

History 6684

Historiography

Fall 2009

Instructor: Dr. Dan Williams
Office Hours: TLC 3225
M, W, 1-5pm
(and by appointment)

Email: dkw@westga.edu

Phone: 678-839-6046

Course website: www.westga.edu/~dkwillia

Class Location:
TLC 3205
Mon., 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. The course begins with a discussion of the rise of “scientific” history in the early nineteenth century, and then quickly moves to the twentieth century with discussions of the *Annales* school, social history, the new cultural history, and historical analysis of gender, race, religion, and the environment. The course will focus on the relevance of these approaches for current historical writing in the twenty-first century.

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.

Learning outcomes:

This class will give students an understanding of what it means to write history. Students will explore the major approaches to historical writing over the past century, and will acquire an understanding of current trends in historical writing. By analyzing and debating competing approaches to historical knowledge, they will gain the information that they need to evaluate their own approach to the past. By gaining an understanding of the way in which the writing of history has evolved over the past few decades, they will be able to assess the historiography of their own area of research, a crucial first step in the process of producing a master’s thesis or future graduate seminar papers.

Assessment:

Students' final grades will be determined as follows:

Class participation	25%
Midterm exam	20%
Historiography paper	25%
Supplementary assignments	10%
Final exam	20%

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 exams (midterm and final): At two points in the semester – October 5 and November 23 – I will give you an essay question related to broad themes that are covered in the class readings. You will then have two weeks to write a 6-8 page response to each of those questions.

Historiography paper and supplementary assignments: You will be expected to write a 12-15 page historiographical analysis of a topic of your choice. This historiography paper is due on November 30, but supplementary assignments related to this paper are due on September 14, September 28, and November 30. Please see the guidelines for this assignment for additional details.

Although a first draft of the historiography paper is not required, I strongly encourage you to submit a draft for advance evaluation. If you choose to submit a first draft of your essay, you should do so no later than November 9. I will not grade these drafts, but I will provide extensive written comments on them, and I think that you will likely benefit from the advance feedback that you will receive.

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.

Assigned readings: I did not place an order at the university bookstore for the assigned monographs for this course, but you can easily order these books online. I have listed the publication information for every assigned text so that you can order the correct editions. Many of these books are also available for 24-hour loan at the UWG library reserves desk. A list of books that are available for short-term loan is posted on the library's course reserve page for this class.

The assigned journal articles are available through the JSTOR or EBSCOhost databases, which you can access through the university library's website. The photocopied sections of book chapters and other assigned readings are available through the university library's online course reserves. To access those course reserves, go to the UWG library website and click on "course reserves." The course reserves page for this class is password protected, so you will need to get the password for the class from me.

Class communication: I may send out periodic email communiqués to students in this course, so please check your UWG email account regularly. The university administration has stipulated that all email communication between faculty and students should take place on UWG email accounts, so please use your UWG email account for all electronic communications that you send me.

University policy also prevents me from disclosing grades over email, so if you would like to discuss your grade on any assignment in the class, please set up an appointment to meet with me in my office. Please do not email me with a request for your grades, since I am not allowed to email that information to you.

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. The prices listed are for new copies from amazon.com, but you may be able to obtain some of these books at lower prices by buying used copies through online book dealers.

William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*, 2nd ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2003). Paper. ISBN: 978-0809016341. \$13.50.

Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre: And Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Basic Books, 1984). Paper. ISBN: 978-0394729275. \$10.17.

Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Vintage, 2008). Paper. ISBN: 978-0375703836. \$10.85.

Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage Books, 1974). Paper. ISBN: 978-0394716527. \$13.60.

Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). Paper. ISBN: 978-0691102771. \$26.95.

Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Seventeenth-Century Miller*, trans. John and Anne Tedeschi (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1992). Paper. ISBN: 978-0801843877. \$17.01. (Used copies of older editions of this work, including the paperback Penguin edition, are available online at considerably discounted prices, and are acceptable for this course).

