

# HISTORY 705: COLLOQUIUM IN EUROPEAN HISTORY BEFORE 1800

## Course Information:

History 705-01, Fall 2009 (CRN:80490)  
Time: Wednesdays, 3:30-6:20 PM  
Room: 3207 MHRA

## Instructor Information:

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**Office Hours:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00-12:00, and by appointment

## 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. 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

1. Georg G. Iggers *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge* 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Wesleyan University Press, 2005), ISBN: 978-0819567666
2. Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Harvard UP, 1984) ISBN: 0674766911
3. Martha Howell and Walter Prevenier, *From Reliable Sources: an Introduction to Historical Methods* (Ithaca, 2001). ISBN: 0801485606

4. Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou: Promised Land of Error* (Vintage Books, 1979. Reprint Georges Braziller, 2008). ISBN: 978-0807615980
5. Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes of French Cultural History* (Vintage, 1985). 978-0394729275
6. Carole Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King: Elizabeth I and the politics of Sex and Power* (Philadelphia, 1994). ISBN: 978-0812215335
7. Ruth Karras, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe: Doing Unto Others* (Routledge, 2005). 978-0415289634
8. Gabrielle Spiegel, *Romancing the Past: the Rise of Vernacular Prose Historiography in Thirteenth-Century France* (Univ. of California Press, 1995). 978-0520089358

### Other Required Readings :

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

Print Reserve: 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. I strongly recommend that you plan ahead - devote a couple of hours to copying a bunch of pieces at one time.

E-Reserves: 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 in the Course Readings folder.

## 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 5-10 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 must do more in your presentation than simply read off your author's career highlights - you need to say something about that person's approach(es) to history. It might be wise to consult with me the week before your presentation.

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

## GRADE BREAKDOWN:

Oral Presentations:	10%
General Participation	10%
Five Analytical Essays	50%
Historiographical Essay	30%

## EXPLANATION OF WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

### a. Analytical Essays

You will write five of these essays over the course of the semester. They should be 4-5 pages in length, typed, with standard margins, foot- or end-notes, etc. Analytical Essays are due the week following the readings with which they are concerned. Two of the essays are fixed (that is, everyone must write on the material for two days indicated below); you may choose when you write the other three.

These essays will be reactions to questions I have posed to you concerning a particular set of readings, and may be found below at the relevant point on the schedule 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. The evidence for whatever argument you make should derive primarily for the readings assigned for that week.

Required Analytical Essays:

1. Week 4 (the Annales movement)
2. Either Week 13 (the Linguistic Turn) or Week 14 (Culture and Power)

Possible Analytical Essays - three more chosen by you.

### b. Historiographical Essay (due Friday, December 11, 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 Republic
- Roman slavery
- 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 26: Introduction to the Course
2. September 2: Historians and Methodology
  - Martha Howell and Walter Prevenier, *From Reliable Sources: an Introduction to Historical Methods* (Ithaca, 2001), entire
  - 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 9: The History of History, part I. Historicism and Rankean Traditionalism
  - Georg F. Iggers, *Historiography in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, 1-19, 23-47

E-Reserves: Geoffrey Elton, *Political History: Principles and Practice* (New York, 1970), pp. 3-11, 57-77, 156-180.

E-Reserves: F.L. Ganshof, "Charlemagne and the Institutions of the Frankish Monarchy," in *Frankish Institutions Under Charlemagne*, trans. Bryce and Mary Lyon (Providence, 1968), 3-58.

Print Reserve: Heinrich Fichtenau, *The Carolingian Empire* (trans. 1957), pp.

Blackboard: Paul Fouracre, "Carolingian Justice: the Rhetoric of Improvement and Contexts of Abuse," *Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo* 42 (1995): 771-803.

**Analytical Essay Topic:** Which view of Carolingian institutions is most persuasive? Why? Would Elton agree with you? Why or why not?

#### 4. September 16: The Challenge of the Social Sciences: the *Annales* movement

Iggers, 51-77

E-Book (Jackson Library): Stuart Clark, "The *Annales* Historians" in Quentin Skinner, ed., *The Return of Grand Theory in the Human Sciences* (Cambridge, 1985), 177-198.

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].

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

E-reserves: Georges Duby, excerpt from *The Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined* (1980), taken from *Histories: French Constructions of the Past*, ed. J. Revel and L. Hunt (New York, 1995), 388-397

Print Reserve: Jacques Le Goff, "Warriors and Conquering Bourgeois: the Image of the City in Twelfth-Century French Literature," in Le Goff, *The Medieval Imagination* (Chicago, 1992), 151-176.

Print Reserve: Le Goff, "Social Realities and Ideological Codes in the Thirteenth Century: an *exemplum* of Jacques de Vitry," in Le Goff, *The Medieval Imagination* (Chicago, 1992), 181-192.

**Analytical Essay Topic:** choose one of the following:

1. Is the study of mentalities possible? If so, is it desirable? Why or why not?
2. What aspect of the *Annales* movement has had the greatest impact, and why?

#### 5. September 23: *Annales* and History from Below: Montaillou

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

Blackboard: Leonard E. Boyle, "Montaillou Revisited: *Mentalité* and Methodology," in *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?

