. An annotated bibliography is a bibliography that gives a short summary of each source listed alphabetically. This will be great preparation for the historiographical essay that you will write later in the course. Monographs and articles listed on this syllabus are off limits.

Historiographical Essay

The major assignment for the course is a 15-20 page double-spaced historiographical essay exploring a topic related to your research interests. Use this as an opportunity to explore possible directions for your future thesis research, as what you write in this essay could very well provide a large chunk of your thesis introduction or project essay. Building upon the work you started in your annotated bibliography, this essay must offer a critical analysis of these books and the historiography of the topic more generally, as well as evaluate core concerns among historians who have written in this field, conceptual or methodological debates with which they have grappled, and/or fundamental problems with the approaches within the field. You will submit a rough draft of this paper for feedback and then revise and resubmit your final draft at the end of the semester. Your grade for this paper will be broken down in various assignments, which are explained in more detail in CourseDen:

- Topic Proposal and Preliminary Bibliography 5%
- Annotated Bibliography 10%
- Historiography Paper Draft 20%
- Research Presentation 5%
- Revised Historiography Paper 10%

A NOTE ON SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS: All submitted assignments must be submitted in MS Word, double spaced, with standard 1" margins, size 12 font in Times New Roman or the like, black text and NO double-spacing between paragraphs. Citations are cited according to the Chicago Manual of Style or points will be deducted. Am I serious? You betcha.

SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS LATE OR OUTSIDE COURSEDEN

I do not accept assignments via email, and any assignment not submitted to the dropbox in CourseDen will receive a 0. Late assignments submitted after the scheduled deadline will not be

accepted unless you have a properly documented excuse. **Late assignments submitted without proper documentation will receive a 0.**

THE RETURN OF GRADED WORK: Assignment grades will be posted within a week of the due date. Weekly discussion grades will be posted within a month after the discussion's completion.

EXTRA CREDIT: There is no extra credit offered in this class.

IN THE EVENT OF TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES

It is **your responsibility** to see that your assignments have posted to CourseDen properly. Please check to make sure that your assignment was uploaded correctly and appears in the appropriate Dropbox. If it does not appear, I cannot grade it, and I will not be asking you where it is. Instead, I will assume that you did not do the assignment on time and will grade your assignment accordingly. In other words, your assignment will be considered late once the submission deadline has passed and late work is not accepted in this class.

In the event that you are having computer/wifi difficulties, please find an alternative source. **Please do not wait until the last minute to submit assignments.** Keep in mind that you are submitting items over the Internet, and sometimes the Internet Gods get angry and withhold access. And sometimes they just like to mess with you when you are approaching a deadline. There are many things that can go wrong in the path between your computer and CourseDen. Technical problems related to computer connections or equipment cannot be used as an excuse for failure to complete assignments or to participate online. Save often and back up your work.

It is your responsibility to locate the computer hardware, software and Internet connections necessary to stay connected and current with your course work online. Please be aware of alternate Internet connections and computers available through college computer labs, college Learning Resource Centers (such as libraries), the public library, and any friends, relatives, or neighbors and access them if your personal computer equipment is not working.

A Note about Academic Honesty:

I shouldn't have to have this conversation with graduate students, but I'm going to anyway. Let it be known that I will not tolerate cheating, plagiarism, or any other form of academic dishonesty in this class, and **any student found guilty of plagiarism will automatically receive a failing grade for the course (resulting in your expulsion from the program).** Any assignments given in class must be written in your own words, and will not consist of information found on the internet or from any outside source unless cited. This includes paraphrasing, which may not be taking a passage word for word, but certainly does not give credit to ideas and/or information. All assignments will be turned into CourseDen and will be monitored by the Turnitin.com feature in CourseDen, which gives me the percentage of the paper that has been plagiarized as well as from where the offending passage was taken. If you plagiarize, you will automatically fail the course. Your name will be forwarded to through the appropriate channels, and I will recommend that UWG administration take action. Plagiarism is a serious offense and it can lead to your expulsion and/or suspension from the University. **In short, don't do it.** See CourseDen for details on what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it in the Content Module. My advice: when in doubt...cite it.

Tentative Course Outline and Readings Assignments

Week 1: August 10—Introduction to the Course

Week 2: August 17 — Why History?

