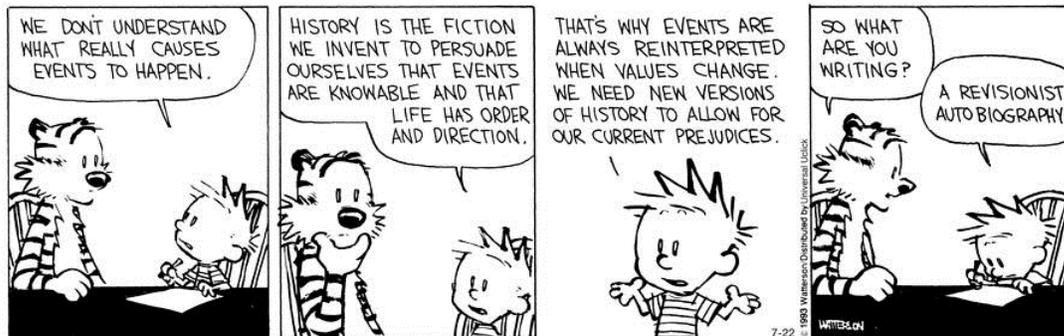


Fall 2013
MHRA 1206
M 6:30-9:20

Dr. Mark Elliott
Office: MHRA 2125
Office Hours:
TUES 2:00-3:00
or by appointment
me Elliot@uncg.edu

HIS 510: HISTORIOGRAPHY



This course examines the evolution of history writing since the first generation of professional historians in the late 19th century. Its purpose is to introduce students to the major philosophical and methodological trends that have dominated the academic field of history since its establishment. Focusing especially on the contributions of scholars over the past fifty years, readings will include influential and groundbreaking works of theory, methodology, and interpretations of the past covering such topics as: “progressive” and “consensus” history; Marxism; social history; “radical” history; the new cultural history; postmodernism; postcolonialism; women’s and gender history; transnational history; cosmopolitanism; environmental history; public history. The selection of topics and readings in this course will change from semester to semester and do not represent *all* of the important methodologies/trends in the field of history.

As an academic endeavor, history has never enjoyed an agreed-upon method or philosophy. What is the nature and purpose of historical research? Even on this most basic of epistemological questions, historians differ in their outlook. Some historians would argue that historians should strive to analyze evidence with clinical objectivity in an effort to correct previous misrepresentations and establish historical truths. Others would insist that establishing truth is less important than the historian’s interpretations of the facts, since the questions that we ask of history are ultimately a reflection of our present values. There are historians from both of these viewpoints who explicitly seek knowledge about the past that is “usable” for the present. Yet others consider “presentism” a distorting lens to be strictly avoided, and would urge historians to reject the temptation to draw lessons or parallels to the present.

Traditionally, historians construct arguments about historical causation, and engage in elaborate debates about *why* events occurred as they did. Yet, in recent

decades, many historians have come to consider such efforts fruitless, insisting that historians ought to restrict their endeavors to providing “thick descriptions” of cultures and societies at given moments in time as the best way to understand the past. With these philosophical debates in mind, students will be encouraged to reach their own conclusions about the nature and purpose of historical research while familiarizing themselves with the major proponents of these various viewpoints.

This is a reading-intensive course. Students must be prepared to read complex works and to answer difficult questions about them. The course is designed for those who are considering entering the profession of history. For undergraduates, only upper-level students who are considering graduate study are recommended for this course. For graduate students, this course is recommended for any Master’s or PhD student interested in expanding their “historical literacy” of their academic field by gaining deeper knowledge of the people and ideas that have profoundly shaped the historical profession and its scholarship.

LEARNING GOALS:

--Students will gain familiarity with major thinkers and concepts in the academic field of history.

--Students will improve their ability to compare competing schools of thought, and to frame creative, analytical questions about them.

--Students will improve their ability to analyze and interpret secondary sources, and to understand historical writing as a genre.

--Students will improve their ability to make historical arguments, and to assess those made by others, and to express themselves clearly orally and in writing.

--Students will develop their skills in making both formal and informal presentations to a group.

COURSE POLICIES:

Attendance:

A student who is not present at the beginning of class will be marked “absent.” More than one absence will lower your final grade. Missing a total of 4 or more classes (one-third of the semester) will result in an automatic “F” for the course. No exceptions. Please use your one unpenalized absence wisely, reserving it for an emergency or serious sickness. Students are responsible for completing on time all work assigned (or due) on days in which they are absent.

Participation:

You are expected to complete each week’s reading before class so that you can participate constructively in class discussion. You must be attentive and engaged during class. Sleeping in class or leaving class early without permission will

cause you to be given a zero for participation that day. Cell phones and laptops should be turned off and stored away. No talking, twittering, texting, e-mailing or using laptops during class.

