

HIST 511: Historiography

Dr. Jason Knirck

Fall 2009

Monday 3PM

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Office Hours: M-Th 10:00-11:00

Purpose

This class will study changes in the practice of history over time. Ideally, it will serve as an introduction to major aspects of our discipline, as well as an introduction to the graduate study of history. Although the “history of history” in the west obviously stretches back to Herodotus, Thucydides and the Greeks, this class will focus on historical trends in the twentieth century. By reading a variety of books from the discipline, we will study several previously dominant paradigms, the incorporation of theoretical material from other social sciences and literary criticism, and the major methodological disputes within the discipline. Taking this course should enable students pursuing a graduate degree in history to understand better the methodological and evidentiary assumptions that underpin their own research.

Outcomes

By the close of the course, students should be able to

- analyze significant issues, trends and developments in the practice of history
- demonstrate knowledge that history is not simply the recitation of names and dates, but instead is a fluid subject where interpretations are constantly changing as a result of different methodologies and patterns of analysis
- analyze and synthesize secondary sources in order to put forward a well-supported argument of their own
- make a clearly-written and clearly-presented argument, including a thesis and sufficient and well-used supporting detail
- identify differing explanations of historical change and the connections between cause and effect in the discipline of history
- identify continuities and discontinuities between the various methodologies—Marxism, social history, gender history, postmodernism—that have dominated the discipline at one time or another in the twentieth century

Readings

Georg Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century* (**optional**)

David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness*

Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *The Peasants of Languedoc*

Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms*

Joseph Taylor, *Making Salmon: An Environmental History of the Northwest Fisheries Crisis*

Joan Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*

Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790*

Lynn Hunt, *The New Cultural History*

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

Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped*

Edward Said, *Orientalism*

Assignments

Book Reviews

Each student will write book reviews on three of the required readings. The reviews are due at the beginning of the class during which we discuss the book under review. Each review should be 6-8 pages and should be a scholarly book review along the lines of those in the *American Historical Review*, the *Journal of British Studies*, or some other scholarly journal. The review should highlight the main lines of argument in the book, but should also assess the book's argument, presentation and method. This assessment needs to be supported with significant specific detail from the book.

Tips for Book Reviews

- Do not just summarize the book chapter-by-chapter. Highlight the book's main analytical points, but your summary of these should take up at most half of the review.
- Make sure that you engage with the book's methodology. What sources did the author choose to use? How did he or she use those sources? What methodological or epistemological assumptions did the author make (i.e. class is important, history is not made by great men etc.)?
- Analyze the book's strengths and weaknesses. Reviews need not necessarily be critical, but make sure to be specific (and back it up with examples) about what you liked and disliked about the book's approach.
- You can talk about the book's structure or writing, but that should not be the entire thrust of the review. Do discuss argument and method.

Final Paper

Write a 12-15 page paper comparing and contrasting the assigned books. You need to choose a theme or focus that allows you to talk about some aspect of all of the books. You could analyze, for example, the scope of each book. What does each author believe to be appropriate subjects of historical inquiry? Or you could look at the types of evidence each author used, or the "engine" of history that each seems to identify. The paper must be comparative, analytical, inclusive of all the required books, and supported with specific examples from those books. The paper is due **Friday, December 11th** at 11:00 am.

Grades

Assignments will be weighted in the following manner:

Book Reviews	100 points each	Final Paper	200 points	Participation	100 points
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Schedule of Readings

Sept 23:	Intro	
Sept 28:	Marxism	Roediger, <i>Wages of Whiteness</i> ; Iggers, Chapters 6-7
Oct 5:	<i>Annales</i>	Ladurie, <i>Peasants of Languedoc</i> ; Iggers, Chapter 5
Oct 12:	Microhistory	Ginzburg, <i>The Cheese and the Worms</i> ; Iggers, Chapter 9
Oct 19:	Environmental	Taylor, <i>Making Salmon</i>
Oct 26:	Postmodernism	Foucault, <i>Discipline and Punish</i> ; Iggers, Chapter 10
Nov 2:	Ethnohistory	Isaac, <i>The Transformation of Virginia</i>
Nov 9:	Gender	Scott, <i>Gender and the Politics of History</i>
Nov 16:	Cultural History	Hunt, <i>The New Cultural History</i>
Nov 23:	Identity	Winichakul, <i>Siam Mapped</i>
Nov 30:	Empire	Said, <i>Orientalism</i>