

**HISTORY 705:
COLLOQUIUM IN EUROPEAN HISTORY BEFORE 1800**



Course Information:

History 705-01, Fall 2021 (CRN: 81873). Time: Tuesdays 2:00-4:50 PM. Room: 2208 MHRA

Instructor Information:

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 11-12, Thursdays 11-1, and by appointment

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 historiography produced by historians concerning the 1500 years (or so) leading up to the French Revolution. Obviously we cannot do justice to every period and/or every topic, and our approach must inevitably be somewhat fragmentary. Each week is thus devoted to a 'large theme' in European history (crusade, saints, lordship, reformation, renaissance, etc.), with an emphasis on subjects which have proven to be of recent scholarly interest. For each of these themes, we will examine a main historiographical reading, typically a fairly recent book by an important modern historian, alongside one or two

shorter readings designed to provide context. Whenever possible I have tried to arrange the readings to show either a debate/dispute or at least a set of alternate approaches to the same theme.

Our goals will be several. First, we are interested in identifying the theme or problem for the week. We will then wish to identify and evaluate the arguments of the main readings insofar as they pertain to that topic. Finally, we will also – when appropriate – consider how the readings reflect broader historiographical trends and methods.

As a graduate reading seminar, you will be tasked to read a lot of pages each week. 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. As our task will be to evaluate the success of this argument, you need to try to avoid getting bogged down in the minutiae of the details offered by each author. Of course it's important to pay attention to some of the evidence, both for its inherent interest and for its contribution(s) to the argument, but we cannot hope to become expert in the local historiographies of such a vast field. So, on the whole, you should 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 essence, you will be learning to “gut” or “fillet” a book for its ‘meat’ or significance. This may sound inelegant, and it is, but learning to do so is an important skill to develop during your graduate education. You should thus practice reading rapidly (but carefully), 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

The following are all available at the UNCG Bookstore. You may also be able to find used copies online. I've also placed all the books that UNCG holds in hard copy on reserve; you can check them out for 2 hours at a time (with overnight privileges too) at the Circulation Desk.

1. Robin Fleming, *Britain after Rome: the Fall and Rise* (Penguin, 2011). ISBN: 9780140148237. (\$15) [no e-book]
2. Jamie Kreiner, *Legions of Pigs in the Early Medieval West* (Yale UP, 2020). ISBN: 978-0300246292. \$26 [UNCG has e-book]
3. Jay Rubenstein, *Nebuchadnezzar's Dream: the Crusades, Apocalyptic Prophecy, and the End of History* (Oxford UP, 2019). ISBN: 978-0190274207. (\$31) [UNCG has e-book]
4. Fredric Cheyette, *Ermengard of Narbonne and the World of the Troubadours* (Cornell 2001) (\$25). ISBN: 978-0801439520. \$36 [UNCG has ebook]
5. M.T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record, England 1066-1307*, 3rd edition (Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) ISBN: 9781405157919 (\$35) [UNCG has ebook]
6. Geraldine Heng, *The Invention of Race in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge University Press, 2018). (\$45) ISBN: 978-1108422789 (\$45) [UNCG has ebook]
7. Bruce M.S. Campbell, *The Great Transition: Climate, Disease and Society in the Late-Medieval World* (Cambridge UP, 2016). 485 pp. 978-0521144438. \$27 [UNCG has ebook]
8. Guido Ruggiero, *Machiavelli in Love: Sex, Self, and Society in the Italian Renaissance* (Johns Hopkins UP, 2007), 300 pp., 978-0801885167. \$9.50 hardcover, \$30 pb [UNCG has e-book]
9. Andrew Pettegree, *Brand Luther: 1517, Printing, and the Making of the Reformation* (Penguin, 2015). ISBN: 9781594204968 (\$19) [no e-book]

10. Nicholas Terpstra, *Religious Refugees in the Early Modern World: An Alternative History of the Reformation* (Cambridge UP, 2015). 353 pp. 978-1107652415. \$27 [UNCG has e-book]
11. Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Harvard UP, 1983). ISBN: 978-0674766914. \$29 [no e-book]
12. Gillian Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs: France and Slavery in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Stanford UP, 2013). 408 pp. 978-0804792097. \$30 [UNCG has e-book]
13. Margaret Jacob, *The Secular Enlightenment* (Princeton, 2019). ISBN: 978-0691161327. \$24. [UNCG has ebook]
14. Robert Darnton, *The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France* (Norton, 1996). ISBN: 9780393314427 (\$25) [no e-book]

Other Required Readings:

Although the assigned books comprise the major reading for the semester, we will also complement them with short excerpts from other books and articles by authors who have written on the same subject. Typically these other readings will be found in pdf form on Canvas; sometimes you will need to acquire them yourselves through UNCG's library.

