

HISTORY 705: COLLOQUIUM IN EUROPEAN HISTORY BEFORE 1800

Course Information:

History 705-01, Fall 2008 (CRN:80260)

Time: Wednesdays, 6:30-9:20 PM

Room: 3209 MHRA

Instructor Information:

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Description:

This course comprises the first half of the Graduate Colloquium in European History. Our imagined task is a huge, even impossible one: we are supposed to make sense of the methods, techniques, and approaches used by historians who study Europe from Rome to the French Revolution. Obviously we cannot do justice to every period and/or every topic, and our approach must inevitably be somewhat fragmentary. Rather than follow a haphazard and incomplete chronology through this vast span of time, I have organized the course methodologically. In essence we are going to examine some of those methods, techniques, and approaches rather than a series of events, periods, or persons. We will accomplish this task, of course, by reading and evaluating sample works of historians who work in that given style, method, or approach. Peter Burke's edited volume, *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, will provide a quasi-textbook or roadmap for our endeavor, as it comprises specially-commissioned chapters on many of the approaches and sub-disciplines that we will examine. Please note that I have tried to balance the temporal focus of the works we will read: my design is that about half of our readings will come from the medieval period and half from the early modern period.

Given these goals, it is important to remember that you will be asked in this course to evaluate, analyze, and criticize the arguments, methods, and structures of important works of history. Such a task requires that you read somewhat differently from the ways in which you might approach a research paper or a simple factual assignment. You must be concerned first and foremost with identifying the author's stated (or unstated) purpose and/or agenda in writing. Close behind this will fall the argument of the author's work. One of our tasks will be to evaluate the success of this argument, so it is worth getting used to the process of reading analytically; don't get bogged down in the minutiae of the details offered by each author, for we are really unconcerned with the specifics. Rather, pay close attention to the argument, the evidence offered to support that argument, and the assumptions around which the argument (and the choice of evidence) is based. In a word, you will be learning to "gut" or "fillet" a book; it sounds inelegant, and it is, but it is a very valuable skill. It involves reading rapidly (but carefully) a large number of pages, skimming the details but keeping your eyes open for the argument, holes in reasoning, blatant (or not-so-blatant) assumptions, and so on.

Required Books (available for purchase at the UNCG Bookstore or on amazon.com):

Peter Burke, *The French Historical Revolution* (Stanford UP, 1990) ISBN: 0804718377

Peter Burke, ed., *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, 2nd edition (Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 2001)
ISBN: 0271021179

Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Harvard UP, 1984) ISBN: 0674766911

Martha Howell and Walter Prevenier, *From Reliable Sources: an Introduction to Historical Methods* (Ithaca,

2001). ISBN: 0801485606

Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou: Promised Land of Error* (Vintage Books, 1979). ISBN: 0394729641

Other Required Readings :

The rest of the readings on the syllabus will be prefaced by one of the following locations:

Reserve Room: this indicates physical reserve. You will need to go request the book from the Circulation desk in Jackson Library. Books may be checked out for 2-hour periods. You may photocopy the selection or read it in the library

E-Reserves or Reserve Room: I have asked the Library to photocopy the relevant article/chapter, scan it into pdf, and place it in the 'e-reserves' folder on our course's blackboard page. This designation is a bit uncertain, since it depends on how many pages the library can copy/scan. Check the e-reserves first; if the pdf is there, great! If not, then you'll have to retrieve the physical copy from the Circulation desk.

Journal-Finder: this designation indicates a journal for which UNCG receives electronic versions. That is, you can click on the Journal Finder button on the Library's homepage and it will bring up a way to access articles from that journal in pdf form. Navigate journal finder, get the pdf, print and read it.

