

HIS 510-01: Historiography

Fall 2020

Seminar, 3 credit hours

Time: Tuesdays 2:00-4:50pm

Format: Online (via Zoom)

Instructor Information:

Dr. Teresa Walch

Email: tmwalch@uncg.edu

Office Hours: via Zoom on Wednesdays 1:00-3:00pm, and by appointment

Course Description

What is history? How has the profession changed over the past century? How are the stories we tell shaped by the questions we ask, the sources we select, and the wider agendas we set? Contrary to a popular conception that history is merely a narration of an objective past “as it really was,” the study of history is a complex endeavor that involves interpretation. Historiography—the study of *history* as an academic discipline—reveals that the profession’s agendas and approaches have shifted dramatically over time.

In this course, we will explore major theoretical and methodological approaches to history in the modern era. We will begin with a broad overview of the historical profession and then continue by analyzing a particular concept or historiographical approach each week. We will also consider how these approaches informed, built upon, or transformed one another. The readings consist of classical texts by major thinkers as well as practical historiographical applications of their theoretical ideas. One goal of the seminar is to assess the ongoing relevance of these approaches for historians in the present and in the future (that includes you!).

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. distinguish between different methodological and theoretical approaches to history.
2. assess how topic and primary source selections shape the narratives crafted by historians.
3. explain how, why, and when approaches to history have evolved over the past century.
4. develop and strengthen their scholarly profiles by identifying which journals, networks, and listservs are relevant for their own fields.
5. evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of individual approaches to history and critique the practical application of them in journal articles and monographs.
6. synthesize complex arguments and draw connections between texts and bodies of thought via oral presentations and written assignments.

Required Books

Kate Brown, *Manual for Survival: A Chernobyl Guide to the Future* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2019).

Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan, 2nd ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1995). (available as a [single-user e-book](#) via Jackson Library)

Lynn Hunt, *History: Why It Matters* (Medford: Polity Press, 2018).

Nancy H. Kwak, *A World of Homeowners: American Power and the Politics of Housing Aid* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016). (available as an [unlimited-user e-book](#) via Jackson Library)

Sarah Maza, *Thinking about History* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2017).

Stephanie E. Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007). (available as an [unlimited-user e-book](#) via Jackson Library)

Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1995. (20th anniversary edition, 2015). (available as a [single-user e-book](#) via Jackson Library)

** You may purchase all required books via the [UNCG bookstore](#), online, or elsewhere. Copies of all required books are available via Jackson Library, either as an e-book (indicated above) or on reserve as a hard copy. All other required readings will be made available on Canvas, linked or as an e-reserve. Prior to accessing the e-reserves, you will need to activate your UNCG Box accounts by visiting box.uncg.edu and logging in with your UNCG username and password.

Assignments & Grading

Participation in Class Discussions (SLOs 1, 2, 3 & 5) – This is a small, reading intensive seminar. Attendance and active participation are crucial. As your instructor, I have endeavored to amass an interesting, and coherent, set of readings. But in this course, I will chiefly be your guide through the historical debates and topics at-hand. Via written assignments and oral presentations, you will have the chance to engage with pressing debates within the historical discipline and to hone your own scholarly voice.

Written Responses (SLOs 1, 2, 3, 5 & 6) – Each week (beginning in Week 2), you will write a 600-word response that reflects a deeper engagement with the weekly readings. Your response should not be a summary of the texts but rather should grapple with the material and reflect a critical analysis on your part. You might choose to identify common threads or contradictions between the various readings, for example. You might evaluate some of the strengths and weaknesses of the methodological approaches at-hand and critique their practical applications in the week's readings. You should conclude your response by posing *two* open-ended discussion questions that emerge from the readings and that reflect a deep engagement with the issues raised in the readings. You will post these responses on Canvas each week by Monday @ 8:00 pm.

Oral Presentations (two) (SLOs 1, 2, 3, 5 & 6) – On your two assigned presentation days, you will begin our discussion of the weekly readings with an approx. 15-minute presentation in which you:

- summarize the authors' main questions & arguments,
- identify their main historiographical and/or methodological interventions,
- draw connections between the assigned readings and the weekly topic,
- provide any critiques of your own of the readings,
- pose 2-3 questions to the class for discussion.

In addition, for the days we read monographs, you will present a short biography of the author. You will also collect reviews of the book and summarize the main points of praise and critique that other scholars have given for the book.

