

History 500
Introduction to the Professional Study of History

Fall 2020

Mondays 8:30am - 10:30am & 11:00am - 1:00pm [Time zone: Eastern US] – Remote Learning

Instructors

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Office Hours: Tues 1:30 – 4:00 pm & by appt.

INTRODUCTION

The class introduces the main topics, methods, theories, and problems of History as an academic discipline. When it was introduced in the graduate curriculum of Princeton University in 1960, it could legitimately claim to offer students a comprehensive introduction to the study of History. Today, such assertion sounds preposterous. Writing history has become a diverse intellectual practice, encompassing such a vast array of themes, models, styles, jargons, techniques, and problematics, that the ambition of offering an exhaustive introduction to the state of the field is doomed to failure. Consequently, this class has been taught differently every year, in accordance to the inclinations, expertise, and beliefs of the teaching faculty. This year, we decided to develop a syllabus that purports to reconstruct the processes that led to the eclectic character of history-writing familiar to us today. To do so, the topics covered during the semester are loosely organized in chronological order to give historical depth to our understanding of historians' cognitive practices. As historians, we indeed believe that the best way to grasp the discipline of History is to approach it *historically*, focusing on the changing epistemological legitimations, metaphysical presuppositions, heuristic languages, institutional organizations, and thematic interests.

Requirements

1) Regular attendance and close reading of the assigned material is mandatory. Students are required to upload their reactions to the readings in Blackboard's "Discussion Board" on Saturday and Sunday before class. Participation in class discussions and written postings count for 40% of the grade.

2) Students are required to write a 4-6-page book review. The reviews will be handed in to the instructors by week 9 and count for 25% of the final grade. The book is to be chosen among the following titles:

- Elizabeth Hennessy, *On the Backs of Tortoises: Darwin, the Galápagos, and the Fate of an Evolutionary Eden* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019).
- Enzo Traverso, *Fire and Blood: The European Civil War, 1914-1945* (London: Verso, 2017).
- Michelle Murphy, *The Economization of Life* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017).

- Sho Konishi, *Anarchist Modernity: Cooperativism and Japanese-Russian Intellectual Relations in Modern Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2013).
- Andrew Zimmerman, *Alabama in Africa: Booker T. Washington, the German Empire, and the Globalization of the New South* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).
- Ann M. Blair, *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

3) The third and final course component is a 15–20-page historiographical essay on a topic of your choice (to be approved by the two instructors by week 10), due on Dean’s Date, Tuesday, December 8th. This final assignment counts for 35% of the grade.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Meeting: Given the unusual public health concerns of the moment and the large size of the course, there is no way for this seminar to meet safely in person while adhering to recommended social distancing guidelines. Therefore, we have devised an unusual approach to the course.

Each week we ask:

(a) **Discussion Board:**

- Please complete the readings and upload your reaction paper to the course discussion board (on Blackboard) by noon of the Saturday before our Monday discussions. (400 words or less)
- At noon on Saturday, Professors Marcon and Milam will then make available two (one each) *brief* pre-recorded introductions to the readings.
- By noon on Sunday, please listen to these introductions, read through your colleagues’ posts, and write a brief follow-up comment to your original post. The idea is not to comment on others’ posts directly but to reflect on how your initial reactions to the readings have been honed, challenged, or confirmed by your colleagues’ reactions, and to frame a question for our Monday discussions. (200 words or less)

(b) **Course Meetings:** Each week, the course will be re-divided into two halves – please note which half you are joining that week and tune in to your two-hour synchronous Zoom discussion. One group will meet Mondays 8:30-10:30am, the other from 11am-1pm. The idea behind re-dividing the course each week is to ensure that all students come to know all other students over the course of the semester. We plan to use break-out groups within these meetings to enable everyone to facilitate tight discussions with fewer people before re-convening.

(c) **Office Hours:** The semester is twelve weeks long. During the first two weeks, each student will also have a solo “office hours” discussion with each of the professors. (We’ll alternate, again to ensure each of us gets to know each of you, such that you meet with each professor in the first two weeks of class.) Then this will switch to once every two weeks. As the end of the semester approaches, we will each meet with you once more. These meetings are mandatory. We are also, of course, available during regular office hours as well but want to ensure we have pre-set opportunities to check in with each of you over the course of the semester. Please see the final page of the .pdf for details about how to book those appointments, with whom, and when.

Readings: Michel-Rolph Trouillot's *Silencing the Past* is available for purchase at Labyrinth and as an eBook through Princeton University Library. All other readings—articles and chapters—are posted as .pdf files in the seminar's Blackboard page under "Course Materials."

Week Zero (Summer Reading) – A Historian's Experience – August 17

We will meet to get to know each other, discuss this book, ask logistical questions about how the seminar will work, etc.

Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, with a new foreword by Hazel V. Carby (Boston: Beacon Press, 2015 [1997]), available for purchase through Labyrinth Books or available as an e-book via Princeton University Library:
<https://catalog.princeton.edu/catalog/9220679>.

Week One – The Myth of Objectivity – August 31

Lorraine Daston & Peter Galison, "The Image of Objectivity," *Representations* Vol. 40 (1992): 81-128.