Blackboard: these are articles that I have already placed on our blackboard site in pdf form.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Oral Presentations:

Each week one of you will open our discussion with a brief discussion of the author(s) assigned for that week. You should try to get a handle on what kind of historian the author is (marxist? Annaliste? Narrative? Political? Social? etc.) and/or what 'school' he or she belongs to. You needn't give a biography of the author(s), although some relevant details might be useful. Rather, you should give a 5 minute synopsis of whatever information about the author(s) is relevant to understanding his/her/their work. Where should you find this? Often the readings will provide some indirect clues, but you should also do a bit of bibliography work (either on-line or in the library) and perhaps a bit of web-searching (if the author is alive, he/she may have a web-page, a university affiliation, etc). You have two tasks during class: 1) to present what you've found succinctly and clearly, and in an informal way (that is, please don't read a prepared text or slavishly consult your notes); 2) prepare a one-page handout for the class listing the author(s) by name and providing whatever pertinent biographical, methodological and bibliographical information that you deem relevant (in this last category, you might well give bibliography of up to 5 important publications by each author). You should try to do more in your presentation than simply read off your author's career highlights - try to say something about the person's approach(es) to history.

2. Written Work:

One of the major goals of this class is to gain experience writing critically about history. And since it is a graduate class, I will expect you to do a fair amount of writing. Although I will ask you to write two kinds of essay for me, I am going to allow you substantial leeway in how you decide to structure your written work. What this really means is that I am going to give you responsibility for choosing your own schedule, within certain guidelines.

All students must complete the following written work

- a. Six Analytical Essays, typed, 3-4 pages each
- b. One Historiographical Essay, 8-12 pages

GRADE BREAKDOWN:

Oral Presentations:	10%
Six Analytical Essays	60%
Historiographical Essay	30%

EXPLANATION OF WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

a. Analytical Essays

You will write six of these essays over the course of the semester. They should be 3-4 pages in length, typed, with standard margins, etc. Three of the six have been fixed by me; that is, you must write an essay based on the readings in Weeks 3, 9, and 13. It is up to you to choose when (and on what material) you wish to write the other three. Analytical Essays are due the week following the readings with which they are concerned.

These essays will be reactions to questions I have posed to you concerning a particular set of readings. I expect you to formulate a clear, well-supported argument that answers my question one way or another. Remember to be concise. State your argument in a brief opening paragraph, and then proceed to introduce evidence and commentary that supports your position. I should hasten to say that the evidence for whatever argument you make should derive primarily for the readings assigned for that week.

Required Analytical Essays:

1. Week 3: Are the articles by Carroll and Sluhovsky examples of the New History or the Old? Why or why not? (due in week 4)
2. Week 9: Either of the following:
 1. Choose one article and examine how well it follows the program laid forth by Scott's article in *New Perspectives*. (due in Week 10)
 2. "'Women's history' is dead. The history of gender has supplanted it." Do you agree? Why or why not?
3. Week 13: choose one of the following: (due in week 15; that is, after Thanksgiving)
 1. Compare the theory and practice of 'post-structuralist' history. That is, how does the writing of 'actual' history live up to post-structuralist theory?
 2. Himmelfarb writes angrily of a 'flight from fact' in 'post-modernist' historical writing. Putting aside her straw-man examples, is this a fair account of Spiegel's work? Why or why not?

Possible Analytical Essays - three more chosen by you. Consult the schedule on the syllabus for possible essay questions.

b. Historiographical Essay (due Monday, December 12, by Noon)

This is to be an 8-12 page examination of a historical topic, issue, or event of interest to you. As a minimum, I expect you to consult 3 books and 3 articles relevant to the subject of your paper. I will be happy to suggest beginning bibliography to anyone who needs advice.

I am concerned to see you do several things: a) propose, develop, and support an argument; b) recognize and evaluate differing and potentially competing historical arguments (ie., wrestle with 'historiography'); c) discuss and interpret relative methodological approaches to the subject at hand. This paper SHOULD NOT BE a 'standard' historical treatment of the subject. That is, if you chose to examine the crusades, I don't want to read about when and why the crusades began, what took place during them, etc; what I want to read about is your evaluation of the methodologies that historians have used to examine the crusades, as well as your assessment of the relative merits of several historians' opinions (ie., historiography).