Peter Charles Hoffer, *Past Imperfect* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004). Paper. ISBN: 978-1586484453. \$12.21.

Lynn Hunt, ed., *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989). Paper. ISBN: 978-0520064294. \$19.76.

Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou: The Promised Land of Error* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978). Paper. ISBN: 978-0807615980. \$13.57.

Peter Lambert and Phillipp Schofield, ed., *Making History: An Introduction to the History and Practices of a Discipline* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004). Paper. ISBN: 978-0415242554. \$32.95.

William H. McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples* (New York: Anchor, 1977). Paper. ISBN: 978-0385121224. \$10.85.

Mary P. Ryan, *Mysteries of Sex: Tracing Women and Men through American History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006). Paper. ISBN: 978-0385121224. \$24.95.

Gordon S. Wood, *The Purpose of the Past: Reflections on the Uses of History* (New York: Penguin Press, 2008). Paper. ISBN: 978-0143115045. \$12.75.

Class schedule:

- 8/17 Introduction: What do historians do?
- 8/24 History before and after Ranke
 Wilhelm von Humboldt, "On the Historian's Task" (1821), in *History and Theory*, 6 (1967): 57-71 (JSTOR).
 C. Behan McCullagh, "What do Historians Argue About?" *History and Theory*, 43 (2004): 18-38 (JSTOR).
 Peter Lambert and Phillipp Schofield, ed., *Making History: An Introduction to the History and Practices of a Discipline* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), 26-54.
- 8/31 The Annales school
 Fernand Braudel, "Personal Testimony," *J. of Modern History*, 44 (1972): 448-467 (JSTOR).
 H.R. Trevor-Roper, "Fernand Braudel, the *Annales*, and the Mediterranean," *J. of Modern History*, 44 (1972): 468-479 (JSTOR).
 Lambert and Schofield, *Making History*, 78-91.
 Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou: The Promised Land of Error* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978).
- 9/7 No class (Labor Day)
- 9/14 Environmental history
 William Cronon, "The Uses of Environmental History," *Environmental History Review*, 17 (1993): 1-22.
 William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*, 2nd ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2003).
Historiography paper topic and supplementary topic essay due.
- 9/21 Social class: Progressive history and Marxism
 Lambert and Schofield, *Making History*, 180-191.
 Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), 3-324.
- 9/28 The new social history and history from below
 Laurence Veysey, "The 'New' Social History in the Context of American Historical Writing," *Reviews in American History*, 7 (1979): 1-12 (JSTOR).
 Alice Kessler-Harris, "Social History," in *The New American History*, ed. Eric Foner (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997), 231-256 (GALILEO e-book).
 Lizabeth Cohen, "Encountering Mass Culture at the Grassroots: The Experience of Chicago Workers in the 1920s," *American Quarterly*, 41 (1989): 6-33 (JSTOR).

Lambert and Schofield, *Making History*, 109-120.
 Reviews of Elizabeth Cohen's *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (search JSTOR).

Bibliography for historiography paper due.

