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HIST 485-01, Senior Seminar in History, Spring 2008

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History 485
Senior Seminar – Spring 2008
Tuesdays, 2:00 p.m.-4:30 p.m.

Timothy S. Huebner

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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:

John Tosh, Historians on History, 2000.

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.

Harry S. Stout, Upon the Altar of the Nation: A Moral History of the Civil War, 2006.

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. 15 – Introductions

- Course syllabus and participants
- Lecture: Western Historiography

Jan. 22 – Thinking About History

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

Jan. 29 – Historiographical Development in the U.S. and Europe

- Lecture: American Historiography
- Lecture/Discussion: “Freud and Psychohistory” and “The Annales” (handouts); Le Roy Lauderie, 232-238, Fogel, 29-244 (Tosh)

Feb. 5 – 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. 12 – The “New Social History” in America

- Lecture/Discussion: Darrett Rutman, “Community Study,” and “The New Social History in America” (handouts).
- *Historians at Work*: A Conversation with Prof. Dee Garceau

Feb. 19 – 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)

Feb. 26 – Anthropology, Ethnohistory, and the Rise of Cultural History

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

[Spring Break: March 4]

Mar. 11 – 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. 18 – 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 Charles McKinney and Mike LaRosa*

Mar. 25 – Myth and History

- Case Study 5: Paul Cohen, History in Three Keys. **(Paper Due)**
- *Historians at Work: A Conversation with Prof. Michael Drompp*

Apr. 1 – Film and History

- Film excerpts: “The Civil War,” “JFK”
- Discussion: Michael Kurtz, “Oliver Stone, JFK, and History”; Oliver Stone, “On Nixon and JFK”; Eric Foner, “Ken Burns and the Romance of Reunion” (handouts)
- *Historians at Work: A Conversation with Prof. Robert Saxe*

Apr. 8 – Morality, History, and Historians

- Case Study 6: Stout, Upon the Altar of the Nation **(Paper Due)**

Apr. 15 – History and the Culture Wars

- Discussion: Eric Foner, “Who is an American?”; Bradley Thompson, “The Strange Career of American History”; James Laine, “Resisting My Attackers, Resisting My Defenders: Representing the Shivaji Narratives”; Gertrude Himmelfarb, 290-298 (Tosh) **(Paper Due)**

Apr. 22 – Summary and Review

- Discussion: Richard Evans, 318-324 (Tosh); James McPherson, “What’s the Matter with History?” (handout)
- Review of the course and explanation of final exam

Take Home Final Examination: Due on Wednesday, April 30, 5 p.m.