Presentations:

Graduate students will make 3 informal presentations [worth 35 points each] and undergraduate students will make 2 informal presentations to the class [worth 50 points each]. The details of the presentation assignments will be distributed in class. Students will provide one-page handouts summarizing their presentations for the class (included as part of the presentation grade).

Written Work:

There will be two papers over the course of the semester. The first paper will be due **October 16** and the second paper will be due **November 22**. There will be an in-class final exam.

Academic Integrity Policy:

All work submitted in your name must be your own original work for this class with proper citation or credit given to all sources. All papers will be turned in using the “Safe Assignment” function on Blackboard which automatically scans your paper for plagiarism. Each student should be familiar with the Academic Integrity Policy, and the penalties for plagiarism. Refer to this address on the UNCG website for more details:

<http://studentconduct.uncg.edu/>

Grading Breakdown:

- 100 Points: Participation in class discussion (You can earn up to 10 points per class. We meet 14 times. No constructive contributions to discussion = 0 points. Minimal participation = 5-6 points. Strong participation = 7-8 points. Outstanding participation = 9-10 points).
- 100 Points: Class Presentations. Undergrads will do 2 presentations worth 50 point each. Graduate students will do 3 presentations worth 35 points each.
- 100 Points: First Paper
- 100 Points: Second Paper
- 100 Points: Final Exam.

Final Grade Scale:

A 465-500; **A-** 450-464; **B+** 435-449; **B** 415-434; **B-** 400-414;
C+ 385-399; **C** 365-384; **C-** 350-364; **D+** 335-349; **D** 315-334; **D-**
300-314; **F** 299 or less.

REQUIRED READING (available at UNCG's Bookstore):

Readings:

The books listed below are available for purchase at the bookstore. Other readings and films can be accessed through the class blackboard site under the "Course Documents" heading.

Required Books:

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Spread of Nationalism*

Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*

Bender, Thomas. *A Nation Among Nations*

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*

Week 1. INTRODUCTION

Aug. 19 Class Introduction

Reading: E.H. Carr, "What is History?" chapters 1, 4, and 6.

Week 2. CLASSIC PERSPECTIVES ON THE PAST

Aug. 26 **Reading:** Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Frontier in American History."

Selection from Hofstadter, *The American Political Tradition*
Murphy, "Perry Miller and American Studies"*

*Graduate Students only

Week 3. CLASS CANCELLED—EXTRA READING TIME!

Sept. 2 **LABOR DAY (NO CLASS)**

Week 4. MARXIST PERSPECTIVES ON HISTORY

Sept. 9 **Reading:** E.P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the 18th Century."

Du Bois from *Black Reconstruction*

Genovese from *Roll, Jordan Roll*.

Yadav, "E.P. Thompson, Scholar, Polemicist, Pacifist"*

*Graduate Students only

Week 5. HISTORY FROM THE "BOTTOM UP"

Sept. 16 Reading: Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States*, Chapter 7, 12-13, 16, 20.
Howard Zinn, "What is Radical History?"
Sam Wineberg, "Undue Certainty"
Walter Johnson, "On Agency."*

*Graduate Students only

Week 6. ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE "NEW" CULTURAL HISTORY

Sept. 23 Reading: From Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre*
Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward An Interpretative Theory of Culture."

Week 7. POSTMODERNISM

Sept. 30 Reading: Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 1-228. *

*Graduate Students read 1-325.

Week 8. GENDER HISTORY

Oct. 7 Reading: Joan W. Scott, "Gender as a Useful Category of Analysis"
Gail Bederman from *Manliness and Civilization*
Journal of American History Roundtable

Week 9. NO CLASS—EXTRA TIME TO WRITE PAPER

Oct. 14 FALL BREAK

Oct. 16 1st Paper Due by 5:00 pm. Upload to Blackboard.

Week 10. POST-COLONIALISM

Oct. 21 Reading: From Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*

From Said, *Orientalism*. Pages TBA

Week 11. CROSSING CULTURES

Oct. 28 Reading: Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism*, all.

Week 12. WHAT IS A NATION?

Nov. 4 **Reading:** Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*

Week 13. TRANSNATIONAL HISTORY

Nov. 11 **Reading:** Ian Tyrell, “American Exceptionalism in an Age of
International History.”
Bender, *A Nation Among Nations*, pages TBA

Week 14. ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY

Nov. 18 **Reading:** Cronon from *Nature’s Metropolis*
Journal of American History Roundtable on
Environmental History

Nov. 22 **2nd Paper Due by 5:00 pm. Upload to Blackboard.**

Week 15 . THE FUTURE OF HISTORY

Nov. 25 **Reading:** William Cronon, “Storytelling.”
From Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream*
Thomas Haskell from *Objectivity is Not Neutrality*

Week 16 . WRAP-UP

Dec. 2 **Informal Presentations**

Week 17. FINAL EXAM

Dec. 9 **6:30-9:30**