History 485
Senior Seminar – Spring 2009
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. Toward the end of the course, we will particularly focus on 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:**


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. More than two absences will result in 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 copies of your paper to class with you. 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.

**Topics and Reading Assignments:**

**Jan. 20 – Introductions**
- Course syllabus and participants
- Lecture: Western Historiography

**Jan. 27 – Thinking About History**
- Discussion: E.H. Carr, “The Historian and His Facts” (handout)
- Case Study 1: Michael Parenti, History as Mystery. *(Paper Due)*

**Feb. 3 – Historiographical Development in the U.S. and Europe**
- Lecture: American Historiography

**Feb. 10 – The Civil Rights Revolution and American Historiography**
- Lecture/Discussion: Vincent Harding, 152-158 (Tosh)
- Case Study 2: Robert Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman, *Time on the Cross*. *(Paper Due)*

**Feb. 17 – The “New Social History”**
- Lecture/Discussion: Darrett Rutman, “Community Study” and “The New Social History in America” (handouts).
- *Historians at Work*: A Conversation with Professor Alex Novikoff

**Feb. 24 – Women, Gender, and Family History**
- Case Study 3: Mary Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class*. *(Paper Due)*
- Lecture/Discussion: Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, 128-134, Joan Scott, 135-143, Gesela Bok, 144-150 (Tosh)
Mar. 3 – Anthropology, Ethnohistory, and the Rise of Cultural History
- Lecture/Discussion: Clifford Geertz, “Thick Description” and “Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight” (handouts)

Mar. 10 – 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)
- Lecture/Discussion: Patrick Joyce, 274-282, Joan Scott, 283-288 (Tosh)

Mar. 24 – Memory and Oral History
- Historians at Work: A Conversation with Professors Mike LaRosa and Gail Murray

Mar. 31 – Myth and History
- Case Study 5: Paul Cohen, History in Three Keys. (Paper Due)

Apr. 7 – Film and History
- Film excerpts: “The Civil War,” “JFK”

Apr. 14 – History and the Senses
- Case Study 6: Smith, Sensing the Past (Paper Due)
- Historians at Work: A Conversation with Professor Tait Keller

Apr. 21 – History and the Culture Wars

Apr. 28 – Summary and Review
- Discussion: Richard Evans, 318-324 (Tosh); James McPherson, “What’s the Matter with History?”; Adam Hochschild, “Practicing History without a License” (handouts)
- Review of the course and explanation of final exam

Take Home Final Examination: Due on Thursday, May 7, 5 p.m.