You have three options in choosing the topic for your essay

I. You may elect a specific topic. Examples might include the following:

- the Fall of the Roman Empire
- 'feudalism'
- The Norman Conquest
- the crusades (or, simply, The First Crusade)
- Inquisition and/or Heresy
- Civic Ritual and Identity
- Literacy and Literate Culture
- Violence
- Absolutism or Constitutionalism
- The Role of the State (in whichever period)
- Religion and Politics (in whichever period)
- The French Revolution

the German Reformation
the Wars of Religion
etc., etc., etc.

- ii. You could write an essay about a particular historian. For instance, if you enjoyed Le Goff's articles, you might elect to write a historiography essay on Le Goff. I would certainly not expect you to read all of Le Goff's work, but I would expect you to compose a bibliography of his work, to see what his intellectual and academic interests were, to learn a little about him as a person (there's an excellent collection of essays on Le Goff's impact), etc. Your challenge here would be to come up with an analytical category within which to discuss and criticize Le Goff's work as a historian. Here, too, you must learn to 'gut' books; skim for approach, method, and sources.
- iii. You could choose a more general methodology or approach to the study of history. Here this could be narrowed by period (ie., gender in the scholarship of the Middle Ages; or even gender in the scholarship of the Later Middle Ages.). Some possibilities include:
 - gender
 - Marxism
 - Social History
 - the Annales paradigm
 - mentalities
 - quantitative history
 - military history
 - periodization issues, such as "the Middle Ages" vs. "the Renaissance"
 - Popular Culture vs. High Culture (in whichever period you choose)
 - The New Cultural History
 - structuralism
 - post-structuralism
 - 'Thick description'
 - Gift-giving

The "Legal" stuff:

1. All students should be familiar (or make themselves familiar) with the UNCG Academic Integrity Policy: <http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/complete/>
2. All work should be your own.
3. Attendance is critical in this course. If you miss more than 1 class without explanation, I will take some sort of disciplinary measures.
4. All course materials must be completed to receive a grade. I am giving you substantial leeway in scheduling your own due-dates. Don't make me mad by piling them all up at the end of the semester!

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND READINGS:

1. August 27: Introduction to the Course
2. September 3: Historians and Methodology
 - Martha Howell and Walter Prevenier, *From Reliable Sources: an Introduction to Historical Methods*, entire (150 pp)
 - Blackboard: G.R. Elton, "King or Minister? The Man Behind the Henrician Revolution," *History* 39 (1954), 216-232.
 - Blackboard: Jacques Le Goff, "Ecclesiastical Culture and Folklore in the Middle Ages: Saint Marcellus of Paris and the Dragon," in Le Goff, *Time, Work*

and Culture in the Middle Ages (Chicago, 1982), 159-188.

3. September 10: the New History and the Old

Burke, "Overture. The New History: its Past and Future," in Burke, *New Perspectives*, pp.

1-24.

Journal Finder: Gertrude Himmelfarb, "Some Reflections on the New History," *American Historical Review* 94 (1989): 661-670

Journal Finder Joan W. Scott, "History in Crisis? The Others' Side of the Story," *American Historical Review* 94 (1989): 680-692.

Journal Finder: John E. Toews, "Perspectives on 'The Old History and the New': a Comment," *American Historical Review* 94 (1989): 693-698.

Journal Finder: Joan Scott, Review of Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The New History and the Old: critical essays and appraisals* (Cambridge, MA, 1987), in *American Historical Review* 94 (1989): 699-700

Journal Finder: Stuart Carroll, "The Peace in the Feud in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century France," *Past & Present* 178 (2003), 74-115.

Journal Finder, Moshe Sluhovsky, "The Devil in the Convent," *American Historical Review* 107 (2002), 1379-1411.

Analytical Essay Topic: Are the articles by Carroll and Sluhovsky examples of the New History or the Old? Why or why not? (due in week 4)

4. September 17: The *Annales* 'School' and Mentalities

Burke, *The French Historical Revolution: the Annales School, 1929-1989*, 1-116

Journal Finder: Peter Burke, "Strengths and Weaknesses of the History of Mentalities," *History of European Ideas* 7 (1986): 439-451 [a revised version exists in Burke, *Varieties of Cultural History* (Ithaca, 1997), 162-182].

