

History, Historians, and Historiography



Johannes Vermeer, *The Art of Painting* (1660s).
The image depicts the artist painting a model dressed as Clio, the muse of history.

Course number: HUM3101
Semester: Block 4, Semester 2, 2011
Dates: April 6 - 29, 2011
Time: M-F 12:20-3:20
Location: A.315

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Course overview

Course Description

This is a history course, but it is different from the other history courses you may have taken. It is not about a particular place, period, or people. Nor is it about a particular theme. Instead, it is about history itself: what it is, why we do it, and how we do it.

Our guide in our quest to understand history itself will be John Tosh's *The Pursuit of History* (available at the Quest University Bookstore and on reserve in the library). This book provides a clear, useful, and sympathetic, if Anglocentric, overview of major issues in the modern theory and practice of history.

Questions, sources, and connections

The central premise of the course is that there is (or ought to be) a close connection between the questions historians ask and the material upon which they draw to answer those questions. Where we look for answers has a great deal to do with what we want to know. This means that part of our task during the semester will be to look at ways historians have asked and answered questions.

Seminars

Our seminars will be of three types: those focusing on particular schools of history ("Schools and Topics"), on controversies and clashes among historians ("Clashes and Controversies"), and, finally, on the (or your) practice of history ("Practice"). There will, of course, be considerable overlap in these three types of seminars. Part of the aim of reading about Schools and Topics is to examine how they actually *do* history; part of what you will learn from reading about clashes is that disagreements about history sometimes have less to do with "fact" than with controversy about the *importance* and *significance* of facts; part of the point of engaging in the practice of history is to understand how you think about history.

A proliferation of approaches

Because there has been a veritable explosion of approaches to history, it is impossible to cover all approaches. Seminar topics are meant to convey an idea of the breadth and the vigor of history as a discipline, not provide a complete overview of historiography. **Note: the topics and readings for seminars may change to better suit our interests and needs. Plenty of notice will be given for any changes.**

Reading

As you already know and will again see, there is considerable disagreement over what makes a good historian and a good history. One thing good historians have in common, whatever their school or interpretive framework, though, is a broad understanding of their field and their subject. Good historians are *readers*. They read broadly and deeply. An appreciation for intellectual, historical, and historiographical context is the hallmark of a good historian. So, in this course, you will be encouraged, even required, to read.

For most seminars, you will find a section on the reading list entitled "Further reading." These books are not listed to demonstrate your tutor's erudition; instead, they are there so that you can read more deeply. You will be **required** to read at least *some* of that material (see the section on "Short Responses," under "Assessment").

Now: on to the nuts and bolts of the course.

Expectations

Attendance: you should attend all the seminars during the block. Failure to attend may have dire consequences, including preclusion from the course. A less formal, but just as serious, consequence is that those who do not attend fail to teach and learn from their colleagues. In exceptional (and documented) cases, an absence may be excused on medical or compassionate grounds.

Discussion: participation in discussion is crucial. You must come to seminars prepared to discuss the common readings, and should always be prepared to bring your knowledge of other (relevant) materials to bear on our discussions. The responsibility for your education falls on you and on your classmates.

Timeliness: You must do your reading and turn in your written work on time. As a courtesy to your fellow students and your instructor, please do all the reading *before* the seminar. Short assignments *will not be accepted* after the seminar for which they are written. Extensions on the major assignments will only be granted in cases of serious and verifiable emergencies or crises.

Writing: Your work will be evaluated for argument, content and style. Arguments should be clear, logical, and well supported. Style matters: it makes your content accessible and your ideas intelligible. Good writing, you will scarcely need to be reminded, is *re-writing*. Plan to write at least two drafts of any work you submit.

There are many useful guides to writing. One of the best is:

Strunk, William, Jr., and E. B. White. *The Elements of Style*. Fourth ed. New York: Longman, 2000.
(Any edition will be useful.)

Citation: If you have questions about footnotes, bibliographies, or other aspects of scholarly citation, please consult any of the following:

The Chicago Manual of Style. 15th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Marius, Richard and Melvin E. Page. *A Short Guide to Writing about History*. Fifth Edition. New York: Pearson Longman, 2005. (This, incidentally, is an extraordinarily useful book – not just for its chapter on citations, but as a guide for anyone writing about history.)

Turabian, Kate L., John Grossman, and Alice Bennett. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 6th edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Books and readings

The following books are available at the Quest University Bookstore:

Carr, Edward Hallet. *What Is History*. Vintage, 1967.

