

HIS 295-01: Modern Classics of Historical Writing

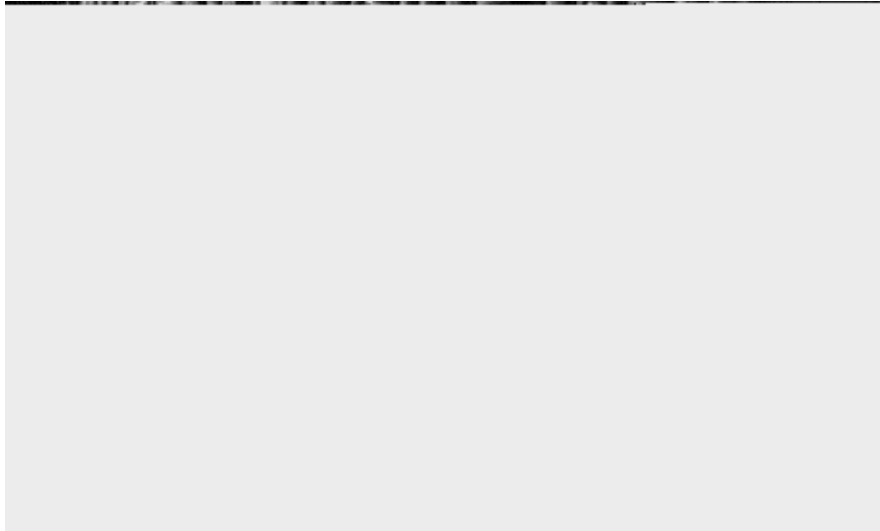
Pablo Silva

(silvajp@grinnell.edu, Mears 216, office hrs TBD) and

Aysha Pollnitz

(pollnitz@grinnell.edu, Mears 210, office hrs T/Th 4:15-5:15pm)

Class: TBA with instructors, in Mears 216 and 210



Course description

This class will provide an opportunity for dynamic, intellectually engaged history majors to read some of the greatest history books

sa plane Scott (among others) These historians' ideas transformed as practiced in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and reshaped Each tutorial will explore a significant theme in contemporary lenses of one or more of these classic texts. Students will have a work's significance by locating it in historians' debates and The class will adopt a tutorial method derived from the work offer an advanced class in critical thinking, cogent analysis, and a "tutorial" or "supervision" system. The

method involves a series of weekly meetings between a pair of students and a professor. Each meeting, a student presents her or his essay on an assigned topic. The essay becomes a spring-board for an intensive discussion of the set texts. The tutorial method is generally regarded as the most effective pedagogical method for accelerated learning by advanced and able students in the humanities and social sciences. In particular, it improves students' prose

At the beginning of semester, you will be assigned a tutorial partner. Each week you will attend a one hour tutorial with one of the two professors (Silva OR Pollnitz, depending on the week). *Both* students will do the set reading. *One* of the two students will be assigned to write a 3-4 page essay in response to a set question. She or he will send her or his paper to the professor and tutorial partner *24 hours* before the scheduled class. The other student is required to provide written feedback on the content and style of the essay, and bring this to the tutorial. The next week the roles of writer and commentator will switch. At the end of semester students may select *one* essay they have written and revise it to implement the feedback they have received from their partner and professor.

Course Objectives

By the end of the semester you should be able to:

- Complete written assignments to a strict deadline
- Summarize historical scholarship accurately and succinctly
- Identify historians' arguments, methods, use of evidence, style
- Identify the intervention being made by a scholar

More than one absence will result in the reduction of your attendance and participation grade. In addition, **three or more unexplained absences will result in overall failure in the course.**

You are expected to participate *actively* in class discussions and activities. Not only will this help you to digest course content and develop speaking skills, but it will make class more enjoyable. To participate actively you will need to prepare for each class by doing the set reading. Annotate it or make notes as you go. We have tried to contain it to a manageable amount for each class.

Before coming to class, you should be able to answer four questions about each historical book or article you have read, whether you are the essayist or the reviewer for that tutorial:

- 1) Who is the historian? (What was their life and/or career like? What historical method or school are they associated with?)
- 2) What are they writing about?
- 3) Who or what are they writing against?
- 4) What do they *do* in this text that is significant/new/influential?

In addition to the set 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 12pt TNR, double-spacing) and *one revised essay* (12pt TNR, double-spacing) this semester in response to essay questions. 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. We will drop your lowest grade when determining your overall score for this section of assessment. You must submit your essay to your tutorial partner and the relevant professor 24 hours before your tutorial.

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 **1/3 of 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. It will be due during the exam period.