Discuss Peter N. Stearns, "Why Study History?" (CourseDen), Penelope J. Corfield, "All People Are Living Histories," (CourseDen), Hayden White, "Historical Fiction, Fictional History, and Historical Reality," *Rethinking History* 9 (2005): 147–157 (CourseDen), and Wilhelm Von Humboldt, "On the Historian's Task" *History and Theory* 6 (1967): 57-71. (JSTOR)

Week 3: August 24 — Cultural History

Discussion of Carolyn Kay Steedman, *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History*. Please note that class will begin at 6:30.

Week 4: August 31 — Memoir

Discussion of Marjane Satrapi, *The Complete Persepolis* and Paula Fass, "The Memoir Problem," *Reviews in American History* 34 (2006): 107-123. (CourseDen)

Topic Proposal and Preliminary Bibliography Due Friday, September 2 by 10PM

Week 5: September 7 — Nationalism

Discussion of Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* and Anthony D. Smith, "Nationalism and the Historians," *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 33 (1992): 58-80. (CourseDen)

Week 6: September 14 — The Marxist Historians

Discussion of Marcus Rediker, *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age* and David Renton, "Studying Their Own Nation without Insularity? The British Marxist Historians Reconsidered," *Science & Society* 69 (2005): 559-579. (JSTOR)

Journal Article Review due Friday, September 16 by 10PM.

Week 7: September 21 — Public History

Discussion of Richard Handler and Eric Gable, *New History in an Old Museum: Creating the Past at Colonial Williamsburg* and Robert Weible, "The Blind Man and His Dog: The Public and Its Historians," *The Public Historian* 28 (2006): 8-17. (JSTOR)

Week 8: September 28 — History and Memory

Discussion of Tony Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War*, James Grossman, "Whose Memory? Whose Monuments? History, Commemoration, and the Struggle for an Ethical Past," *Perspectives* 54 (2016): online edition (CourseDen), and Alon Confino, "Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method," *The American Historical Review* 102 (1997): 1386-403. (JSTOR)

Week 9: October 5 — Popular History

Discussion of Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa*, Paula Michaels, "What is Academic History For?" *The Conversation*, 25 March 2014

(CourseDen), David Greenburg, "That Barnes & Noble Dream," *Slate* 17 May 2005 (CourseDen), and Gordon S. Wood, "The Writing Life," *The Washington Post*, 17 November 2009. (CourseDen)

Week 10: October 12 — Environmental

Discussion of Alfred Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe* and William Cronon, "The Uses of Environmental History," *Environmental History Review* 17 (1993): 1-22. (JSTOR)
Annotated Bibliography due Friday, October 14 by 10PM.

Week 11: October 19— Global History and World Systems Theory

Discussion of Donald R. Wright, *The World and a Very Small Place in Africa: A History of Globalization in Niimi, the Gambia* and David Christian, "The Case for 'Big History,'" *Journal of World History* 2 (1991): 223-238. (JSTOR)

Week 12: October 26 — Gender

Discussion of Kathryn Sloan, *Runaway Daughters: Seduction, Elopement, and Honor in Nineteenth-Century Mexico* and Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91 (1986): 1053-1075 (JSTOR).

Week 13: November 2 — Interdisciplinary History

Discussion of James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* and T. C. R. Horn and Harry Ritter, "Interdisciplinary History: A Historiographical Review," *The History Teacher* 19 (1986): 427-48. (JSTOR)

Historiographical Essay Rough Draft due Friday, November 4 by 10PM.

Week 14: November 9 — Micro-History

Discussion of Trevor Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire: Thomas Thistlewood and His Slaves in the Anglo-Jamaican World* and Lawrence Stone, "The Revival of Narrative: Reflections on a New Old History," *Past and Present* 85 (1979): 3-24 (JSTOR).

Week 15: November 16 — Comparative/Military History

Discussion of Wim Klooster, *Revolutions in the Atlantic World: A Comparative History* and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka, "Comparative History: Methods, Aims, Problems," in *Comparison and History: Europe in Cross-national Perspective*, eds. Deborah Cohen and Maura O'Connor (Routledge 2004) (CourseDen).

Week 16: November 21-25—Thanksgiving Break!!!

Week 17: November 30 — Presentations

Historiographical Essay due Friday, December 2 by 10PM

Final grades will be posted no later than Monday, December 12 at noon.