Reserve Room or E-reserves: Georges Duby, "Youth in Aristocratic Society: Northwestern France in the Twelfth Century," in *The Chivalrous Society*, trans. Cynthia Postan (Berkeley, 1977), 112-22

Blackboard: Susan Reynolds, "Social Mentalities and the Case of Medieval Scepticism," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th series, 1 (1991), 21-41.

Reserve Room: Alexander Murray, *Reason and Society in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1984), 59-137.

Analytical Essay Topic: Is the study of mentalities possible? If so, is it desirable? Why or why not? Use the assigned readings for your examples.

5. September 24: Hot Topic #1: Honor

Journal Finder: Elvin Hatch, "Theories of Social Honor," *American Anthropologist*, 91 (1989): 341-353.

Journal Finder: Faramerz Dabhoiwala, "The Construction of Honour, Reputation and Status in Late Seventeenth- and Early Eighteenth-Century England,"

- Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th series, 6 (1996): 201-213.
- Blackboard: William Palmer, "That 'Insolent Liberty': Honor, Rites of Power and Persuasion in Sixteenth-Century Ireland," *Renaissance Quarterly* 46:2 (1993): 308-327.
- Blackboard: Cynthia Herrup, "'To Pluck Bright Honour from the Pale-Faced Moon': Gender and Honour in the Castlehaven Story," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th Ser., Vol. 6. (1996), pp. 137-159.
- Journal Finder: Robert Shoemaker, "The Decline of Public Insult in London, 1660-1800," *Past and Present* 169 (2000): 97-131
- Journal Finder: N.A.M. Rodger, "Honour and Duty at Sea, 1660-1815," *Historical Research* 75 (2002): 425-447.

Analytical Essay Topic: either of the following:

1. Is the study of honor actually the study of politics? Why or why not?
2. What is "new" about the study of honor in history? Would Elton and co. have written on honor? Why or why not?

6. October 1: Cultural Anthropology and its impact

- Blackboard: Clifford Geertz, "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight," *Daedalus* 101 (1972): 1-37, reprinted in Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures* (NY: Basic Books), 412-454.
- Reserve Room: Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York, 1984), pp. 3-104, 257-263
- Blackboard: Roger Chartier, "Texts, Symbols and Frenchness," *Journal of Modern History* 57 (1985): 682-695
- Blackboard: Darnton, "The Symbolic Element in History," *Journal of Modern History* 58 (1986): 218-234.
- Blackboard: James Fernandez, "Review: Historians Tell Tales: Of Cartesian Cats and Gallic Cockfights," *Journal of Modern History* 60 (1988): 113-127.

Analytical Essay Topic:

Evaluate Clifford Geertz's influence on the theory and writing of history.

7. October 8: History from Below

- Jim Sharpe, "History from Below," in Burke, *New Perspectives*, 25-42.
- Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou: Promised Land of Error* (Vintage, 1979), Entire.
- Blackboard: Leonard E. Boyle, "Montaillou Revisited: *Mentalité* and Methodology," *Pathways to Medieval Peasants*, ed. J. Raftis (Toronto: PIMS, 1981), 119-40.

Analytical Essay Topic: Is *Montaillou* a successful work of history? Why or why not?

8. October 15: Military History: Debates and Revolutions

- Journal Finder: John A. Lynn, "The Embattled Future of Academic Military History," *Journal of Military History* 61:4 (1997): 777-789.

Journal Finder: Geoffrey Parker, "The 'Military Revolution,' 1560-1660--a Myth?," *Journal of Modern History* 48:2 (1976): 195-214.

Reserve Room: Colin Jones, "The Military Revolution and the Professionalisation of the French Army under the Ancien Régime," in M. Duffy (ed.), *The Military Revolution and the State, 1500-1800*, (Exeter, 1980, pp. 29-48. Reprinted in C.J. Rogers (ed.), *The Military Revolution Debate: Readings in the Military Transformation of Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1995), pp. 149-67.

