

History 6684

Historiography

Fall 2017

Instructor: Dr. Dan Williams

Office Hours: TLC 3207

T, Th, 9:30-10:30am

Wed., 10am-12pm, 2-5pm

(Additional office hours available by appointment)

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Class Location:

TLC 3205

Thurs., 5:30-8:00pm

Description:

As a required course for students pursuing an M.A. in history, HIST 6684 offers a comprehensive survey of recent historiographical trends – that is, approaches to the writing of history. This course will be taught as a seminar, which means that class sessions will consist of discussions of the assigned readings. Students will have the opportunity to interact with their colleagues, explore new points of view, ask questions, and present their own interpretations of the readings as they seek to gain an understanding of the history of their craft and the methodology necessary to produce their own historical scholarship.

This course is designed to give students the skills they need to: 1) Read and evaluate the historical monographs assigned in an M.A. program in history; 2) Write a historiography paper; and 3) Apply their skills in historiography while writing an M.A. thesis, thesis essay, or substantive research paper. In short, the purpose of this class is to give students an understanding of what it means to study and write history as a member of the historical profession.

Learning outcomes:

Students in this course will demonstrate knowledge of historiography and its changes over time. This learning outcome will be assessed through the students' historiography papers and exam essays.

Assessment:

Students' final grades will be determined as follows:

Class participation / CourseDen posts 20%

Class presentations	20%
Midterm exam	20%
Historiography paper	40%

There will be no opportunity for extra-credit assignments in this course.

Grading Methodology: This university does not use a plus / minus grading system, but during the course of the semester, I will use plus / minus grades, as well as split-letter grades (e.g., an A- / B+), in order to evaluate students' written work with precision. In computing final course grades, I convert all grades into numeric scores according to the following system:

A = 95

A/A- = 94

A- = 92

A-/B+ = 90

B+ = 88

B+/B = 87

B = 85

B/B- = 84

B- = 82

B-/C+ = 80

(A similar pattern is used for grades in the C-range).

In computing final course grades, a grade average of 89.5 or higher converts to a course grade of A, a grade average between 79.5 and 89.49 converts to a course grade of B, and a grade average between 69.5 and 79.49 converts to a course grade of C.

A-range grades, including the grade of A-/B+, are reserved for work that is of exceptional quality. In order to receive an A-range grade on an essay assignment, a student's essay must show evidence of original thinking and a thorough understanding of the relevant sources on the topic, as well as good writing technique. Papers that receive a grade of 90 or above must be cogent and persuasive in their argumentation, and they must be well written and tightly organized around a strong thesis. In short, a paper that receives an A-range grade not only meets the basic requirements for the assignment, but also demonstrates that a student has mastered the interpretative, analytical, and writing skills expected for a course at this level.

B-range grades are given to essays that demonstrate a student's accurate understanding of the material, adequate use of the assigned documents, and competence in writing. They rarely contain the sophisticated analysis required for an A-range essay, but they meet the requirements and expectations for the assignment.

C-range grades are given to essays that contain factual inaccuracies, errors in interpretation, inadequate use of the assigned documents, or poor writing technique, even though they usually meet most of the basic requirements for the assignment.

Failing grades are assigned to work that does not meet the requirements and expectations for the assignment.

Take-home exam midterm exam: On September 28, I will email you an essay question related to broad themes that are covered in the class readings. You will then have until October 9 to write a response to that question. The midterm exam essay should be 8-10 pages long.

Historiography paper: You will be expected to write a 15-20 page historiographical analysis of a topic of your choice. This historiography paper is due on December 7 (with a first draft due on October 30). Please see the guidelines for this assignment for additional details.

Papers that are turned in after the assigned date will be marked down 1/3 of a letter grade for each day they are overdue.

It should go without saying that all papers that you write must be your own work, and that any students who are caught plagiarizing another student's work, a paper from a web site, a textbook, or any other source will automatically fail this course and may be subject to further disciplinary action. Plagiarism is a serious offense that will not be tolerated.

All of your written work for this class must be original; you are not allowed to submit essays that you have written for other courses or that you have completed prior to this semester.