Student Learning Outcomes

A student who successfully completes this course will be able to:

1. Critically evaluate important works of modern scholarship both orally and in writing
2. Conduct evidence-based discussions of scholarship in a professional, collegial manner
3. Locate, assess, and communicate reviews and other subjective analyses of the assigned readings
4. Identify and analyze a range of methodological approaches to historical writing

Teaching Methods and Course Requirements

A. Teaching Methods:

The course is taught as a seminar in which all participants critically analyze joint readings. The instructor takes a semi-socratic approach, suggesting (when needed) topics and questions for discussion, and filling in historiographical background when necessary. The point of discussion is to assess the arguments of the assigned readings, particularly with an eye towards their contribution to debates on signal themes of medieval and early modern historiography. Students will make regular presentations on cognate matters of historiographical concern, and will help to lead discussion.

B. Requirements

Requirement	Percentage of Course Grade
Oral Presentation	15%
General Participation	15%
Five Analytical Essays	50%
Final Project	20%

1. Oral Presentation: (15%) (Student Learning Outcomes 1, 3)

Each week one of you will open our discussion with a brief (10 minute) presentation that accomplishes the following three tasks:

1. Offer your (informed) opinion about what you found the argument of the main book to

be, whether or not you found it to be persuasive, and why or why not you found it persuasive

2. Offer a mini-biography of the author (as much as can be gleaned), paying special attention to the author's historiographical alignments.
3. Explain the scholarly reception of the main work for the week (as evidenced by reviews).
4. Suggest three lines of inquiry to be pursued in the subsequent discussion

Along with your presentation you should distribute a 1-page handout with whatever relevant points about the book, author, and/or historiographical 'problem du jour' that you wish to share with us (some biographical details, potentially relevant quotations, your questions, etc.).

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 speech [i.e., not reading notes], etc.).

2. General Participation (15%) (Student Learning Outcomes 1, 2, 6)

As a graduate seminar, the course demands participation from all students. I recognize that much of the material may be unfamiliar to some of you; despite this reasonable point, I still expect students to take an active and frequent part in the discussion. If you find that you are not saying almost anything (one interjection per meeting, say), you are likely to receive a C for this part of the course grade. Grades in the A and B range are only awarded to students who speak regularly and participate in discussion by considering and responding to the comments of others (professor and students). I am less concerned with **what** you say than in seeing you make a decent effort to orally analyze the reading and offer some sort of reasoned explanation for your analysis. (Okay, I *am* also interested in *what* you say, but still)

3. Analytical Essays: (50% total, 10% each) (Student Learning Outcomes: 1, 6)

Students must complete five (5) short analytical essays. Each should be 3-4 pages long (1000-1200 words), typed, with 1" margins, and with appropriate citations. Responses are due the week following discussion (i.e., essays related to the readings for week 3 are due in week 4). You have substantial freedom in deciding when you write your essays. All students must write on the subject of EITHER week 2 (Fleming) OR week 3 (Kreiner); you also must complete at least one more short essay in September. When you choose to write the other three essays is up to you. Some students like to churn them out swiftly, others like to pick and choose according to their schedules, their interests, or other issues.

You also have choice in what you choose to write about for a given topic. While I have written a couple of essay prompts for each book/topic, you are also ALWAYS welcome to take the 'Open Option'. In the Open Option, you answer an analytical question of your own devising (in case you want to write about something other than the prompt[s] I have written). For the Open Option, you should identify a problem, issue, or major point of significance raised by the reading and discuss it, using evidence from the readings to support your position. I don't want to see a summary. What I do want to see is you making an argument about the reading, and supporting it with evidence. That argument can come in several forms: you can support, modify or reject the author's argument; you might explain the significance of the main work to the historiography of the main theme; you might take sides in a debate; or you might devise an argument of your own (yay!).

4. Final Essay/Project

Again, I am going to give you a choice for your final project in the course. You can EITHER write a 2000- 2500-word essay (~7-8-pages) historiographical essay on the subject of one of the topics we have already read for the semester (you'll need to locate, read, and incorporate 3-5 other works on this topic as well), OR you can prepare a syllabus for an upper-level undergraduate course on a topic of their choosing from pre-Modern European history. The syllabus project will require that you produce a 500-word justificatory introduction to the course, a list of required readings, a weekly schedule of topics, and an annotated bibliography you have consulted (or might consult) in preparation to teaching said course. I'll distribute a handout with more information during the semester. Note I am more than happy (excited, even!) to consult you concerning your topic, whether historiographical essay or course syllabus, and to brainstorm with you about ideas and bibliography.