Scholarly Profile Assignment (SLO 4) – For this assignment, you have the opportunity to build and expand your own scholarly profile. HIS 510 covers a broad swath of territory relevant for all historians. But the necessary breadth means that we need to sacrifice depth in some areas that might be of particular interest to you as historians. Thus, this assignment allows you to start pursuing some of those avenues that interest you most. For this assignment, you will be asked to identify several things:

1. scholarly journals relevant to your field of interest,
2. networks relevant to your field (including scholarly associations, societies, listservs, etc.),
3. grants and fellowships available to people in your field of interest,
4. major historians working in your field,
5. important archives for historians working in your field,
6. a major debate that is currently raging (or has recently reshaped) your field,
7. professional opportunities (internships, further training, professions, etc.) available to people with training in your field.

You will compile this information in a Word document or as a PowerPoint, upload it to Canvas, and briefly present your findings to the class in Week 7, 8, or 9 (we will assign dates in Week 1).

Final Historiographic Essay (SLOs 3, 5 & 6) – For the final assignment, you will write a historiographic essay that builds upon one of the weekly themes/methodological approaches that interests you most. It may (but does not need to) pertain to the major debate in your field that you identify in the “Scholarly Profile Assignment.” You will select 4-5 books and write a review essay (12-15 pages) that examines and critiques the current trends in your selected thematic/methodological approach. You may discuss the selection of these books with me, but I also encourage you to consult with your advisors in your field.

Your final grade will be assessed as such*:

- 100 Points – Participation in Class Discussions (14 classes, worth up to 8 points each)
 - 0 points: no constructive contributions to discussion
 - 3-4 points: minimal participation
 - 5-6 points: strong participation
 - 7-8 points: outstanding participation
- 100 Points – Written Weekly Responses (13 responses, worth up to 8 points each)
- 100 Points – Oral Presentations (2 presentations, worth up to 50 points each)
- 50 Points – Building Scholarly Profile Assignment
- 150 Points – Final Historiographic Essay

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.

* Grade scale borrowed and modified from Dr. Mark Elliott.

Assignment Submission and Format:

You will submit all assignments in this course electronically on Canvas as a text entry or as a Word document. No assignments will be accepted either by email or on paper.

Attendance Policy

Regular attendance and participation in the seminar is mandatory. Please sign into our Zoom class on time each week. Consistent tardiness will lower your grade. Students who miss 4 classes will automatically fail the course. If you need to miss class, you have one automatic excused absence. In this case, please notify me *ahead* of time. Any absence beyond that can lower your final grade. If other issues arise throughout the semester that will affect your ability to attend class, please be in contact with me.

Communication

I am teaching this course from abroad, and I am seven hours ahead of North Carolina time. If it is 12:00pm in Greensboro, it's 7:00pm for me. This means that I may respond to your emails at some strange hours according to NC time. I will respond to emails sent to me Monday-Thursday within 24 hours. I will respond to emails received Friday-Sunday the following Monday. In general, if you have urgent questions, I encourage you to post your questions to the "General Discussion Board" on Canvas to see if one of your classmates can answer your question.

Technical Support:

Students with technical issues with the course and email should contact [6-TECH](#) for support either by email (6tech@uncg.edu), phone (336-256-8324), or chat ([6TECH Help](#)). Please also make me aware of the issue and let me know if there will be any delays in resolving the issue.

COVID-19 Spartan Shield Video

Though it is not directly relevant for HIS 510 since we are meeting online, if you will be on campus this semester, it is important to remember that UNCG Chancellor Frank Gilliam has challenged us to create a Culture of Care at UNCG where we all wear face coverings and social distance, less to protect ourselves but rather more to protect everyone around us. It shows that you care about the well-being of everyone around you. UNCG has created this video featuring the student body presidents to better explain how and why this is so important. Please watch this video before the first day of classes:

<https://youtu.be/Mb58551qxEk>

Health and Wellness Statement

Health and well-being impact learning and academic success. Throughout your time in the university, you may experience a range of concerns that can cause barriers to your academic success. These might include illnesses, strained relationships, anxiety, high levels of stress, alcohol or drug problems, feeling down, or loss of motivation. Student Health Services and The Counseling Center can help with these or other issues you may experience. You can learn about the free, confidential mental health services available on campus by calling [336-334-5874](tel:336-334-5874), visiting the website at <https://shs.uncg.edu/> or visiting the Anna M. Gove Student Health Center at 107 Gray Drive. For undergraduate or graduate students in recovery from alcohol and other drug addiction, The Spartan Recovery Program (SRP) offers recovery support services. You can learn more about recovery and recovery support services by visiting <https://shs.uncg.edu/srp> or reaching out to recovery@uncg.edu.