#### 6. September 30: Marxist Tradition of Historiography

Iggers, 78-94

Print or e-reserves: W.G. Runciman, "Introduction," in *Marxist History-Writing for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. C. Wickham, British Academy Occasional Paper, 9 (Oxford, 2007), 1-14

Print or E-reserves: Eric Hobsbawm, "Marxist Historiography Today," in Wickham, ed. *Marxist History-Writing*, 180-187

Journal Finder: E.P. Thompson, "Eighteenth-Century English Society: Class Struggle Without Class?" *Social History* 3 (1978), 133-165

Journal Finder: E.P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century," *Past and Present* 50 (1971), 76-136

Print Reserve: E.P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy Reviewed," in *Customs in Common* (New York, 1991): 185-258, 259-351

**Analytical Essay Topic:** What value does Marxism hold for the writing of history in the 21st century?

7. October 7: History of Everyday Life/Microhistory

Iggers, 97-117

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, why should we care if Davis 'got it right'?

8. October 14: Anthropology and History

Print Reserve (possibly blackboard): Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretative Theory of Culture," in Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York, Basic Books, 3-30.

Print Reserve (possibly 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.

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.

**Analytical Essay Topic:**

Explain Geertz's method and evaluate its strengths and weaknesses when applied to the writing of history.

9. October 21: Women and Gender

Print reserve: Joan Scott, "Women's History," in Peter Burke, *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (2001), 42-66

Blackboard: 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

Carole Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Sex and Power* (1994)

**Analytical Essay Topic:** "'Women's history' is dead. The history of gender has supplanted it." Do you agree? Why or why not?

10. October 28: Sexuality

Ruth Karras, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe: Doing Unto Others* (Routledge, 2005)

Print reserve: Matthew Kuefler, "The Boswell Thesis," in Matthew Kuefler, ed., *The Boswell Thesis: Essays on Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality* (Chicago, 2006), 1-31

Print reserve: Matthew Kuefler, "Male Friendship and the Suspicion of Sodomy in Twelfth-Century France," in Matthew Kuefler, ed., *The Boswell Thesis: Essays on Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality* (Chicago, 2006), 179-212.

Print reserve: Ruth Karras, "Knighthood, Compulsory Heterosexuality, and Sodomy," in Matthew Kuefler, ed., *The Boswell Thesis: Essays on Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality* (Chicago, 2006), 273-286.

**Analytical Essay Topic:** What are the strengths and weaknesses of the Boswell thesis? How might his thesis influence the study of history more broadly?

11. November 4: NO CLASS: Instructor at conference

12. November 11: Grand Social Theory revisited - Elias and Socio-History

Print reserve: Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, tr. Edmund Jephcott (1978), pp. TBA

Blackboard: Paul Hyams, "What did Henry III of England Think in Bed and in French about Kingship and Anger?" in *Anger's Past: the Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages*, ed. B. Rosenwein (Ithaca, 1998), pp. 92-124

Blackboard or print reserve: Richard Barton, "'Zealous Anger' and the Renegotiation of Aristocratic Relationships in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century France," in *Anger's Past*, ed. Rosenwein (1998), 153-170.

Journal Finder: John Gillingham, "From *Civilitas* to Civility: Codes of Manners in Medieval and Early Modern England," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, ser. 6, 12 (2002): 267-289.

**Analytical Essay Topic:** Using Elias' theory as our example, discuss the strengths and weaknesses of grand social theories.

13. November 18: The Linguistic Turn

Iggers, 118-140

E-reserves: Gabrielle Spiegel, "Introduction," in Spiegel, ed., *Practicing History: New Directions in Historical Writing after the Linguistic Turn* (Routledge, 2005), 1-31.

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

**Analytical Essay Topic:** Can Spiegel's book be described as a product of the Linguistic Turn (or post-structuralism)? How? Is it successful? Why?

14. December 2: Culture and Power: Bourdieu and Foucault

E-Book (Jackson Library): Mark Philp, "Michel Foucault," in Quentin Skinner, ed., *The Return of Grand Theory in the Human Sciences* (Cambridge, 1985), 69-81.

E-Reserves: Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: the birth of the Prison* (Fr. ed. 1975; trans. 1979), 3-31.

Blackboard: Joseph Rouse, "Power/Knowledge," in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, ed. Gary Gutting (Cambridge, 2005), 95-122.

Blackboard: Thomas M. Kavanagh, "Gambling, Chance and the Discourse of Power in *Ancien Régime* France," *Renaissance and Modern Studies* 37 (1994): 31-46.

E-reserves: Pierre Bourdieu, from *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Fr. edition 1972), in G.M. Spiegel, ed., *Practicing History: new Directions in Historical Writing after the Linguistic Turn*, (Routledge, 2005), 179-198.

E-reserves: Stephen D. White, "Proposing the Ordeal and Avoiding It: Strategy and Power in Western French Litigation, 1050-1150," in T.N. Bisson, ed., *Cultures of Power: Lordship, Status and Process in Twelfth-Century Europe* (Philadelphia, 1995), 89-123.

Iggers, 140-147

**Analytical Essay Topic:** choose one of the following:

1. Explain Foucault's concept of discourse and its utility (or not!) to the writing of history.
2. Bourdieu is known for his emphasis on practice (e.g., habitus). How does this concept affect the way some historians view (or might view) the study of the past?

## 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 altered 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?

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?