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. Plagiarism is intolerable all the time, but there is absolutely no excuse for it at the graduate level.
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

NOTE: I have listed the readings for each week in a particular order. I **strongly** suggest that you read them in the order listed (starting with 1, etc.). This is largely a matter of historiography; that is, the earlier readings typically offer a viewpoint being challenged by the 'main' book for that week.

Week 1

August 17: Course Introduction

Week 2

August 24: the Early Middle Ages – Written Texts and Archaeology

Readings:

1. (Canvas) Peter Hunter Blair, *An Introduction to Anglo-Saxon England*, 2nd edition (1977), pp 1-54. Pay special attention to the sources Blair uses; we're not so much concerned with his factual information.
2. Robin Fleming, *Britain after Rome*, entire

Issues: material culture vs written history, political vs social history, invasion vs migration, how the collapse of Roman Britain occurred, others

Week 3

August 31: Ecology and Culture: Approaches to Animals

Readings:

1. Jamie Kreiner, *Legions of Pigs*, entire
2. Canvas: Naomi Sykes, "Zooarchaeology of the Norman Conquest," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 27 (2004): 185-197.
3. Canvas: Esther Cohen, "Law, Folklore and Animal Lore," *Past and Present* 110 (1986): 6-37
4. Optional, in case you want more context for Cohen: Canvas: Peter Dinzelbacher, "Animal Trials: A Multidisciplinary approach", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 32 (2002): 405-421

Issues:

Week 4

September 7: Motivations for Crusading

Readings:

1. (Canvas) Hans Eberhard Mayer, "The Origins of the Crusades", in *The Crusades*, tr. John Gillingham (1965; tr. 1972), 9-40
2. (canvas) Jonathan Riley-Smith, "Crusading as an Act of Love," *History* 65 (1980): 177-192.
2. Jay Rubenstein, *Nebuchadnezzar's Dream*

Issues: motives of first crusaders, material, spiritual, apocalyptic, other

Week 5

September 14: Lordship and its Discontents

Readings:

- 1 Optional: Canvas: Thomas Bisson, "The 'Feudal Revolution'." *Past and Present* 142 (1994): 6-42
2. Canvas: Dominique Barthélemy and Stephen D. White, "Debate: The 'Feudal Revolution' I-II," *Past and Present* 152 (1996): 196-223
3. Fredric Cheyette, *Ermengard of Narbonne and the World of the Troubadours*, pp TBA [FYI, but not required: Timothy Reuter and Chris Wickham, "Debate: The 'Feudal Revolution,' III-IV," *Past and Present* 157 (1997): 177-208; and final rejoinder by Bisson, "Reply." *Past and Present* 157 (1997): 208-225.]

Issues: what is power?; lordship vs. government; definition of 'state'; stateless society; anarchy; violence as a social ill.

Week 6

September 21: Writing, Literacy and Power

Readings:

1. M.T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 3rd edition (Wiley-Blackwell, 2012)
2. Canvas: Alexander Murray, *Reason and Society in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1978), pp. 1-22, 110-137.

Issues: what is literacy?; who was literate (and when) in the MA?; literacy vs. orality; types of written 'texts'; link between writing and power

Week 7

September 28: Race in the Middle Ages

Readings:

1. Canvas: Robert Bartlett, "Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31 (2001): 39-56.
2. Canvas: David Nirenberg, "Was there race before modernity? The example of Jewish Blood in Late Medieval Spain," in *The Origins of Racism in the West*, ed. M. Eliav-Feldon, B. Isaac, and J. Ziegler (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 232-264.
2. Geraldine Heng, *The Invention of Race in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge University Press, 2018), chapters TBA

Week 8

October 5: Plague and Society

Readings:

1. Bruce M.S. Campbell, *The Great Transition*
2. Canvas: Monica H. Green, "The Four Black Deaths," *American Historical Review* 125 (2020), 1600-1631.