Davis, Natalie Zemon. *The Return of Martin Guerre*. Harvard University Press, 1984.

Marx, Karl. *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. International Publishers, 1994.

Tosh, John, and Sean Lang. *The pursuit of history: aims, methods, and new directions in the study of modern history*. 5th ed. New York: Longman, 2010.

Many of the articles assigned in this course are available electronically (mostly through JSTOR). (Please note that readings for the course are subject to change.) Other articles will be made available through an informal reserve system.

Assessment

Your grade will consist of five elements:

Participation / contribution to class discussion	25%
Short critiques	10% (2, each 5% -- but pass/fail)
Development and justification of a research question	10%
Annotated research bibliography	20%
Critical essay on an approach to history	35%

Written Work

Our discussion will depend in part on the written work you do in preparation for class. Papers must be properly formatted: 12-point type (Times New Roman or equivalent is best), adequate margins, double spacing (except for lengthy quotations, which should be single-spaced and indented on both margins), footnoted (no in-text citations, please), and, of course, thoroughly proof-read.

Various times in the block: short responses

Twice during the block you must write a short (500-600 word) response to one of the major works listed under "Major Works." You may choose from any of the seminars listed as "Schools and Topics" or "Clashes." (You may arrange to write about another book – provided you consult with the instructor first.)

Your task is to:

- 1) *identify the question* asked (and possibly answered) by the work you have chosen;
- 2) *identify the kind of sources* the work relies upon to make its case;
- 3) *discuss the relationship between question and sources*; and
- 4) *assess the suitability of the sources* for the question you have identified.

The purpose of this assignment is twofold: to encourage you to engage directly with an historian's concerns and methods, and to provide you with material for class discussion. Please do not hesitate to bring your particular knowledge of a book, argument, or historian to bear on our discussion!

Your response must be ready at the *beginning* of the seminar for which it is written.

Monday, April 18: Research question

Your task is to write a research question that could be the basis of a thesis, article, or capstone project. You should explain why the question is important, and why an answer to that question might be illuminating/interesting/useful. You should also provide a hypothesis (or informed guess) in response to your question. (This hypothesis is not binding, but coming up with a hypothesis will help sharpen your question.)

We will discuss this assignment in greater detail in class.

Thursday, April 21: Annotated research bibliography

This annotated bibliography will be related to the question you wrote for 2), above. (You may modify the question; in any case, you must begin the annotated bibliography with a presentation of the question.)

This list of sources must be produced in proper bibliographic form. (For the purposes of this course, the proper bibliographic form is the *Chicago Manual of Style*.)

After each bibliographical entry, write a brief description or summary of the article/book. You need not read (indeed, probably cannot have read) all of your sources completely, but you should be familiar with the gist of each source. Your annotation for each source should provide some idea of the content of each source, and indicate (implicitly or explicitly) why you have chosen this source. (A hint: your reader should have a sense of how your sources might differ one from another.)

You should also clearly indicate the distinction between primary and secondary sources.

Criteria for evaluation of the annotated bibliography:

Relevance to the question posed: Does the material on the list bear a close relationship to the question posed? Could the question be answered on the basis of the sources cited?

Context: Does bibliography take into account relevant scholarship? Does it take note of recent developments in the field? Does it reflect the breadth of scholarship in the field?

Methodology and approach: Does the bibliography include works that help provide a methodological framework?

Adequacy of sources: Does the bibliography provide an adequate (albeit preliminary) set of sources upon which a research paper could reasonably be based? Does it indicate where these sources may be obtained?

Further details about this assignment will be provided during the course.

Thursday, April 28: Critical Essay

You should write a critical essay of approximately 2500 words surveying and assessing a particular school of history. You may choose to write on one of the schools we examine during the block, or you may, with my permission, choose to write on a field or school more directly connected to your own interests or question. Further details will be provided during the course.

History, Historians, and Historiography: Reading Schedule

April 6 – Introduction: Why History?

Introduction to the class: goals and purpose of course. Discussion of requirements and of this delightful syllabus.

We will break into small groups to discuss the question, “Why history?”

April 7 – What is History?

Taking E H Carr’s title as our point of departure, we ask an old and deceptively simple question: what is history? Please be prepared to discuss the ways that the historians you read for today (and other historians you have read in the past) think about the nature of history. Is history a science? Can it be? Should it be?

Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, Chapter One: Historical Awareness; Chapter Two: The Uses of History.

Carr, E. H. *What is history?* New York: Vintage, 1961. 3-112.

