

HISTORY 511B            SEMINAR IN HISTORICAL RESEARCH AND WRITING:  
SELF AND SOCIETY IN EUROPE, 1350-1700

Fall Semester 2005  
Tuesdays 6:30-9:20 PM  
225 McIver

Jodi Bilinkoff    McIver 211  
Office Hours:  
Tues, Thurs 10:00-10:45 and by appointment

Contact Information:

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Required Texts:

Benvenuto Cellini, Autobiography  
William Roper, The Life of Sir Thomas More  
Christopher Columbus The Four Voyages  
Madame de Sévigné, Selected Letters  
Steven Ozment, Magdalena and Balthasar

For reference I have ordered Jonathan Zophy, A Short History of Renaissance and Reformation Europe. You may, however, use any other Western Civ or European history text.

These books are available for purchase at the UNCG Bookstore and are also on reserve at Jackson Library. Using the internet can frequently result in savings on book purchases.

Description of Course:

We will be examining biographical and autobiographical texts, which were produced in abundance in Europe and its colonies in the period between 1350 and 1700. At the heart of our inquiry will be what scholars call "the construction of identities," how individuals perceive and present their own lives, or the lives of others. We will read and discuss together some representative texts from the period and identify analytical categories such as class, gender, geographical origin, profession, religious orientation, political persuasion, intended audience, and genre. Students will then choose a text or group of texts to investigate and contextualize on their own. There is

a wealth of material in English in Jackson Library. I have compiled a bibliography to aid you in making your choices, and will, of course, be available throughout the semester for consultation.

This is a research seminar, which means that the major enterprise of the semester will be producing a research paper, approximately 15-20 pages in length for undergraduates, 20-25 pages for graduate students. The paper itself will count for 60% of the final grade. During the course of the semester each student will prepare a research prospectus, detailed outline and annotated bibliography; together they will constitute 20% of the final grade. The remaining 20% of the grade will be derived from various oral presentations, including class participation, oral reports based on the common readings, and progress reports on research projects. Oral reports will be assigned after our first meeting. I do not intend to lecture at any length in this class, thus student participation is absolutely crucial to its success. Let me remind you that the Renaissance was a great age of oratory as well as written masterpieces!

**RESPONSIBILITY CLAUSE:** If you are unable to hand in any of your assignments on time or make an oral presentation for any reason it is YOUR responsibility to contact me. If I am not contacted directly or by message I will not accept late assignments. See above for ways of contacting me.

Please make every effort to attend each class meeting, there is, after all, only one each week. If you have to miss a class or come late, please contact me so we don't have to hold up the class for the other students. I will check my voice mail and e-mail before each class meeting.

#### Course Schedule:

- Aug 16 Introduction to Course; Constructing Identities, Writing about Identities; Italy and the Renaissance
- Aug 23 The Self as a Work of Art: Benvenuto Cellini  
15-24, 32-92, 101-112, 120-124, 147-157
- Aug 30 Cellini  
166-178, 188-231, 238-240, 251-272, 288-304, 334-350  
384-397
- Sep 6 Personality, Politics, Reformation: Thomas More and his Circle  
More on More; Margaret Roper on More (handout)

Sep 13 William Roper on More  
7-125  
Robert Bolt on More: "A Man for All Seasons"  
PROSPECTUS OF RESEARCH PAPER DUE

Sept 20 Discovering Columbus  
Columbus  
27-36, 82-92, 100-114, 115-122, 127-128,  
158-199

Sept 27 Columbus  
206-226, 241-253, 259-264, 265-276, 283-304, 318-320

Oct 4 Letters from the City: Magdalena and Balthasar  
15-26, 27-88 (focus on letters)  
DRAFT OF ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE

FRIDAY OCT 7 LAST DAY TO DROP CLASSES

Oct 11 FALL BREAK

Oct 18 Magdalena and Balthasar  
89-160 (focus on letters), 161-166  
OUTLINES DUE

Oct 25 PROGRESS REPORTS

Nov 1 Letters from Court and Country: Madame de Sévigné  
Intro, 29-30, 55-59, 61-62, 67-72, 75-81, 85-90  
110-113, 124-131, 140-141, 154-158

Nov 8 Madame de Sévigné  
164-166, 173-175, 179-180, 182, 185-186, 188-189  
193-195, 196-197, 206-210, 216-218, 222-224, 228-231,  
233-238, 246-248, 257, 264-265, 267-269, 271-272,  
280-282, 289-291, 298-300, 304-306, 308-311, 311-314,  
320  
DRAFT OF RESEARCH PAPER DUE, BRING 2 COPIES

Nov 15 Discussion of Drafts  
BIBLIOGRAPHIES DUE

Nov 22 Research Papers in Progress, NO CLASS

Nov 29 Final Discussion and evaluation of course, texts,  
papers, bibliographies; suitably festive end of term

FRIDAY DEC 9 RESEARCH PAPERS DUE IN DR. BILINKOFF'S MAILBOX  
IN HISTORY DEPARTMENT OFFICE 221 MCIVER BY 2 PM;  
YOU MAY HAND IT IN EARLIER IF YOU CHOOSE.