Your essays will be evaluated by your professor (for your grade) and your partner (for feedback purposes only) using the following rubric:

- Relevance of response to set question
- Argument: clarity and persuasiveness
- Organization of material: Logic and flow
- Expression: clarity of prose, spelling and grammar
- Adherence to Style Guide
- Evidence: Critical discussion of historical scholarship

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

Providing others' with feedback on their academic writing will help you develop evaluative skills but it will also help you improve your own prose and analytical skills. The point of providing feedback is not to make your partner like you, it is to help them write better historical essays. Providing feedback will involve:

- 1) Annotating the body of the essay. Correct spelling and grammar. Suggest alternative phrasings. 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.
- 2) Provide additional comments based on the rubric above. You should not award your partner with a "grade" but comment on things you admired and make suggestions that they can carry forward to the next essay. E.g. "You identified an important difference between A and B's use of this evidence. Make sure, however, that each paragraph of your essay begins with a topic sentence so that your reader can follow the direction of your argument."
- 3) Write down three questions about the historical material of the class. At least one of them 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.

- a) Was the feedback thorough?
- b) Did the feedback make *accurate* corrections with respect to spelling and grammar?
- c) Did the feedback offer at least one positive comment?
- d) Did the feedback offer at least one helpful suggestion for implementation in future essays?
- e) Did the feedback include a pertinent question?

Extensions:

As successful tutorials will depend on both partners fulfilling their roles in a timely fashion, there will be fewer extensions granted than in other Grinnell classes. Each student may have **one 48 hour extension on an essay** this semester. We would recommend saving this for if/when you fall ill. You must inform your partner and supervisor as soon as you realise that you will not be able to complete your assignment on time. This 48 hour period may not be broken into shorter extensions on multiple assignments. If, in addition to this extension, the essay-writer is unable to attend class it will be her or his responsibility to schedule a (u)2 (leo)-1 (i)-2 (oTc 0

Plagiarism

All essays and feedback for this course must be entirely your own work. Written work should be produced using only those sources assigned in class unless it is explicitly stated that additional research is required. Please feel free to discuss the class and your reading with others—in fact *do discuss the class and your reading with others* since this will improve your understanding of the material—but you should compose your assignments alone.

We take plagiarism very seriously. It is an act of intellectual dishonesty which shows a lack of respect for your peers, other historians, and this College. You should read Grinnell's formal definition of plagiarism before submitting any written work for this course. In addition we have included a document on Plagiarism in the "Assignments" section of our course website which identifies four types of plagiarism and defines the term "common knowledge" for HIST 295-01.

Students with disabilities

Syllabus for

Essay question: How much do the potential historical benefits of doing micro-history outweigh the potential disadvantages?

Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the worms: The Cosmos of a sixteenth-century miller*, trans. John and Anne Tedeschi (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), esp. pp. 1-60.
For Purchase.

Dominick LaCapra, “*The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Twentieth-Century Historian*,” in *LaCapra, History and Criticism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 45-69. E-reserve.

Paolo Zambelli, “From Menocchio to Piero della Francesca,” *The Historical Journal*, 28 (1985), pp. 985-99. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2639333>

Week 7 (Begins 03/03): Gender with POLLNITZ in 210

(Student Y submits, X reviews)

Essay question: Joan Scott argued that gender is “a primary way of signifying relationship 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). To what extent does the persistence of patriarchy negate the utility of gender as a category of historical analysis?

Joan Scott, “Gender: A Useful category of historical analysis,” *American Historical Review*

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SPRING BREAK

Week 9 (Begins 03/31): The Invention of Tradition with SILVA in 216

(Student Y submits, X reviews)

Essay question: TBA.

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 Music of Performance and the Politics of Tradition in Britain," pp. 42-71.

Canadine, 33 The Music of Performance and the Politics of Tradition in Britain pp. 42-71

Daniel Martin Varisco, *Reading Orientalism: Said and the Unsaid* (University of Washington, 2007), pp. 3-28, 251-266, 290-305. E-reserve.

Week 12 (Begins 04/21): Keywords with SILVA in 216

(Student X submits, Y reviews)

Essay question: If the words that “describe social life are also active forces in shaping it,” how does that shaping happen?

Raymond Williams, *Keywords* (New York: Oxford, 1983 [1976]), pp. 11-26 and entries for Capitalism, Class, Culture, Democracy, Educated, History, Individual, Liberal, Modern, Progressive, Revolution, Society, Welfare, and at least three others. **For Purchase.**

Lynn Hunt, “The Rhetoric of Revolution,” in *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley: California, 1984), pp. 19-51. E-reserve.

Nancy Fraser and Linda Gordon, “A Genealogy of *Dependency*: Tracing a Keyword of the U.S. Welfare State,” *Signs* 19 (1994), pp. 309-336. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3174801>

Week 13 (Begins 04/28): Intellectual History with POLLNITZ in 210

(Student Y submits, X reviews)

Essay question: Intellectual historians examine rhetorically and philosophically complex texts in order to interpret the way people *thought* in the past. Quentin Skinner argues that 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,” in *Modern European intellectual history: Reappraisals and new perspectives* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982), pp. 47-85. P-web and <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb.04883.0001.001>

Quentin Skinner, *Liberty before Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). **For Purchase.**

Week 14 (05/05): History and Narrative with SILVA in 216

(No essay due)

Discussion question: TBA.