April 8 – The stakes of history

We continue with Carr, and meet two other historians who are equally reluctant to engage in polemics. And we try to sort out what kind of enterprise we’re embarked on.

Carr, E. H. *What is history?* New York: Vintage, 1961. 113-209. (Finish.)

*Evans, Richard J. “Sources and discourses.” In *In defence of history*, 103-128. London: Granta, 1997.

*Jenkins, Keith. “On some questions and answers.” In *Re-thinking history*, 33-69. London: Routledge, 2003.

April 11 – Schools of History: Marx and Marxist approaches

Today and tomorrow we examine Marx’s historical work directly. Our first selection is from *Capital*; our second is Marx’s most “historical” work, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*. Our task is to understand how Marx went about his work as an historical observer. What kind of historical framework did Marx have in mind? What kinds of sources did he use?

Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, Chapter 3: “Mapping the Field”

Marx, Karl. *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. New York: International Publishers, 1963.

April 12 – Marx and Marxist Approaches II

Today: Labour history and social history.

Tosh, Chapter Eight: “History and social theory”

*Marx, Karl. “The Working Day.” In *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume I*, trans. Ben Fowkes, 341-416. New York: Vintage, 1976.

Hobsbawm, E. J. “Labor History and Ideology.” *Journal of Social History* 7, no. 4 (July 1, 1974): 371-381. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3786462>.

———. “The Social Function of the Past: Some Questions.” *Past & Present*, no. 55 (May 1, 1972): 3-17. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/650220>.

Fink, Leon. “The New Labor History and the Powers of Historical Pessimism: Consensus, Hegemony, and the Case of the Knights of Labor.” *The Journal of American History* 75,

no. 1 (1988): 115-136. (<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0021-8723%28198806%2975%3A1%3C115%3ATNLHAT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-A>)

Hause, Steven C. "The Evolution of Social History." *French Historical Studies* 19, no. 4 (Autumn 1996): 1191-1214. (<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0016-1071%28199623%2919%3A4%3C1191%3ATEOSH%3E2.0.CO%3B2-3>)

April 13 – Practices: Where is history? Varieties of evidence

In a previous seminar, we looked at the question, "What is history?" Today, we ask, "Where is history?" or, more precisely, "Where can we find the evidence for history?"

For today's class, we will meet in the library, where Venessa Walsten and Tina Sherlock will join us for a discussion of the role of libraries in historical research.

Preparation: you must collect three *different types* of evidence to bring to the seminar.

These may include a *material object*; an *image*; a *text*; or any other form of evidence that you are prepared to defend as a piece of evidence. Be creative! The point here is to think about the varieties and possibilities of evidence.

You should be prepared to explain why the material you bring to the seminar is indeed evidence. What questions do your items help answer? What questions do they raise? Does each item have a history of its own?

You will also want to ask larger questions about the nature of historical evidence. What constitutes evidence? How do we read evidence? Where do we find evidence? When does a thing become evidence? (Is a thing always evidence?)

For inspiration, you should look to the histories you have read, for this course as well as for other. Glance at these, and think imaginatively of the range of sources you have at your disposal.

Reading for today:

Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, Chapter 4: "The Raw Materials"; Chapter 5, "Using the sources"

*Bloch, Marc. "Chapter II: Historical Observation." In *The Historian's Craft*, trans. Peter Putnam, 48-78. New York: Vintage, 1953.

Grafton, Anthony. "The Footnote from De Thou to Ranke." *History and Theory* 33, no. 4 (1994): 53-76. (<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0018-2656%28199412%2933%3A4%3C53%3ATFFDTT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-9>)

April 14 – Schools of History: The Annales School

Braudel, Fernand. "Personal Testimony." *The Journal of Modern History* 44, no. 4 (1972): 448-467. (<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-2801%28197212%2944%3A4%3C448%3APT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-O>)

*———. "History and the social sciences." In *Economy and society in early modern Europe: Essays from the Annales*, edited by Peter Burke, 11-42. New York: Harper & Row, 1972.

