

History 382: Modern Classics of Historical Writing

Course description

Course texts

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The British Industrial Revolution in Global Perspective

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England

Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of Early New

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Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison

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Thinking about History

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The Making of the English Working Class

Class format: Tutorials

student will be assigned to a tutorial group of either two or three students. For the rest of the semester, each tutorial group will meet with the professor once each week for a one-hour session. Both students will complete the reading assignment of the week. The first student will also write a 3-to

class experience for everyone. Please bring the course readings and your notes to class with you each week.

Here are four questions to keep in mind each week:

1. What is X? (Where X= the topic for the class, e.g. "Race", "Gender", "Cultural history")
2. Who is the historian? (What was their life and/or career like? What historical method or school are they associated with?) Google them.
3. Who or what are they writing against?
4. What do the historians you are reading agree about? Even more importantly, what do they disagree about?

In addition to the assigned reading, you may find answers to these questions in book reviews in reputable historical journals (search the book title in JSTOR and Project Muse) and online (especially useful for biographical information about authors).

Essays (6x10=60%):

You will be required to submit six essays (3-4 pages 12-point Times New Roman, double-spacing) and one revised essay (2-point Times New Roman, double-spacing) this semester in response to the essay questions listed in this syllabus. Each essay must have footnotes and a bibliography. The bibliography is not included in the page count. This means that after the first week you will be writing an essay every second week. (I will drop your lowest grade when determining your overall score for this section of assessment (which, as noted above, means in practice that you can complete five essays instead of six).) You must submit your essay to your tutorial partner and to me 24 hours before your tutorial; submit your paper by email in Microsoft Word or another easily accessible format (but not pdf, since I will be providing my comments electronically.)

As a successful tutorial will depend on timely submission of your essay, the penalties for a late essay will be higher than in other history classes. You will forfeit a grade point every two hours after the deadline has passed (e.g. If the essay was a B and you submit it two hours late, you will receive a B-; if you submit the same essay four hours late, you will receive a C+ and so on).

In addition, at the end of semester you should select one of your previous essays and revise it to implement the feedback you have received in class from your professor and tutorial partner. (You can select any essay you want, as long as it did not earn an A.) It will be due during the exam period.

Your essays will be graded using several criteria:

- ✖ Does it have a clear, specific, and nuanced thesis statement?
- ✖ Does the thesis respond directly to the essay prompt and accurately convey the ideas in the reading?
- ✖ Does the essay give a reasonable overall sense of the works it describes?
- ✖ Is this essay organized as a clear and logical defense of the thesis without tangents or irrelevant material?

- ¥ Is the writing clear?
- ¥ Does the paper use evidence from the readings to back up its argument?
- ¥ Does the paper use following the conventions of English grammar and usage with appropriate footnotes and bibliography?

Feedback on peers' essays (5x5=25%)

In weeks when you are not writing an essay, you will provide feedback to your tutorial partner on his or her paper. This feedback will take the following form:

1. Give the professor and the student an annotated copy of the essay. You should correct spelling and grammar, suggest alternative phrasings, and commend sentences and paragraphs that are well written. Photocopy or print your annotations, bring them to your tutorial, and give copies to both your partner and professor (You are welcome to write them by hand on a printed-out paper, or to write comments electronically using the commenting feature of Word.)
2. Providing additional comments, which you should type and print out for your partner and professor:
 - ¥ Briefly describe what your tutorial partner argued in the essay
 - ¥ Note one thing that they did successfully
 - ¥ Does the paper do an accurate and effective job of describing the ideas of the historians you read this week?
 - ¥ Note one thing that they did that could have been made clearer, more convincing or more effective in some other way, along with a suggestion for what they should do next time.
3. Write down two questions about the class session's reading material. At least one of those queries should be a direct question to your partner about her or his essay. The other(s) could be general questions about the historical writing we will be examining.

Your feedback will be evaluated according to the following Yes/No rubric. Each "Yes" will get you one point out of a possible five for the assignment.

- ! Did the feedback make accurate corrections with respect to spelling and grammar?
- ! Did the feedback describe the argument of the essay?
- ! Did the feedback offer at least one positive comment?
- ! Did the feedback offer at least one critical comment and helpful suggestion for implementation in future essays?
- ! Did the feedback include a pertinent question?

Extension Policy

The class's tutorial format makes it especially important for both (or all three) partners to fulfil their roles as planned, which makes it more complicated than usual to grant extensions in this course. Each student may therefore have 48-hour extension on an essay this semester. It will nearly always be in your interests to save this extension until you are ill, since you will not be given a second extension unless you can provide documentation of an emergency. If you do

Essay question: What does the history of the transition from public punishment to individual imprisonment reveal about the history of power?

