

HISTORY 705: COLLOQUIUM IN EUROPEAN HISTORY BEFORE 1800

Course Information:

History 705-01, Fall 2011 (CRN:81275)
Time: Wednesdays, 3:30-6:20 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. 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* 2nd 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. Nicholas Terpstra, *Lost Girls: Sex and Death in Renaissance Florence* (Baltimore, 2010)[978-0-8018-9499-2]

8. Gabrielle Spiegel, *Romancing the Past: the Rise of Vernacular Prose Historiography in Thirteenth-Century France* (Univ. of California Press, 1995). 978-0520089358

9. E.P. Thompson, *The Essential E.P. Thompson* (New Press, 2001) [978-1565846227]

10. Chris Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400-800* (Oxford 2005; paperback, Oxford, 2006) [978-0-19-9211296-5]

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 4-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 presentation that accomplishes two tasks: first, it briefly introduces the (main) author of the week, and second, it identifies the main methodological points to be discussed for that week. In your comments on the author you should be brief and should try to tell us 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 (e.g., main publications) 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). For the second part of your presentation you should move from the specific (the author) to the general points that you think we should discuss that week. This means having a good handle on the readings (possibly meeting with me beforehand) and summarizing so that you can both quickly summarize the main methodological points for the week and offer two or three questions that might serve as jumping-off points for our discussion.

As part of your presentation please prepare a one-page handout, half of which offers whatever useful information about the author you have found, and the other half of which summarizes the main methodological points/principles for the week and poses at least three questions for us to discuss.

The actual oral part of the presentation should not feature you reading your handout. Summarize your points succinctly and clearly, and do so in a confident, professional way (eye-contact, spontaneous [not reading notes], etc.). In past years these reports tended to focus more on the author's curriculum vitae; this year I am asking you to ensure that your presentation addresses the methodological content of the week.

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. 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, 4-5 pages each

GRADE BREAKDOWN:

Oral Presentations:	20%
General Participation	20%
Five Analytical Essays	60%

EXPLANATION OF 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.

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 24: Introduction to the Course
2. August 31: 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 7: The History of History: Historicism and Rankean Traditionalism

Georg F. Iggers, *Historiography in the 20th Century*, 1-19, 23-47

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

Blackboard: 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.

e-reserve requested: Heinrich Fichtenau, *The Carolingian Empire* (trans. 1957), pp. 104-143

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 14: The Challenge of the Social Sciences: the *Annales* movement

Iggers, 51-77

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-reserve or 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.

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

Journal Finder: Steven Justice, "Did the Middle Ages Believe in their Miracles?" *Representations* 103 (2008), 1-29

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 21: Marxist Tradition of Historiography

Iggers, 78-94

E.P. Thompson, *The Essential E.P. Thompson*, pp. vii-x, 3-184, 287-495.

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

6. September 28: Archaeology and Social Theory

Chris Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages*, introduction and parts I, II and IV (skip or skim part III).

Analytical Essay Topic: Choose one of the following:

1. In what ways has the incorporation of archeological evidence into historical narratives of the 'fall of Rome' changed the way historians understand that problem?
2. Wickham admits he has been labeled both a 'continuist' and a 'catastrophist'. Given his arguments, which label fits him better, and why?

7. October 5: 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?

8. October 12: 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'?

9. October 19: Anthropology and History

e-reserve requested: Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretative Theory of Culture," in Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York, Basic Books, 3-30.

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.

10. October 26: Women and Gender

Print or E-reserves: Joan Scott, "Women's History," in Peter Burke, *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, 2nd edition (2001), 42-66

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

Journal Finder: Dyan Elliott, "The Three Ages of Joan Scott," *American Historical Review* 113 (2008), 1390-1403.

Journal Finder: Joanne Meyerowitz, "A History of 'Gender'," *American Historical Review* 113 (2008), 1346-1356.

Journal Finder: Joan Scott, "Unanswered Questions," *American Historical Review* 113 (2008), 1422-1430.

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

11. November 2: Sexuality

Nicholas Terpstra, *Lost Girls: Sex and Death in Renaissance Florence* (all).

Analytical Essay Topic: TBA

12. November 9: Grand Social Theory revisited - Elias and Socio-History

Print reserve: Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, tr. Edmund Jephcott (1978), pp. 3-7, 42-67, 103-105, 117-125, 265-269, 443-524

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: 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 16: The Linguistic Turn

Iggers, 118-140

requested e-reserve: Gabrielle Spiegel, "Introduction," in Spiegel, *The Past as Text: the Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), xi-xxii.

Blackboard: Gabrielle Spiegel, "In the Mirror's Eye: the Writing of Medieval History in North America," in

Spiegel, *The Past as Text*, 57-80 and 230-238. [notes requested as e-reserve]

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

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. November 30: Culture and Power: Bourdieu and Foucault

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

Blackboard: Alan Megill, "The Reception of Foucault by Historians," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 48 (1987), 117-141

Blackboard: Kevin Jon Heller, "Power, Subjectification and Resistance in Foucault," *SubStance*, Vol. 25, No. 1, Issue 79 (1996), pp. 78-110

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

Blackboard: 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.

Blackboard: 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

Film Clips: Foucault vs. Chomsky (to be shown in class)

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 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?

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?