Class participation: Since class sessions in this seminar course will consist almost entirely of class discussion, your participation in those discussions is crucial to the success of this course. It is imperative that you come to class prepared to talk about the assigned reading each week. I will determine your class participation grade at the end of the semester based on my perception of your level of preparedness for each class session, your willingness to participate in the discussion, and the perceptiveness of the comments that you make throughout the duration of this course. I understand that some students may be more inclined than others to speak up in class, but I hope to create an environment that will allow everyone, regardless of their personality or background, to feel comfortable sharing their thoughts on the readings. If you find yourself reluctant to join in the conversation for any reason, or if you feel that your class participation level does not adequately reflect your knowledge of the material and preparation for class, I would encourage you to meet with me early in the semester to discuss strategies that will enable you to succeed in earning a class participation grade that accurately reflects your work.

In addition, your class participation grade will be based on your CourseDen discussion posts. Discussion posts on the class readings are **due by 3pm each class day**. Your discussion post should respond to posted questions, suggest some discussion questions of your own, and present your thoughts on the authors' historiographical approaches.

Class presentations: Each student will be required to give several class presentations this semester. These include two five-minute presentations on assigned historiographical questions and their relationship to the topic that you select for your historiography paper. The first presentation is scheduled to take place on September 7, and the second on October 19. In addition, for each class book discussion, I will ask for a student volunteer to prepare a brief presentation summarizing information from academic reviews of the book that we are scheduled to discuss. The presentation should use those reviews to discuss the methodological approach of the book, as well as any critical comments that reviewers have made. In addition, there will be ten opportunities to give short presentations on groundbreaking historiographical monographs that are not assigned in this class. Those presentations should draw on information from academic reviews and review essays to discuss the historiographical significance of these works. Depending on the number of students in the class, I may need to ask some students to team up with a classmate for one of these presentations.

Class communication: I may send out periodic email communiqués to students in this course, so please check your UWG email account regularly.

To protect students' privacy rights, I will not return graded papers to any third party (e.g., a student's friend or relative who asks to pick up a student's work on that person's behalf) unless a student gives me permission in writing (e.g., an email) to do so. There are occasions when I must disclose a student's grade to university administrators or other history department faculty (e.g., the department chair, students' advisors, or the graduate studies coordinator), but in all other cases, I will make every effort to maintain the confidentiality of students' grades.

I would like to do whatever I can to help you succeed in this course. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have a question about any subject pertaining to this class. I make it a priority to respond promptly to emails from students, and I am happy to talk with students during my office hours, so please feel free to stop by my office anytime that you want to discuss your concerns about this course. I believe that this will be an excellent semester, and I'm pleased to welcome you to this class.

Assigned texts:

You will need to obtain copies of the following books. Most or all of these books are available at the university bookstore, but you can also order these books through online retailers.

Peter Charles Hoffer, *Past Imperfect* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004). Paper. ISBN: 978-1586484453.

Marcus Rediker, *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age* (Boston: Beacon, 2004). Paper. ISBN: 978-0807050255.
(Amazon new price: \$16.97; used price: starting at \$4.01).

Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004). Paper. ISBN: 978-0691160825.
(Amazon new price: \$17.56; used price: starting at \$13.48). (This book was reissued with a new foreword in 2014, but the text of the book was otherwise unchanged. Either edition of the book is acceptable).

Linda Gordon, *Pitied but Not Entitled: Single Mothers and the History of Welfare* (New York: Free Press, 1994). Hardcover. ISBN: 978-0029124857. (This book is out of print, but used copies are available for purchase through Amazon. Prices start at \$3.99).

Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001). Paperback. ISBN: 978-0674007048.
(Amazon new price: \$32.22; used price: starting at \$21.69).

Lawrence Levine, *Highbrow / Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988). Paperback. ISBN: 978-0674390775. (Amazon new price: \$30.43; used price: starting at \$6.99).

Steve Goodson, *Highbrows, Hillbillies, and Hellfire: Public Entertainment in Atlanta, 1880-1930* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2002). Paperback. ISBN: 978-0820329307. (Amazon new price: \$29.50; used price: starting at \$11.00).

Craig Harline and Eddy Put, *A Bishop's Tale: Mathias Hovius among His Flock in Seventeenth-Century Flanders* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000). Paperback. ISBN: 978-0300094053. (Amazon new price: \$28.80; used price: starting at \$1.99).

Cian McMahon, *The Global Dimensions of Irish Identity: Race, Nation, and the Popular Press, 1840-1880* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015). Paperback. ISBN: 978-1469620107. (Amazon new price: \$28.26; used price: starting at \$13.00).

Karl Jacoby and Patricia Nelson Limerick, *Shadows at Dawn: An Apache Massacre and the Violence of History* (New York: Penguin, 2008). Paperback. ISBN: 978-0143116219. (Amazon new price: \$13.71; used price: starting at \$5.99).