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (New York: Vintage, 1995 [1975]), Parts 1 and 2. For Purchase.

Week 6 (Begins 02/26): Gender

(Student X submits, Y reviews)

Essay question: Joan Scott argues that gender is "a primary way of signifying relationships of power. Changes in the organization of social relationships always correspond to changes in the representations of power, but the direction of change is not necessarily one way" (p. 1067). Judith Bennett proposes a theory of "patriarchal equilibrium" as a particular vision of how gender relations have played out in history. To what extent can their two visions of gender history be reconciled?

Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful category of historical analysis," *American Historical Review*, 91 (1986), 1053-75. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1864376>

Judith M. Bennett, "Confronting Continuity," *Journal of Women's History*, 9: 3 (1997): 73-94. <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/jowh/summary/v009/9.3.bennett.html>

Week 7 (Begins 03/05): The Invention of Tradition

(Student Y submits, X reviews)

Essay question: Eric Hobsbawm suggests that although the "invention of tradition" has taken place in societies throughout history, it is more frequent in the modern era. Is the theory of "invented traditions" proposed by Hobsbawm and Ranger more useful in helping us understand "traditions" or the time period in which they were "invented"?

Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (New York: Cambridge, 1983): Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," pp. 1-14; Hugh Trevor-Roper, "The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland," pp. 15-41; David Cannadine, "The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the 'Invention of Tradition,' c. 1820-1977," pp. 101-164. P-Web.

Week 8 (Begins 03/12): Environmental history

(Student X submits, Y reviews)

Essay question: William Cronon writes that "Our project must be to locate a nature which is within rather than without history, for only by doing so can we find human communities which are inside rather than outside nature." How does Cronon balance the role of human

agents (like colonists and Indians), natural phenomena, and other actors in producing an ecological history of early New England?

William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of Early New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2003 [1983]). Pages 3-81 and 108-156. Purchase.

SPRING BREAK

Week 9 (Begins 04/02): The New Cultural History

(Student Y submits, X reviews)

Essay question: In "The Great Cat Massacre" Robert Darnton attempted to explicate a seemingly opaque event in Paris in 1730 by excavating the way that culturally specific symbols were evoked, used, and understood by the protagonists of the incident. To what extent do you think Darnton "got the joke" of the massacre?

Robert Darnton, "Introduction: The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History" (New York: Vintage Books, 1984), pp. 3-7. P-Web

Robert Darnton, "Workers Revolt: The Great Cat Massacre of the Rue Saint-Severin," in

we may reconstruct the force of past speech acts by contextualising them discursively. In the process we may learn how the meaning of important ideas (such as liberty) changed over time. To what extent does Dominick LaCapra agree with his approach?

Dominick LaCapra, *Rethinking Intellectual History and Reading Texts* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982), pp. 47-85. P-web and <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb.04883.0001.001>

Quentin Skinner, *Interpretation and the Understanding of Speech Acts in History: Volume 1, Regarding Method* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 103-27. P-Web.

Week 12 (Begins 04/23): The History of Reading

(Student X submits, Y reviews)

Essay question: Jonathan Rose seeks to enter the minds of ordinary readers in history, to discover what they read and how they read it. How successful are his attempts to reconstruct the literary tastes and autodidact culture of British workers, when it comes to the reception of modernism and other literary works?

Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (New Haven: Yale, 2001), xi-xiii, 1-57, 116-145, 393-438. P-Web.

Christopher Hilliard, "Modernism and the Common Writer," *The Historical Journal* 48:3 (2005), 769-787. [<http://www.jstor.org/stable/4091722>]

Week 13 (Begins 04/30): Orientalism

(Student Y submits, X reviews)

Essay question: Said argues that ideas, cultures, and histories cannot seriously be understood or studied without their force, or more precisely their configurations of power, also being studied, while Varisco responds that the real goal of serious scholarship should be to improve understanding of self and other, not to whine endlessly or wallow self-righteously in continual opposition. In your opinion, does Said advance serious understanding?

Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1994), 1-73. Three copies are on reserve.

Daniel Martin Varisco, *Reading Orientalism: Said and the Unsaid* (University of Washington, 2007), pp. 251-266, 290-305. P-Web.

Week 14 (05/07): Thinking about History (no essay due)

Sarah Maza, *Thinking about History*, pp. 83-239.