Academic Integrity

All the work you submit in this course must be your own. You are expected to properly cite and acknowledge any material that you quote, paraphrase, or summarize. Each student is required to sign UNCG's Academic Integrity Policy on all major work submitted for the course. If you have any questions, I encourage you to visit UNCG's webpages on [plagiarism](#) and [academic integrity](#).

Accommodations

UNCG seeks to comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students requesting accommodations based on a disability must be registered with the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) in 215 Elliott University Center, 334-5440, oars.uncg.edu.

Religious Holidays:

It is expected that instructors will make reasonable accommodations for students who have conflicts due to religious obligations. Please make arrangements with me in advance of any such scenario. For more information on UNCG's Religious Obligations policy, visit: [UNCG's Religious Obligations Policy](#).

Elasticity Statement:

If the need arises, there may be adjustments to the syllabus and calendar. In such cases, I will notify you via email with an updated syllabus and calendar within a reasonable timeframe to allow you to adjust as needed.

1. Introduction & Overview (August 18)

Sarah Maza, *Thinking about History* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2017).

Geoff Eley "Becoming a Historian: A Personal Preface," in *A Crooked Line: From Cultural History to the History of Society* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2005), 1-12.

2. On Objectivity, Selections, and Vantage Points (August 25)

Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1995. (20th anniversary edition, 2015)

Peter Novick, "Introduction," *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988), 1-17. (e-reserve)

Thomas Haskell, "Objectivity is not Neutrality: Rhetoric vs. Practice in Peter Novick's *That Noble Dream*," *History and Theory* 29, no. 2 (1990): 129-157.

3. Classic & Modern Approaches (September 1)

Selections from Jeremy Popkin, *From Herodotus to H-Net: The Story of Historiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). (e-reserve)

Herodotus, *The Histories*, trans. Robin Waterfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), ix-xli, 3-94. (e-reserve)

Leopold von Ranke, "On the Character of Historical Science," in *The Theory and Practice of History*, ed. Georg G. Iggers (New York: Routledge, 2011), 8-16. (e-reserve)

H. R. Trevor-Roper, "Fernand Braudel, the Annales, and the Mediterranean," *The Journal of Modern History* 44, no. 4 (1972): 468-479.

4. Marxism (September 8)

Karl Marx, "Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert Tucker (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1978), 3-6. (e-reserve)

Karl Marx, "The German Ideology," Part 1, in *ibid.*, 146-200. (e-reserve)

Karl Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon," in *ibid.*, 594-617. (e-reserve)

E. P. Thompson, "Preface" to *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Open Road Media, 2016), 10-14.

E. P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," *Past & Present* 38 (1967): 56-97.

Eric J. Hobsbawm, "Marx and History," *New Left Review* 143 (1984): 39-50.

Geoff Eley "Optimism," in *A Crooked Line: From Cultural History to the History of Society* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2005), 13-60.

5. Social History: History "From Below" (September 15)

Stephanie E. Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).

Walter Johnson, "On Agency," *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 1 (2003): 113-124.

Matthew B. Karush and Peter N. Stearns, "Five Decades of Social History: An Interview with Peter Stearns," *Journal of Social History* 51, no. 3 (2018): 488-499.

Myriam Cottias and Audra A. Diptée, "The Future of Slavery: Social History as Radical History," *Histoire sociale/Social History* 53, no. 107 (2020): 9-16.

6. Cultural History (September 22)

Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture" in idem., *The Interpretation of Culture: Selected Essays* (New York, 1973), 3-30.

Victoria E. Bonnell and Lynn Hunt, "Introduction," in *Beyond the Cultural Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 1-32.

Robert Darnton, "Workers Revolt. The Great Cat Massacre of the Rue Saint-Severin," in idem., *The Great Cat Massacre and other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Basic Books, 1984), 75-104.

A. Roger Ekirch, "Sleep We Have Lost: Pre-Industrial Slumber in the British Isles," *American Historical Review* 106, no. 2 (2001): 343-386.

7. Microhistory & *Alltagsgeschichte* (History of Everyday Life) (September 29)

Carlo Ginzburg, "Microhistory: Two or Three Things That I Know about It," *Critical Inquiry* 20, no. 1 (1993): 10-35.