- 10/5 Microhistory
 George Iggers, "The History of Everyday Life," in Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1997), 101-117, 177-180 (online course reserves).
 Richard D. Brown, "Microhistory and the Post-Modern Challenge," *J. of the Early Republic*, 23 (2003): 1-20 (JSTOR).
 Gordon S. Wood, *The Purpose of the Past: Reflections on the Uses of History* (New York: Penguin Press, 2008), 119-132.
 Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Seventeenth-Century Miller*, trans. John and Anne Tedeschi (New York: Penguin Books, 1976).
- 10/12 Comparative History, Global History, and "Big History"
 Carl N. Degler, "Comparative History: An Essay Review," *J. of Southern History*, 34 (1968): 425-430 (JSTOR).
 David Christian, "The Case for 'Big History,'" *J. of World History*, 2 (1991): 223-238 (JSTOR).
 William H. McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples* (New York: Anchor, 1977).
- 10/19 Postmodernism, the new anthropology, and the new cultural history
 Hayden White, "Introduction: Historical Fiction, Fictional History, and Historical Reality," *Rethinking History*, 9 (2005): 147-157 (EBSCOhost Academic Search Complete).
 Lynn Hunt, ed., *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 1-128.
 Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre: And Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Basic Books, 1984), 1-106.
Midterm exam essay due.
- 10/26 Gender history
 Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review*, 91 (1986): 1053-1075 (JSTOR).
 Joanne Meyerowitz, "A History of 'Gender,'" *AHR*, 113 (2008): 1346-1356 (online course reserves).
 Mary P. Ryan, *Mysteries of Sex: Tracing Women and Men through American History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).
- 11/2 Race
 John Hope Franklin, "On the Evolution of Scholarship in Afro-American History," in *The State of Afro-American History: Past, Present, and Future*, ed.

- Darlene Clark Hine (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986), 13-22 (online course reserves).
- 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 (online course reserves).
- Peter Kolchin, "Whiteness Studies: The New History of Race in America," *J. of American History*, 89 (2002): 154-173 (JSTOR).
- Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).
- 11/9 Religion
- Jon Butler, "Jack-in-the-Box Faith: The Religion Problem in Modern American History," *J. of American History*, 90 (March 2004): 1357-1378 (EBSCOhost Academic Search Complete).
- Paul Boyer, "The Chameleon with Nine Lives: American Religion in the Twentieth Century," in *Perspectives on Modern America: Making Sense of the Twentieth Century*, ed. Harvard Sitkoff (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 247-274 (online course reserves).
- James D. Tracy, "Believers, Non-Believers, and the Historian's Unspoken Assumptions," *Catholic Historical Review*, 86 (2000): 403-419 (JSTOR).
- Jan Shipps, "Richard Lyman Bushman, the Story of Joseph Smith and Mormonism, and the New Mormon History," *J. of American History*, 94 (2007): 498-516 (EBSCOhost Academic Search Complete).
- Richard Lyman Bushman, "What's New in Mormon History: A Response to Jan Shipps," *JAH*, 94 (2007): 517-521 (EBSCOhost Academic Search Complete).
- Deadline for submitting draft of historiography paper (recommended).**
- 11/16 Current directions in cultural history
- Paula S. Fass, "Cultural History / Social History: Some Reflections on a Continuing Dialogue," *J. of Social History*, 37 (2003): 39-46.
- Daniel Wickberg, "Heterosexual White Male: Some Recent Inversions in American Cultural History," *J. of American History*, 92 (2005): 136-157.
- Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Vintage Books, 2008).
- 11/23 The Individual in History
- 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).
- Carla Rahn Phillips and William D. Phillips, "Christopher Columbus in United States Historiography: Biography as Projection," *The History Teacher*, 25 (1992): 119-135 (JSTOR).
- Historiography paper due.**

11/30 Bias, objectivity, and the uses of history

E.P. Thompson, "Agenda for Radical History," *Critical Inquiry*, 21 (1995): 299-304 (JSTOR).

John Hope Franklin, "The Historian and Public Policy," *The History Teacher*, 11 (1978): 377-391 (JSTOR).

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 (JSTOR).

Adam Hochschild, "Practicing History without a License," *Historically Speaking*, 9 (March / April 2008): 2-5 [http://64.233.167.104/search?q=cache:2mcZD1-570wJ:www.bu.edu/historic/_hs_pdfs/Hochschild_Mar_Ap_2008.pdf+%22do+you+need+a+license+to+practice+history%22&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=1&gl=us].

Wood, *Purpose of the Past*, 62-72, 264-308.

Peter Charles Hoffer, *Past Imperfect* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 13-171.

Statistical review of current historical literature due.

12/7 **Final exam essay due.**