Forster, Robert. "Achievements of the Annales School." *The Journal of Economic History* 38, no. 1 (1978): 58-76. (<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-0507%28197803%2938%3A1%3C58%3AAOTAS%3E2.0.CO%3B2-R>)

Hexter, J. H. "Fernand Braudel and the *Monde Braudellien*." *The Journal of Modern History* 44, no. 4 (1972): 480-539. (<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-2801%28197212%2944%3A4%3C480%3AFBATMB%3E2.0.CO%3B2-6>)

Hunt, Lynn. "French History in the Last Twenty Years: The Rise and Fall of the *Annales* Paradigm." *Journal of Contemporary History* 21, no. 2, Twentieth Anniversary Issue (Apr. 1986): 209-224. (<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-0094%28198604%2921%3A2%3C209%3AFHITLT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-W>)

Lovett, A. W. "Braudel: Total History for Beginners." *The Historical Journal* 26, no. 3 (1983): 747-753. (<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0018-246X%28198309%2926%3A3%3C747%3ABTHFB%3E2.0.CO%3B2-I>)

April 15 – Women's History, Gender History

Today we focus on the development and practices of women's history and gender history. Part of our discussion may focus on the impact that the development of women's history and gender history had on the theory and practice of history; another may consider the relationship (historical and theoretical) between women's history and gender history.

Tosh, Chapter Ten: "Gender history and postcolonial history"

*Bock, Gisela. "Women's History and Gender History: Aspects of an International Debate." *Gender & History* 1, no. 1 (1989): 7-30.

Davis, Natalie Zemon. "'Women's History' in Transition: The European Case." *Feminist Studies* 3, no. 3/4 (Spring 1976): 83-103. (<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0046-3663%28197621%2F22%293%3A3%2F4%3C83%3A%22HITTE%3E2.0.CO%3B2-8>)

*Parr, Joy. "Gender history and historical practice." *Canadian Historical Review* 76, no. 3 (1995): 354. (URL: <http://proxy.library.adelaide.edu.au/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=9509246609&site=ehost-live&scope=site>)

Scott, Joan W. "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis." *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (1986): 1053-1075. (<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0002-8762%28198612%2991%3A5%3C1053%3AGAUCOH%3E2.0.CO%3B2-Z>)

April 18 – Microhistory – The Return of Martin Guerre

Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (entire).

April 19 – Microhistory

Review **Tosh**, Chapter 3: "Mapping the Field"

Brown, Richard D. "Microhistory and the Post-Modern Challenge." *Journal of the Early Republic* 23, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 1-20. (<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0275-1275%28200321%2923%3A1%3C1%3AMATPC%3E2.0.CO%3B2-7>)

Davis, Natalie Zemon. "The shapes of social history." *Storia della Storiografia* 17 (1990): 28-34. [In course reader.]

Magnusson, Sigurdur Gylfi. What is microhistory? [web page]. History News Network, 2006, accessed February 1 2008; Available from <http://hnn.us/articles/23720.html>.

Ginzburg, Carlo. "Latitude, Slaves, and the "Bible": An Experiment in Microhistory." *Critical Inquiry* 31, no. 3 (Spring 2005): 665-683. (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/430989>)

Ginzburg, Carlo, John Tedeschi, and Anne C. Tedeschi. "Microhistory: Two or Three Things That I Know about It." *Critical Inquiry* 20, no. 1 (1993): 10-35.

(<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0093-1896%28199323%2920%3A1%3C10%3AMTOTT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-V>)

April 20 – Cultural History

Tosh, Chapter Nine: "Cultural evidence and the cultural turn"

Today we turn to "cultural history"—which sometimes seems to cover everything that is not explicitly political. Is Geertz's interpretive theory of culture useful for historians?

*Geertz, Clifford. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture." In *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 3-30. New York: Basic Books, 2000.

*———. "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese cockfight." In *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 412-453. New York: Basic Books, 2000.

*Hunt, Lynn Avery. "Introduction." In *The New cultural history: essays*, edited by Aletta Biersack and Lynn Avery Hunt, 1-22. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989.

April 21 – Annotated research bibliography – Cat Massacres

Our focus will be on the controversy engendered by a then-pioneering book: Robert Darnton's *Great Cat Massacre*. Questions to think about: is "Workers Revolt" good history? Bad history?

*Darnton, Robert. "Workers Revolt: The Great Cat Massacre of the Rue Saint-Séverin." In *The Great cat massacre and other episodes in French cultural history*, 75-104. New York: Basic Books, 1984.

Chartier, Roger. "Text, Symbols, and Frenchness." *The Journal of Modern History* 57, no. 4 (Dec. 1985): 682-695. (<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-2801%28198512%2957%3A4%3C682%3ATSAP%3E2.0.CO%3B2-I>)

LaCapra, Dominick. "Chartier, Darnton, and the Great Symbol Massacre." *The Journal of Modern History* 60, no. 1 (Mar. 1988): 95-112. (<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-2801%28198803%2960%3A1%3C95%3ACDATGS%3E2.0.CO%3B2-O>)

April 25 - Clashes and controversies: Did the linguistic turn silence Clio?