Alf Lüdtke, "Introduction: What Is the History of Everyday Life and Who Are Its practitioners?," in *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life*, ed. Alf Lüdtke, trans. William Timpler (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 3-40.

Andrew Stuart Bergerson, "Hildesheim in an Age of Pestilence," in *The Work of Memory: New Directions in the Study of German Society and Culture*, ed. Alon Confino and Peter Fritzsche (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 107-135. (e-reserve)

Paul Steege, Andrew Stuart Bergerson, Maureen Healy, and Pamela E. Swett, "The History of Everyday Life: A Second Chapter," in *The Journal of Modern History* 80, no 2 (June 2008): 358-378.

8. Postmodernism and Power (October 6)

Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan, 2nd ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 3-228.

Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), 29-42, 45-49, 91-110. (e-reserve)

David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1989), 1-9, 39-65. (e-reserve)

Elijah Anderson, "'The White Space'," *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 1, no. 1 (2015): 10-21.

9. Postcolonialism (October 13)

Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Introduction" and "Chapter 1: Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History," in *Provincializing Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, 3-23, 27-46.

Marshall Sahlins, "Captain James Cook; or, the Dying Good" in idem., *Islands of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 104-35. (e-reserve)

Marshall Sahlins, *How "Natives" Think: About Captain Cook, For Example* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 17-84.

Gananath Obeyesekere, *The Apotheosis of Captain Cook: European Mythmaking in the Pacific* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), xiii-xv, 3-22, 49-73, 102-119.

10. Gender & Sexuality (October 20)

Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (1986): 1053-75.

Laura Lee Downs, "If 'Woman' is Just an Empty Category, Then Why Am I Afraid to Walk Alone at Night? Identity Politics Meets the Postmodern Subject," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 35, no. 2 (1993): 414-37.

– Joan Scott, "The Tip of the Volcano," *ibid.*, 438-44

– Laura Lee Downs, "Reply to Joan Scott," *ibid.*, 444-51

Joanne Meyerowitz, "A History of 'Gender,'" *American Historical Review* 113, no. 5 (2008): 1346-1356.

Regina Kunzel, "The Power of Queer History," *American Historical Review* 123, no. 5 (2018): 1560–1582. [Review Essay]

11. Material & Visual Culture (October 27)

Leora Auslander, "Beyond Words," *American Historical Review* 110, no. 4 (2005): 1014-1045.

Sarah Jones Weicksel, "'Peeled' Bodies, Pillaged Homes: Looting and Material Culture in the American Civil War Era," in *Objects of War: The Material Culture of Conflict and Displacement*, ed. Leora Auslander and Tara Zahra (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018), 111-138.

Annelie Ramsbrock, "The 'Face of War' in Weimar Visual Culture," in *The Ethics of Seeing: Photography and Twentieth-Century German History*, ed. Jennifer Evans, Paul Betts, and Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2019), 57-78.

Neil MacGregor's BBC Radio 4 program: "A History of the World in 100 Objects"

- please select **two** objects from the program, listen to the associated podcast episodes (approx. 15 minutes each) and prepare to present them briefly to the class

12. World, Global, and Transnational Histories (November 3)

Nancy H. Kwak, *A World of Homeowners: American Power and the Politics of Housing Aid* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

Paul A. Kramer, "Power and Connection: Imperial Histories of the United States in the World," *The American Historical Review* 116, no. 5 (2011): 1348-1391. [Review Essay]

Akira Iriye, "The Rise of Global and Transnational History," in *Global and Transnational History: The Past, Present, and Future* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 1-18.

13. Environmental History (November 10)

Kate Brown, *Manual for Survival: A Chernobyl Guide to the Future* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2019).

William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness: Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature," *Environmental History* 1.1 (1996), 7-28.

Lisa M. Brady, "Has Environmental History Lost Its Way?" *Process: A Blog for American History*, Organization of American Historians, December 15, 2015, <http://www.processhistory.org/has-environmental-history-lost-its-way/> .

14. Historians, Memory, and The Public (November 17)

Lynn Hunt, *History: Why It Matters* (Medford: Polity Press, 2018).

Peter Burke, "History as Social Memory," in *Varieties of Cultural History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), 43-59. (e-reserve)

William Cronon, "Storytelling," *The American Historical Review* 118, no. 1 (2013): 1-19.

Matthew Gabriele, "Why Historians Are Like Tax Collectors," *Forbes*, March 24, 2019.