

History 485
Senior Seminar – Fall 2010
Tuesdays, 2:00 p.m.-4:30 p.m.

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Course Description and Objectives:

This course examines important themes and issues in the study, writing, and presentation of history, as seen through selected representative works drawn from diverse fields of historical investigation. In addition, toward the end of the course, we will examine the ways in which the historical profession engages the public. The course will emphasize reading and discussion, and both written analyses and oral presentations are required.

After completing this course, students should have an understanding of how the historical profession and historical writing have developed over the past century. In addition, students should possess improved oral, written, and critical thinking skills.

Readings:

John Tosh, *Historians on History*, second ed., 2009.

Michael Parenti, *History as Mystery*, 1999.

Robert W. Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman, *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery*, 1974.

Mary Ryan, *The Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865*, 1981,

Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre, and other Episodes in French Cultural History*, 1984.

Paul Cohen, *History in Three Keys: The Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth*, 1997.

Mark M. Smith, *Sensing the Past: Seeing, Hearing, Smelling, Tasting, and Touching in History*, 2007.

Supplementary essays and articles to be distributed.

Assignments and Grading:

Because of our limited number of class meetings, class attendance and participation is absolutely essential. Two absences will adversely affect your grade in this course. More than two absences will result being dropped from the course or in an “F” for the final

course grade. You must complete the reading assignment prior to each seminar and come to class prepared to discuss and engage the material.

Your final grade will be determined as follows:

- Papers – 45%
- Seminar participation and paper presentations – 40%
- Take-home final examination – 15%

All papers will be due at the beginning of class. Please bring two printed copies of your paper to class with you—one to submit and one to hold onto during class discussion. No late papers will be accepted. Each student will be responsible for presenting a paper to the seminar on two occasions.

All work, unless otherwise indicated, is pledged under the Rhodes College Honor Code. Your critiques of the books and articles to be discussed should be your own work. Plagiarism—the using of another’s words or ideas without attribution—is strictly prohibited.

Topics and Reading Assignments:

Aug. 31 – Introductions

- Course syllabus and participants
- Lecture: Western Historiography

Sept. 7 – Thinking About History

- Discussion: E.H. Carr, “The Historian and His Facts” (handout)
- Case Study 1: Michael Parenti, *History as Mystery*. **(Paper Due)**

Sept. 14 – Historiographical Development in the U.S. and Europe

- Lecture: American Historiography
- Lecture/Discussion: “Freud and Psychohistory,” “The Annales,” Braudel, “The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II” (handouts); Le Roy Ladurie, 246-252, Fogel, 253-258 (Tosh)

Sept. 21 – The Civil Rights Revolution and American Historiography

- Lecture/Discussion: Vincent Harding, 118-124 (Tosh)
- Case Study 2: Robert Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman, *Time on the Cross*. **(Paper Due)**

Sept. 28 – The “New Social History”

- Lecture/Discussion: Darrett Rutman, “Community Study” and “The New Social History in America” (handouts).
- Discussion: Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum, “Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft.”

Oct. 5 – Family, Women, and Gender

- Case Study 3: Mary Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class*. **(Paper Due)**
- Lecture/Discussion: Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, 134-140, Joan Scott, 141-149, Gesela Bok, 150-155 (Tosh).

Oct. 12 – Anthropology, Ethnohistory, and the Rise of Cultural History

- Lecture/Discussion: Clifford Geertz, “Thick Description” and “Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight” (handouts)

[Oct. 19 – Fall Break]

Oct. 26 – Cultural History and Beyond

- Case Study 4: Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre, and other Episodes in French Cultural History*, 3-8, 75-104, 257-263. **(Paper Due)**
- *Historians at Work*: A Conversation with Prof. Jeffrey Jackson

Nov. 2 – Memory and Oral History

- Lecture/Discussion: Eric Hobsbawm, “On History from Below,” in *On History* (handout); Alistair Thomson, “Making the Most of Memories: The Empirical and Subjective Value of Oral History” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th ser., 9 (1999): 291-301. (JSTOR)
- *Historians at Work*: A Conversation with Professors Mike LaRosa and Gail Murray

Nov. 9 – Myth and History

- Case Study 5: Paul Cohen, *History in Three Keys*. **(Paper Due)**

Nov. 16 – Film and History

- Film excerpts “JFK,” “The Civil War,”
- Discussion: Michael Kurtz, “Oliver Stone, *JFK*, and History”; Oliver Stone, “On *Nixon* and *JFK*”; Eric Foner, “Ken Burns and the Romance of Reunion” (handouts)

Nov. 23 – New Directions

- Case Study 6: Smith, *Sensing the Past* **(Paper Due)**
- Lecture/Discussion: Daniel Wickberg, “Heterosexual White Male: Some Recent Inversions in American Cultural History,” *Journal of American History*, 92 (June 2005), 136-157.

Nov. 30 – History and the Culture Wars

- Discussion: Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., excerpts from *The Disuniting of America* (1991); Bradley Thompson, “The Strange Career of American History” (1995); James Laine, “Resisting My Attackers, Resisting My Defenders: Representing the Shivaji Narratives” (2005) **(Paper Due)**

Dec. 7 – Summary and Review

- Discussion: James McPherson, “What’s the Matter with History?”; Adam Hochschild, “Practicing History without a License” (handouts); H.R. Trevor-Roper, 350-355, Gerda Lerner, 356-361 (Tosh).
- Review of the course and explanation of final exam

Take Home Final Examination: Due Wednesday, Dec. 15, 12 noon