Issues: TBA

Week 9

October 12: No Class: Fall Break

Week 10

October 19: Renaissance Identities and Sexualities

Readings

1. Canvas: Caroline Walker Bynum, "Did the Twelfth Century Discover the Individual?" *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 31 (1980): 1-18
2. Canvas: John Martin, "Inventing Sincerity, Refashioning Prudence: the Discovery of the Individual in Renaissance Europe," *American Historical Review* 102 (1997): 1309-1342.
3. Guido Ruggiero, *Machiavelli in Love*, entire

Week 11

October 26: Approaches to Martin Luther

Readings:

1. Andrew Pettegree, *Brand Luther* (Penguin, 2015)
2. Canvas: R.W. Scribner, "Incombustible Luther: the Image of the Reformer in Early Modern Germany," *Past and Present* 110 (1986), 38-68
3. Canvas: Lyndal Roper, "Martin Luther's Body: the 'Stout' Doctor and His Biographers," *American Historical Review* 115 (2010), 351-384.

Issues: what is imp't about Luther? Printing and reformation; ideas vs culture; social history vs intellectual vs theological history of the reformation; Luther as 'pop star'; how revolutionary was the reformation?

Week 12

November 2: Religious Conflict in Early Modern Europe

Readings:

1. Nicholas Terpstra, *Religious Refugees*
2. Canvas: William Beik, "The Violence of the French Crowd from Charivari to Revolution," *Past and Present* 197 (2007), 75-110.

Issues: TBA

Week 13

November 9: Peasant Life, Gender and Agency in the 16th Century

Readings:

1. Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre*
2. Canvas: Robert Finlay, "The Refashioning of Martin Guerre," *American Historical Review* 93 (1988), 553-571.
3. Canvas: Natalie Zemon Davis, "On the Lame," *American Historical Review* 93 (1988), 572-603.
4. Film: *Return of Martin Guerre* [clips to be shown in class]

Issues: TBA

Week 14

November 16: Slavery and Culture in the Early-Modern Mediterranean (and the medieval north Atlantic)

Readings

1. Gillian Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs*
2. Canvas: Sally McKee, "Domestic Slavery in Renaissance Italy," *Slavery & Abolition* 29 (2008): 305-326
3. Canvas: Kirsten A. Seaver, "Thralls and Queens: Female Slavery in the Medieval Norse Atlantic," in *Women and Slavery: Africa, the Indian Ocean World, and the Medieval North Atlantic*, ed. Gwyn Campbell et al. (Ohio Univeristy Press, 2007), 147-167.

Week 15

November 23: The Enlightenment

Readings

1. Margaret Jacob, *The Secular Enlightenment* (Princeton, 2019)

Week 16

November 30: Writing, Culture and Revolution in the Ancien Regime

Readings:

1. Robert Darnton, *The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France* (Norton, 1996)
2. Possibly: Canvas: Selections from *The Darnton Debate*

Issues: TBA

Final Project Due: Tuesday, December 7, by noon in my office

Some 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 altered 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?

COVID-19 INFORMATION

As we return for fall 2021, the campus community must recognize and address continuing concerns about physical and emotional safety, especially as we will have many more students, faculty, and staff on campus than in the last academic year. As such, all students, faculty, and staff are required to uphold UNCG's culture of care by actively engaging in behaviors that limit the spread of COVID-19. Such actions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- [Following face-covering guidelines](#)
- Engaging in proper hand-washing hygiene when possible
- Self-monitoring for symptoms of COVID-19
- Staying home if you are ill
- Complying with directions from health care providers or public health officials to quarantine or isolate if ill or exposed to someone who is ill.

Instructors will have seating charts for their classes. These are important for facilitating contact tracing should there be a confirmed case of COVID-19. Students must sit in their assigned seats at every class meeting and must not move furniture. Students should not eat or drink during class time.

To make it easier for students to hear their instructor and/or read lips and if conditions permit, instructors who are fully vaccinated and who can maintain at least six feet of distance from students may remove their masks while actively teaching if they choose, but will wear a mask at all other times while in the classroom, including during the periods before and after class

A limited number of disposable masks will be available in classrooms for students who have forgotten theirs. Face coverings will also be available for purchase in the UNCG Campus Bookstore. Students who do not follow masking requirements will be asked to put on a face covering or leave the classroom to retrieve one and only return when they follow the basic requirements to uphold standards of safety and care for the UNCG community. Once students have a face covering, they are permitted to re-enter a class already in progress. Repeated issues may result in conduct action. The course policies regarding attendance and academics remain in effect for partial or full absence from class due to lack of adherence with face covering and other requirements.

For instances where the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) has granted accommodations regarding wearing face coverings, students should contact their instructors to develop appropriate alternatives to class participation and/or activities as needed. Instructors or the student may also contact [OARS](#) (336.334.5440) who, in consultation with Student Health Services, will review requests for accommodations.