Reserve Room: Simon Adams, "Tactics or Politics? 'The Military Revolution' and the Hapsburg Hegemony, 1525-1648," in John A. Lynn, ed. *Tools of War: Instruments, Ideas and Institutions of Warfare, 1445-1871* (Urbana, 1990), 28-52 [reprinted in Rogers, *The Military Revolution Debate*, pp. 253-272]

Journal Finder: Clifford Rogers, "The Military Revolutions of the Hundred Years' War," *Journal of Military History* 57:2 (1993), pp. 241-278. [Reprinted in Rogers, *The Military Revolution Debate*, pp. 55-94]

Reserve Room: Blackboard: Geoffrey Parker, "In Defense of the Military Revolution," in C.J. Rogers (ed.), *The Military Revolution Debate: Readings in the Military Transformation of Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1995), pp. 337-365.

[For further reading: Thomas Barker, Jeremy Black, and Weston Cook, "Geoffrey Parker's Military Revolution: Three Reviews of the Second Edition," *The Journal of Military History*, 61:2. (1997), pp. 347-354]

[for further reading: John France, "Recent Writing on Medieval Warfare: From the Fall of Rome to c.1300," *Journal of Military History* 65 (2001): 441-473]

Analytical Essay Topic:

Is military history as written in the late 20th Century actually cultural history in disguise? Justify your position.

9. October 22: Women's History? Or History of Gender?

Joan Scott, "Women's History," in Burke, *New Perspectives*, 42-66

Optional Background Reading: Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis?," in *American Historical Review* 91 (1986): 1053-1075, revised in Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (Columbia UP, 1988), chapter 2

Journal Finder: Sharon Farmer, "Persuasive Voices: Clerical Views of Medieval Wives," *Speculum* 61 (1986): 517-543.

Journal Finder: Shannon McSheffery, "Place, Space, and Situation: Public and Private in the Making of Marriage in Late Medieval London," *Speculum* 79 (2004): 960-90.

Reserve Room or E-reserves: Kimberley Loprete, "The gender of lordly women: the case of Adela of Blois," in Christine Meek and Catherine Lawless, eds., *Studies on medieval and early modern women: pawns or players?* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003): 90-110.

Reserve Room or E-Reserves: JoAnn McNamara, "The *Herrenfrage*: the Restructuring of

the Gender System, 1050-1150,” in *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages*, ed. Clare A. Lees with Thelma Fenster and JoAnn McNamara (Minneapolis, 1994), 3-29.

Reserve Room or E-Reserves: Michael Rocke, “Gender and Sexual Culture in Renaissance Italy,” in Judith C. Brown, ed., *Gender and Society in Renaissance Italy* (Longman, 1998), 150-170; reprinted in Paul Findlen, ed., *The Italian Renaissance*, Blackwell Essential Readings in History (Oxford, 2002), 192-211

Analytical Essay Topic: either of the following:

1. Choose one article and examine how well it follows the program laid forth by Scott’s article in *New Perspectives*.
2. “‘Women’s history’ is dead. The history of gender has supplanted it.” Do you agree? Why or why not?

10. October 29: Microhistory

Giovanni Levi, “On Microhistory,” in Burke, *New Perspectives*, 93-113

Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre*, entire

Blackboard: Robert Finlay, “The Refashioning of Martin Guerre,” *American Historical Review* 93 (1988), 553-571.

Blackboard: Natalie Zemon Davis, “On the Lame,” *American Historical Review* 93 (1988), 572-603.

Film: Return of Martin Guerre [To be shown in Class]

Analytical Essay Topic: Why should we care about Martin Guerre? Or, perhaps, should we care if Davis ‘got it right’?

11. November 5: Hot Topic #2: Emotions

Barbara Rosenwein, “Worrying About Emotions in History,” *American Historical Review*

107 (2002): 821-845.