Has the distinction between the world and text disappeared? What happens to history when everything is text? What is the place of narrative in history?

Roth, Michael S. "Cultural Criticism and Political Theory: Hayden White's Rhetorics of History." *Political Theory* 16, no. 4 (1988): 636-646.

(<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0090-5917%28198811%2916%3A4%3C636%3ACCAPTH%3E2.0.CO%3B2-8>)

O'Brien, Patricia. "Michel Foucault's History of culture." In *The New cultural history: essays*, edited by Lynn Avery Hunt, 25-46. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989.

Clark, Elizabeth A. "The Lady Vanishes: Dilemmas of a Feminist Historian after the 'Linguistic Turn'." *Church History* 67, no. 1 (1998): 1-31.

(<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0009-6407%28199803%2967%3A1%3C1%3ATLVDOA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-U>)

Himmelfarb, Gertrude. "Some Reflections on the New History." *The American Historical Review* 94, no. 3 (Jun. 1989): 661-670. (<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0002-8762%28198906%2994%3A3%3C661%3ASROTNH%3E2.0.CO%3B2-J>)

Pagden, Anthony. "Rethinking the Linguistic Turn: Current Anxieties in Intellectual History." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 49, no. 3 (Jul. - Sep. 1988): 519-529.

(<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-5037%28198807%2F09%2949%3A3%3C519%3ARTLTCA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-J>)

Stone, Lawrence. "The Revival of Narrative: Reflections on a New Old History." *Past and Present*, no. 85 (Nov. 1979): 3-24. (<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0031-2746%28197911%290%3A85%3C3%3ATRONRO%3E2.0.CO%3B2-Y>)

April 26

April 27

This week, we look away from grand theories of history, and turn to the history of *things*: chocolate, sugar, watches... This is a bit of a catch-all category – but our aim should be to ask questions about perspectives in historical writing. Does writing about an object, technology, or commodity change the way we think about human actors and agency?

*Knight, G. Roger. "A sugar factory and its swimming pool: incorporation and differentiation in Dutch colonial society in Java." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 24, no. 3 (2001): 451 - 471. (<http://www.informaworld.com/10.1080/01419870020036747>)

Landes, David S. "Watchmaking: A Case Study in Enterprise and Change." *The Business History Review* 53, no. 1 (1979): 1-39. (<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0007-6805%28197921%2953%3A1%3C1%3AWACSI%3E2.0.CO%3B2-5>)

Norton, Marcy. "Tasting Empire: Chocolate and the European Internalization of Mesoamerican Aesthetics." *The American Historical Review* 111, no. 3 (2006): 660-691. (<http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/ahr.111.3.660>)

April 28– Essay on schools of history

April 29

Today, we focus on the relationship between history and writing. Our aim is two-fold: first, to focus on the possibilities of using literature as a source; second, to focus on the act of writing itself. In addition to this week's reading, you should think about what you think makes for good historical writing. Please bring in a book or an article that is, in your view,

well written. Be prepared to explain what you think is good about it. Think about the nature of the writing itself: pay attention to the structure of the argument, the formation of sentences, the choice of words. Be prepared to explain how the writer engages her or his audience. And think about techniques you can borrow from this writer to make your own writing crisper, clearer, and deeper.

"Introduction." *The American Historical Review* 103, no. 5 (1998): 1502.

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0002-8762%28199812%29103%3A5%3C1502%3AI%3E2.0.CO%3B2-Y>

Atwood, Margaret. "In Search of Alias Grace: On Writing Canadian Historical Fiction." *The American Historical Review* 103, no. 5 (1998): 1503-1516.

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0002-8762%28199812%29103%3A5%3C1503%3AISOAGO%3E2.0.CO%3B2-P>

Hunt, Lynn. "'No Longer an Evenly Flowing River': Time, History, and the Novel." *The American Historical Review* 103, no. 5 (1998): 1517-1521.

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0002-8762%28199812%29103%3A5%3C1517%3A%22LAEFR%3E2.0.CO%3B2-F>

Spence, Jonathan D. "Margaret Atwood and the Edges of History." *The American Historical Review* 103, no. 5 (1998): 1522-1525. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0002-8762%28199812%29103%3A5%3C1522%3AMAATEO%3E2.0.CO%3B2-T>

Demos, John. "In Search of Reasons for Historians to Read Novels." *The American Historical Review* 103, no. 5 (1998): 1526-1529. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0002-8762%28199812%29103%3A5%3C1526%3AISORFH%3E2.0.CO%3B2-O>