Jon Sensbach, *Rebecca's Revival: Creating Black Christianity in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005). Paperback. ISBN: 978-0674022577. (Amazon new price: \$17.54; used price: starting at \$8.33).

Sara Dubow, *Ourselves Unborn: A History of the Fetus in Modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). ISBN: 978-0195323436. (Amazon price for new hardcover: \$27.16; new paperback: \$24.77; used hardcover: starting at \$9.70; used paperback: starting at \$14.90).

Daniel K. Williams, *Defenders of the Unborn: The Pro-Life Movement before Roe v. Wade* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016). Hardcover. ISBN: 978-0199391646. (Amazon new price: \$23.96; used price: starting at \$20.41; Kindle price: \$9.99).

Class schedule:

(Please complete all assigned readings before class and post questions and thoughts for class discussion on CourseDen by 3pm of class day).

- 8/10 The history of history-writing
 Peter Charles Hoffer, *Past Imperfect*, 1-130.
 Assigned article:
 Carl Becker, "Everyman His Own Historian," *American Historical Review* 37 (1932): 221-236.
 CourseDen discussion questions (Please answer these in a CourseDen discussion post by 3pm): 1) What do you think are the most important skills required to write history? 2) What type of history would you like to write, and why? 3) What do you most enjoy about studying history? Why do you want to become a historian?
 Assignment: Bring a favorite historical monograph to class and explain what makes it a compelling work of history.
- 8/17 Socioeconomic class as a category of analysis
 Marcus Rediker, *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age* (Guest discussion leader: Dr. Colleen Vasconcellos)
 Assigned articles:
 Phillip Schofield, "History and Marxism," in *Making History: An Introduction to the History and Practices of a Discipline*, ed. Peter Lambert and Phillip Schofield (New York: Routledge, 2004), 180-191 (CourseDen).
 Michael B. Katz, "Social Class in North American Urban History," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 11 (1981): 579-605.
 Paul M. Hohenberg, "Toward a More Useful Economic History," *Journal of Economic History* 68 (2008): 339-354.
 Student presentation: E. P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class*
 Student presentation: Eugene Genovese's *Roll, Jordan, Roll*
- 8/24 Race
 Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*
 Assigned articles:
 James D. Anderson, "How We Learn about Race through History," in *Learning History in America: Schools, Cultures, and Politics*, ed. Lloyd Kramer et al. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 87-106 (CourseDen).
 Matthew A. Axtell, "Toward a New Legal History of Capitalism and Unfree Labor: Law, Slavery, and Emancipation in the American Marketplace," *Law & Social Inquiry* 40 (2015): 270-300.
 Student presentation: C. Vann Woodward's *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*
- 8/31 Gender
 Linda Gordon, *Pitied but Not Entitled: Single Mothers and the History of Welfare* (Guest discussion leader: Dr. Stephanie Chalifoux)
 Assigned articles:
 Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American*

Historical Review (1986): 1053-1075.

Joanne Meyerowitz, "A History of 'Gender,'" *American Historical Review* 113 (2008): 1346-1356.

Mary E. Wiesner, "Beyond Women and Family: Towards a Gender Analysis of the Reformation," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 18 (1987): 311-321.

Rachel Leouw, "Age as a Category of Gender Analysis: Servant Girls, Modern Girls, and Gender in Southeast Asia," *Journal of Asian Studies* 71 (2012): 975-990.

Bruce Fehn, "Theodore Roosevelt and American Masculinity," *OAH Magazine of History* 19 (2005): 52-59.

Student presentation: Glenda Gilmore's *Gender and Jim Crow*

Historiography paper topic and annotated bibliography due

9/7 Religion and beliefs as categories of analysis

Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe*

Assigned articles:

Hans J. Hillerbrand, "Was There a Reformation in the Sixteenth Century?" *Church History* 72 (2003): 525-552.

Jon Butler, "Jack-in-the-Box Faith: The Religion Problem in Modern American History," *J. of American History* 90 (March 2004): 1357-1378.

First 5-minute class presentation assignment: How have historians used class, race, and gender as categories of analysis in your field of study? How could you use these categories of analysis in your own work? How would your perspective on your topic change depending on which category of analysis you emphasized? Can you think of other categories of analysis that might be helpful?