Blackboard: Rosenwein, “Emotional Space” in C. Stephen Jaeger, ed., *Codierung von Emotionen im Mittelalter/Emotions and Sensibilities in the Middle Ages* (2003): 287-303

Blackboard: R. E. Barton, “Gendering Anger: *Ira*, *Furor*, and Discourses of Power and Masculinity in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries,” in Richard Newhauser, ed., *In the Garden of Evil: the Vices and Culture in the Middle Ages* (Toronto, 2005), 371-392.

Reserve Room or E-Reserves: Paul Hyams, “What did Henry III of England Think in

Bed

and In French about Kingship and Anger?” in Barbara Rosenwein, ed., *Anger’s Past: the Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 1998), 92-124.

Blackboard: Daniel Lord Smail, “Emotions and Somatic Gestures in Medieval Narratives,” in *Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik* 138 (2005), 34-47.

Statement of Intent for Final Essay due in my mailbox (1 paragraph, plus 1-2 citations to articles or sections of books).

Analytical Essay Topic: Is it possible to write a history of emotions? If so, how and why? If not, why not?

Note: Instructor at Conference, November 6-9

12. November 12: History of the Body

Roy Porter, "History of the Body," in Burke, *New Perspectives*, 206-232

Journal-Finder: Caroline Walker Bynum, "Fast, Feast and Flesh: the Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women," *Representations* 11 (1985), 1-25.

Reserve Room: Katharine Park, "Was there a Renaissance Body?," in Allen Grieco, Michael Rocke and Fiorella Gioffredi Superbi, eds., *The Italian Renaissance in the Twentieth Century: Acts of an International Conference, Florence, Villa I Tatti, June 9-11 1999* (Florence 2002), 321-336

Reserve Room: Caroline Bynum, "Why all the Fuss about the Body? A Medievalist's Perspective," in Victoria Bonnell and Lynn Hunt, eds., *Beyond the Cultural Turn* (Berkeley, 1999), 241-280

Blackboard: Carlin Barton, "The Roman Blush: the Delicate Matter of Self-Control," in *Constructions of the Classical Body*, ed. James Porter (Ann Arbor: Univ of Michigan Press, 1999), 212-234(?)

Journal-Finder: Ulinka Rublack, "Childbirth and the Female Body in Early Modern Germany," *Past and Present* 150 (1996): 84-110

Analytical Essay Topic: What does it mean to argue that the 'history of the body' is essentially an act of cultural construction? Use examples from the readings.

13. November 19: Texts, Language, and Construction

Reserve Room or E-Reserves: Catherine Belsey, *Poststructuralism: a very short introduction* (Oxford, 2002), 1-22

Blackboard: Gertrude Himmelfarb, "Telling It as you Like it: Post-Modernist History and the Flight from Fact," *Times Literary Supplement*, October 16, 1992, 12-15. Also available as Gertrude Himmelfarb, "Telling It as You Like It: History and the Flight from Fact," in *The Postmodern History Reader*, ed. Keith Jenkins (New York: Routledge, 1997), 158-74.

Blackboard: Geoffrey Elton, "Return to Essentials," in *The Postmodern Reader*, ed. Keith Jenkins (New York, 1997), 175-179)

Journal Finder: Gabrielle Spiegel, "History, Historicism, and the Social Logic of the Text in the Middle Ages," *Speculum* 65 (1990), pp. 59-86.

Reserve Room: Gabrielle Spiegel, *Romancing the Past: the Rise of Vernacular Prose Historiography in Thirteenth-Century France* (Univ. of California Press, reprint 1995), selected chapters

Analytical Essay Topics: Choose one of the following:

1. Compare the theory and practice of 'post-structuralist' history. That is, how does the writing of 'actual' history live up to post-structuralist theory?
2. Himmelfarb writes angrily of a 'flight from fact' in 'post-modernist' historical writing. Putting aside her straw-man examples, is this a fair account of Spiegel's work? Why or why not?

