

**THE UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
HISTORIOGRAPHY (HIS 721)
FALL 2023**

Course Instructor: Prof. Stephen R. Halsey
Instructor Email: s.halsey@miami.edu
Office Hours: R 9:30am-11:30am and by appointment
Office Location: Ashe 621
Office Phone: 305.284.2144
Course Number: HIS 721
Course Location: Ashe Building
Course Time: T 9:00am-11:45am

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND FORMAT

Welcome to History boot camp! This reading colloquium will introduce doctoral students to the theory and methods of writing history since the middle of the twentieth century in the Euro-American academy. The instructor will take the position that the writing of history resembles a professional craft, in which practice is everything. He will also argue for the broad influence of a narrow range of narrative archetypes and identify an affinity between forms of historical and literary storytelling. Readings will focus on the period since 1600 and address geographic and thematic areas as diverse as global environmental history and the social history of pre-revolutionary France. This seminar will introduce a range of different genres of historical writing and explore the ways that history engages with anthropology and literature. Students will learn how to analyze the logical structure of scholarly arguments, evaluate the use of historical sources and evidence, and identify the ideological framework that informs a given historical work. They will also have an opportunity to hone their analytical writing skills and to read a corpus of historical literature related to either their MA project or qualifying exam lists.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students will write **two papers** for this course. All students will write a short historiography review of 6-8 pages at a time of their choosing from weeks three through eleven (**Sept 5-Oct 31**). Their analysis will focus on the course reading(s) for the given week and will examine the narrative form of the book, the author's use of sources and evidence, and the ideological, epistemological, and ontological framework of the piece. This assignment is due at the beginning of class during your chosen week in hard copy form and will constitute 20% of the final course grade. The second paper consists of a 25-35 page review of the historiography in your primary research field (40%). You will create a list of books related to either your MA project or your qualifying exams in consultation with your principal academic advisor and analyze these works using the principles you learned in this course. Students will distribute a rough draft to the class (Sat., Dec. 2, by 12pm) and then offer feedback on their classmates' work during class on Tuesday, Dec. 5. They will then submit a final version of this paper to the instructor no later than **12pm EST (noon) on Tuesday, Dec. 12th**, via email. **Class participation** will constitute 40% of the final grade and will reflect both the quality and quantity of the student's comments during weekly discussions.

REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS

Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The Objectivity Question and the American Historical Profession* (Recommended but not very highly)
Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth Century Europe*
E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*

James Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*

Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*

Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy*

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*

Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference*

Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth Century Miller*

JR McNeill, *Something New Under the Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth Century World*

Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*

Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*

Joan Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*

I encourage you to purchase the primary course texts on amazon or another website of your choice. Additional readings are available in pdf format under the “Documents/Course Readings” link in Blackboard.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course will:

- Introduce students to the principal methods and theories of historical writing since the mid twentieth century in the Euro-American academy
- Teach students to identify the logical structure of arguments
- Enable students to identify the ideological, normative, and theoretical frameworks that inform a given piece of historical writing
- Help students to hone their analytical reading, thinking, and writing skills
- Give students an opportunity to reflect on the origins, development, and purposes of the discipline of history

LATE POLICY

Course papers are due at the beginning of class in hard copy form on the date specified in the syllabus or by mutual agreement with the instructor. Work submitted after this deadline will be penalized one full letter grade per day (an A becomes a B, etc.), and extensions will be granted only under exceptional circumstances such as hospitalization or a death in the immediate family. Please note that students must complete **ALL** assignments in order to pass this course; failure to do so will result in failure of the course.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

You are required to attend each class and participate in every discussion. Chronic absenteeism or tardiness as defined by the instructor will result in a failing grade for class participation.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty will result in automatic failure of the course and referral to the University Honor Council. Please note that the use of AI such as ChatGPT will incur the same penalties as plagiarism. Please do not commit professional suicide by violating either the university’s rules or mine.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week One

Aug 22 What Is History?: Halsey's Approach to the Discipline of History.

Recommended Readings: Feel free to torture yourself with Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream*

Week Two

Aug 29 Tools of Analysis: Narratives, Literary Tropes, and the Question of "Objectivity."

Readings: Hayden White, *Metahistory*, esp. chap. 1

Week Three

Sept 5 Class History: The Marxist Revolution That (Sort of) Came and Went.

Readings: E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*

Week Four

Sept 12 Cultural History: The Wonderful World of Semiotics.

Readings: Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* and "Deep Play"
Robert Darnton, "Great Cat Massacre," 75-104
Marshal Sahlins, "The Apotheosis of Captain Cook," 73-102

Week Five

Sept 19 Post-structural History: Knowledge, Power, and a Dose of Epistemological Nihilism.

Readings: Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*

Week Six

Sept 26 Comparative History: Parallax Visions.

Readings: Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence*

Week Seven

Oct 3 Anarchist History: States, Statelessness, and James Scott's Chickens.

Readings: James Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*

Week Eight

October 10 Global History: Thinking Really Big.

Readings: Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History*

Week Nine

Oct 17 Fall Break (Not Thinking at All.)

Week Ten

Oct 24 Microhistory: Thinking Really Small.

Readings: Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms*

Week Eleven

Oct 31 Environmental History: History Isn't Just About Big-Brained Primates.

Readings: JR McNeill, *Something New Under the Sun*

Week Twelve

Nov 7 Anti-colonial History: Down With the West! Up With the Rest!

Readings: Edward Said, *Orientalism*

Week Thirteen

Nov 14 Subaltern History: Anti-colonial History in Another Key.

Readings: Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments*
O'Hanlon/Washbrook and Spivak

Week Fourteen

Nov 21 Thanksgiving (Gluttony Is NOT a Sin.)

Week Fifteen

Nov 28 Gender History: Discovering Women's Voices in History.

Readings: Joan Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*

Week Sixteen

Dec 5 Practicing Historiography: Discussion of Term Paper Drafts.

Readings: Student Paper Drafts

TERM PAPER WRITING SCHEDULE

Week of Oct. 3 (or earlier!). Meeting with Principal Advisor to Discuss Term Paper.

Week of Oct. 10. Preliminary Meeting with Course Instructor to Discuss Term Paper.

Week of Nov. 14. Second Meeting with Course Instructor to Discuss Term Paper.

Saturday, Dec. 2 at 12pm. Students Submit Complete Rough Draft of Term Paper to Instructor.

Tuesday, Dec. 5 at 9am. Students Discuss Rough Drafts in Class.

Tuesday, Dec. 12 at 12pm. Students Submit a Final Version of the Paper Via Email.

Students are welcome to meet with the instructor between Dec. 5-12 for virtual office hours via Zoom. Please email to make an appointment with me in advance.