Student presentation: Perry Miller's *The New England Mind*

Professor's presentation: The historical career of George Marsden

9/14 Social and cultural history

Lawrence Levine, *Highbrow / Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Guest discussion leader: Dr. Steve Goodson)

Assigned article:

Paula S. Fass, "Cultural History / Social History: Some Reflections on a Continuing Dialogue," *Journal of Social History* 37 (2003): 39-46.

9/21 Cultural history in application

Steve Goodson, *Highbrows, Hillbillies, and Hellfire: Public Entertainment in Atlanta, 1880-1930* (Guest discussion leader: Dr. Steve Goodson)

9/28 Microhistory

Craig Harline and Eddy Put, *A Bishop's Tale: Mathias Hovius among His Flock in Seventeenth-Century Flanders* (Guest discussion leader: Dr. Charles Lipp)

Assigned article:

Jill Lepore, "Historians Who Love Too Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography," *Journal of American History* 88 (2001): 129-144.

Student presentation: Carlo Ginsburg's *The Cheese and the Worms*
 Student presentation: Laurel Thatcher Ulrich's *A Midwife's Tale*

10/5 No class (fall break)

Monday, October 9, 11:59pm: Midterm exam essay due (submit via CourseDen)

10/12 Transnational and comparative history

Cian McMahon, *The Global Dimensions of Irish Identity: Race, Nation, and the Popular Press, 1840-1880* (Guest discussion leader: Dr. Michael de Nie)

Assigned articles:

Enda Delaney, "Our Island Story? Towards a Transnational History of Late Modern Ireland," *Irish Historical Studies* 37 (2011): 599-621.

Carl N. Degler, "Comparative History: An Essay Review," *J. of Southern History* 34 (1968): 425-430.

David Christian, "The Case for 'Big History,'" *J. of World History* 2 (1991): 223-238.

Student presentation: William McNeill's *Plagues and Peoples*

Student presentation: Jared Diamond's *Guns, Germs, and Steel*

10/19 Oral history and the history of memory

Karl Jacoby and Patricia Nelson Limerick, *Shadows at Dawn: An Apache Massacre and the Violence of History* (Guest discussion leader: Dr. Gary Van Valen)

Assigned article:

David Thelen, "Memory and American History," *J. of American History* 75 (1989): 1117-1129 (JSTOR).

Second 5-minute class presentation assignment: How would the historical perspective on your selected topic change depending on whether a historian employed a broadly based transnational (or comparative) historical approach or a microhistorical perspective? If possible, find examples of both approaches to your selected topic, and discuss the changes in perspective that result.

10/26 No class (instructor at a conference)

Work on paper (due Monday, October 30)

Monday, October 30, 11:59pm: First draft of historiography paper due (submit via CourseDen)

11/2 Putting it all together

Jon Sensbach, *Rebecca's Revival: Creating Black Christianity in the Atlantic World*

Assigned articles:

Philip Pomper, "Historians and Individual Agency," *History and Theory* 35 (1996): 281-308 (JSTOR).

- Alice Kessler-Harris, "AHR Roundtable: Why Biography?" *American Historical Review* 114 (2009): 625-630 (online course reserves).
- James M. McPherson, "Who Freed the Slaves?" *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 139 (1995): 1-10.
- Student presentation: Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*
- 11/9 Historiographical case study: Two perspectives on writing the history of American abortion policy (part 1)
Sara Dubow, *Ourselves Unborn: A History of the Fetus in Modern America*
- 11/16 Historiographical case study: Two perspectives on writing the history of American abortion policy (part 2)
Daniel K. Williams, *Defenders of the Unborn: The Pro-Life Movement before Roe v. Wade*
Assigned articles:
John Hope Franklin, "The Historian and Public Policy," *The History Teacher* 11 (1978): 377-391.
Gordon S. Wood, "The Lessons of History" and "Presentism in History," in Wood, *The Purpose of the Past: Reflections on the Uses of History* (New York: Penguin Press, 2008), 62-72 and 293-308 (online course reserves).
- 11/23 No class (Thanksgiving break)
- 11/30 Historians behaving badly: Case studies in what went wrong
Hoffer, *Past Imperfect*, 131-261.
Assigned articles:
Peter Novick, "(The Death of) The Ethics of Historical Practice (And Why I am Not in Mourning)," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 560 (November 1998): 28-42.
Adam Hochschild, "Practicing History without a License," *Historically Speaking*, 9 (March / April 2008): 2-5
[http://www.bu.edu/historic/_hs_pdfs/Hochschild_Mar_Ap_2008.pdf].
- 12/7 Final version of historiography paper due via CourseDen by 11:59pm**