14. November 26: NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)

15. December 3: *A Bilan?* Thoughts on the Historian's Craft and Goals

Peter Burke, "History of Events and the Revival of Narrative," in Burke, *New Perspectives*, 233-248

Blackboard: Natalie Zemon Davis, "History's Two Bodies," *American Historical Review* 93 (1988): 1-30

Reserve Room: Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt and Margaret Jacob, "Postmodernism and Historians", in John Tosh, ed., *Historians on History* (Longman, 2000), 308-317

Reserve Room or E-Reserves: Gabrielle M. Spiegel, "In the Mirror's Eye: the Writing of Medieval History in North America," in Spiegel, *The Past as Text: the Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography* (Baltimore, 1997), 57-80.

Blackboard: Bonnie G. Smith, "Gender and the Practices of Scientific History: the Seminar and Archival Research in the Nineteenth Century," *American Historical Review* 100 (1995): 1150-1176.

Blackboard: Moshe Sluhovsky, "History as Voyeurism: from Marguerite de Valois to *La Reine Margot*," *Rethinking History* 4 (2000): 193-210.

Analytical Essay Topic: Von Ranke believed that the historian's task was "not the duty to judge the past, nor to instruct one's contemporaries with an eye to the future, but rather merely to show how it actually was." Given the readings for this week and the content of this course, what would you say that a 21st-century historian's task was? Why?

(Due in Finals week - see me for date)

Friday, December 14 - Final Historiography papers due by noon in my office

OTHER COURSE INFORMATION

I. Use of Reference Materials

You may come across many terms, expressions, and topics with which you are unfamiliar. Don't just let them slide by; rather, use a dictionary and/or encyclopedia to identify whatever it is you are having trouble with. Some examples, which we may encounter in our readings: epistemology, hermeneutics, papacy, guilds, vassal, fief, chivalry, humanism, inquisition, heresy, dowry, philosophe, tithe, Holy Roman Empire, misogyny, primogeniture, relic, eucharist, asceticism, etc. The reference librarians in Jackson Library will be able to assist you in finding reference works.

II. Guidelines for Critical Reading and Writing

Learning how to read, analyze, and write about historical literature in a critical way is the main objective of this course. Keep the following in mind as you read and write about the books and articles this semester:

- a. Check the date and place of publication (don't be fooled by reprints or later editions). How are these important to an understanding of the book? Consider a book on medieval Germany written by an Englishman in 1943.
- b. Read the author's introduction or preface and/or acknowledgments. Whom else does he/she know, or with whom and with what types of historical writing does he/she choose to associate his/her work? To whom is he/she indebted? Whom does he/she consider as an opponent? Does the author state his/her purpose in writing the book? No author is an island, and very few are truly original; most authors are indebted either personally to someone else or methodologically to a school or approach.
- c. Pay careful attention to the author's use of sources. To ascertain this, you will need to be aware of his/her footnotes and/or bibliography, even if you do not read every single reference (indeed, you probably shouldn't read every reference). How does the selection and use of sources inform the author's historical interpretation? Does the author use a single source [a treatise, a chronicle, an inquest]? A single category of sources [parish records, letters, memoirs, legal sources, etc.]? Many different types of sources? Does he/she make use of literary sources? Statistical sources? Police records? Are all sources equally reliable? Would use of another kind of source alter his/her conclusions?
- d. Does the author make clear what is (are) his/her thesis (or theses) in the book or article? That is to say, can you discern if an argument is being made? Or, is the book pure narrative? [be careful!, for even narratives can have agendas and/or theses] If there is no apparent argument, is this a problem? If there is an argument, does it fit into some larger historiographical debate? Or, does it fit into or alongside some major historical or ideological theory [such as Marxism]?
- e. Does the author bring to his/her analysis a particular method or approach? In some weeks, you may well read works on the same subject from diametrically opposing methodological perspectives. While the tendency may be to believe that one is "right" and the other "wrong", we will find that it is more useful to simply try to uncover, analyze, and criticize the methods being used, and to express an opinion about which method seems to offer a better, or more important, understanding of the topic in question.
- f. To what sort of audience is the book or article addressed? Other scholars? A general readership? Students? How do considerations of audience affect an author's selection and use of sources?
- g. Is the work in question a monograph, based primarily on original research? Or is it a synthesis that integrates new material with older ideas? Or some combination of the two?