

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

Fall Semester 2012  
Mondays 3:30-6:20 PM  
MHRA 3207

Jodi Bilinkoff  
MHRA 2127  
Office Hours: MW 2:00-3:00 PM and by appointment

CONTACT INFORMATION:

History Department Office: (336)334-5992  
Home/Voice Mail: (919) 960-3636 (before 9:00 please)  
E-Mail: [jodi\\_bilinkoff@uncg.edu](mailto:jodi_bilinkoff@uncg.edu)

REQUIRED TEXTS:

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

For reference I have ordered Jonathan Zophy A Short History of Renaissance and Reformation Europe (4th. edition). You may, however, use any other Western Civilization or European history textbook that covers this time period.

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.

There are also several documents on e-reserves.

#### 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 several 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.

#### GUIDELINES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

This is a research seminar, which means that the main goal of the semester will be producing a research paper of 15-25 pages in length (minimum of 15 pages or 3,750 words). 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 oral participation in class, including discussion of the common readings and progress reports on research projects. 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!

Please make every effort to attend each class meeting, there is, after all, only one each week. If, because of illness or another legitimate excuse you must miss a class or arrive late, please contact me ahead of time so I don't have to hold up the class for the other students. I will check my messages and e-mail before each class meeting. Two unexcused absences will result in a student being dropped from the course.

Laptop computers are not permitted in the classroom except in documented cases of need. In those cases students are required to seat themselves at the back of the classroom so as not to distract others. Cellphones and other electronic equipment must be turned off and placed out of sight during class. We will take a break half-way through the seminar, which will allow students time to make a call or send text messages.

UNCG takes its Academic Integrity Policy very seriously, and so do I. We will review correct citation of sources and how to avoid plagiarism during the course of the semester. Students may also consult:

<http://studentconduct.uncg.edu/policy/academicintegrity>. Any work containing plagiarized material will receive a failing grade and the student will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for appropriate action.

**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 before the deadline I will not accept late assignments. See above for ways of contacting me.

#### LEARNING GOALS FOR HISTORY MAJORS: THINKING IN TIME

The UNCG Department of History hopes that its majors will be able to:

1. Analyze historical duration, succession, and change in terms of human agency and larger systems or structures in a wide variety of places and periods. [Historical Comprehension]
2. Use historical thinking to contextualize and analyze primary and secondary sources representing different points of view. [Historical Analysis]
3. Conduct original research by investigating and interpreting primary and secondary sources. [Historical Research]
4. Use evidence-based reasoning to interpret the past coherently while developing and presenting an original argument, orally and in writing. [Historical Interpretation]

COURSE SCHEDULE:

- Aug 20 Introduction to Course  
Constructing Identities, Writing about Identities
- Aug 27 The Self as a Work of Art: Benvenuto Cellini  
Autobiography, 1-11, 28-39, 45-50, 59-70, 76-83, 92-104,  
113-117, 141-152  
Zephy chs 4, 5
- Sep 3 LABOR DAY, NO CLASS
- Sep 10 Cellini, Autobiography  
161-174, 184-201, 215-230, 236-239, 250-274, 289-306,  
343-353, 389-402
- Sep 17 Personality, Politics, Religion: Thomas More and his  
Circle  
Thomas More and Margaret More Roper, excerpts from  
The Last Letters of Thomas More [on e-reserves]  
Zephy chs. 9, 14 [10]
- Sep 24 1-2 PAGE PROSPECTUS OF RESEARCH PAPER DUE  
(min. 250 words)
- ORAL PRESENTATIONS ON PLANNED RESEARCH PROJECTS
- Oct 1 Roper, The Life of Sir Thomas More  
7-125 [but notice large page borders, many  
illustrations!]
- Oct 8 Discovering Columbus  
The Four Voyages  
27-36, 82-92, 100-114, 115-122, 127-128, 169-185, 194-199  
Zephy ch. 8
- Oct 12 LAST DAY TO DROP CLASSES [NOTE: THIS IS A FRIDAY]
- Oct 15 FALL BREAK, NO CLASS

Oct 22 Columbus, The Four Voyages  
206-226, 241-253, 259-264, 265-276, 283-304, 318-320

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES DUE

Oct 29 Letters from Court and Country: Madame de Sévigné  
Selected Letters, 29-30, 55-59, 61-62, 67-72,  
75-81, 85-90, 110-113, 124-131, 140-141, 154-158  
Zephy chs.1, 18

Nov 5 Madame de Sévigné, Selected Letters  
173-175, 179-180, 182, 188-189, 216-218, 228-31,  
233-238, 257, 264-265, 271-272, 289-291, 298-300,  
308-311, 311-314, 320

DETAILED OUTLINES DUE  
PEER REVIEWERS ASSIGNED

Nov 12 NO CLASS MEETING, STUDENTS WORK ON DRAFTS  
DR. BILINKOFF AVAILABLE FOR CONSULTATION

Nov 16 TWO COPIES OF DRAFTS DUE, ONE TO DR. BILINKOFF,  
ONE TO YOUR PEER REVIEWER, BY 12:00 NOON.  
NOTE THAT THIS IS A FRIDAY. SEND YOUR DRAFTS BY  
E-MAIL ATTACHMENT IN MICROSOFT WORD OR AS A PDF FILE.

Nov 19 DISCUSSION OF DRAFTS  
ASSESSMENT OF PEER REVIEWS  
SIGN UP FOR INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS

Nov 26 NO CLASS MEETING, STUDENTS REVISE DRAFTS  
INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS Group I

Dec 3 NO CLASS MEETING, STUDENTS REVISE DRAFTS  
INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS Group II

Dec 7 FINAL PAPERS DUE IN ONE OF DR. BILINKOFF'S MAILBOXES,  
IN HISTORY DEPARTMENT OFFICE, MHRA 2118A OR NEXT TO HER  
OFFICE, 2127 MHRA BY 2:00 PM. NOTE: THIS IS A FRIDAY.  
YOU MAY HAND IN YOUR PAPER EARLIER IF YOU WISH.

