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


** 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, 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)

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

3. Classic & Modern Approaches (September 1)

4. Marxism (September 8)
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)


5. Social History: History “From Below” (September 15)


6. Cultural History (September 22)


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


8. Postmodernism and Power (October 6)


9. Postcolonialism (October 13)


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


10. Gender & Sexuality (October 20)


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

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


11. Material & Visual Culture (October 27)


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)

13. Environmental History (November 10)

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