Bonnie G. Smith, "Birth of the Amateur" and "What is a Historian," in *The Gender of History: Men, Women, and Historical Practice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 37-102.

Ian Hacking, "Historical Ontology," in *Historical Ontology* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 1-26.

Allan Megill, "Objectivity for Historians," in *Historical Knowledge, Historical Error* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 107-123.

Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," *Small Axe* Vol. 12, no. 2 (2008): 1-14.

Supplementary: Daniel Little, "Philosophy of History," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2017), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2017/entries/history/>.

Week Two – Origin Stories – September 7

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, "Preface" and "First Draft: The Varieties of Historical Writing," *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History: Introduction, Reason in History*, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 5-24.

Friedrich Nietzsche, "The Use and Disadvantages of History for Life" (1874), in Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, ed. D. Breazale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 57-123.

Felix Gilbert, "What Ranke Meant," *The American Scholar* Vol. 56, no. 3 (Summer 1987): 393-397.

Susan Buck-Morss, "Hegel and Haiti," *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 26, no. 4 (Summer 2000): 821-865.

Bonnie G. Smith, "The Practices of Scientific History" and "Men and Facts," in *The Gender of History: Men, Women, and Historical Practice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 103-156.

Elizabeth A. Clark, "Defending and Lamenting History," in *History, Theory, Text: Historians and the Linguistic Turns* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 9-17.

Supplementary: Stephen Houlgate, "History and Truth," in *An Introduction to Hegel: Freedom, Truth and History* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 4-25.

Week Three – Marxists and Others – September 14

The Marx-Engels Reader, ed. by Robert C. Tucker. Second Edition (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1978), selections: "For a Ruthless Criticism of Everything Existing," 12-15;
"Theses on Feuerbach," 143-145;
"The German Ideology: Part I," 146-200;
"The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," 594-617.

W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk: essays and Sketches* (1903), intro. Shawn Leigh Alexander (University of Massachusetts Press, 2018), selections: "Of Our Spiritual Strivings," 1-12;
"Of the Training of Black Men," 85-105.
"Of the Quest of the Golden Fleece," 130-156.

W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Souls of White Folk," in *Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Howe, 1920), 26-52.

Rosa Luxemburg, "The Junius Pamphlet—The Crisis of German Social Democracy" (1915), available online: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/luxemburg/1915/junius/>. Selections.

Guenther Roth, "History and Sociology in the Work of Max Weber," *British Journal of Sociology* Vol. 27, no. 3 (1976): 306-318.

Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Two Histories of Capital," in *Deprovincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 47-71.

Supplementary: Karl Marx, "The Commodity," in *Capital* (Penguin, 1976-1990), 125-177.

Week Four – The Emancipation of the Present – September 21

The Antonio Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings 1916-1935, ed. David Forgacs (New York: NYU Press, 2000): selections: "Hegemony, Relations of Force, Historical Bloc," 189-221;
"Intellectuals and Education," 300-322.

Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History" (1940), in *Selected Writings*, Vol. 4: 1938-1940 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 389-400.

E.P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," *Past & Present*, No. 38 (December 1967): 56-97.

Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 127-186.

Frantz Fanon, "On Violence," in *Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2004 [1961]), 1-62.

Achille Mbembe, "This Stifling Noonday," in *Necropolitics*, trans. Steven Corcoran (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), 156-183, notes 207-210.

Supplementary: Michael Löwy, *Fire Alarm: Reading Walter Benjamin's 'On the Concept of History'* (London: Verso, 2005).

Week Five – The Past is a Foreign Country – September 28

Mary Douglas, "The Two Bodies," in *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology* (New York: Routledge, 1996 [1970]), 69-87.

Laura Nader, "Up the Anthropologist—Perspectives Gained from Studying Up," in *Reinventing Anthropology*, ed. Dell H. Hymes (New York: Pantheon Press, 1972), 284-311.

Clifford Geertz, "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight," *Daedalus*, Vol. 101, no. 1 (1972): 1-37.

Peter Brown, "Introduction," *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*, 20th ann. edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008 [1988]), xxi-lxvii.

Philip Deloria, "Counterculture Indians and the New Age," in *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 154-180.

Elizabeth A. Clark, "The Territory of the Historian," in *History, Theory, Text: Historians and the Linguistic Turns* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 63-85.

Week Six – Epistemologies of Sex and Gender – October 5

Michel Foucault, "Right of Death and Power over Life," in *History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1 (New York: Vintage, 1990 [1976]), 133-159.

Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review* Vol. 91, no. 5 (1986), 1053-1075.

Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1989, article 8 (1989): 139-167.

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Introduction: Axiomatic," in *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 1-63.

Evelyn Brooks Higgenbotham, "African-American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race," Vol. 17, no. 2 (1992): 251-274.

Robert A. Nye, "Medicine and Science as Masculine 'Fields of Honor,'" *Osiris* Vol. 12 (1997): 60-79.

Supplementary:

- Sherie M. Randolph, Robin DG Kelley, Tammar Carroll, Dayo F Gore, Marlon M. Bailey, and LH Stallings, "The Metalanguage of Race: A Commemoration," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, Vol 42, no. 3 (2017): 589-642.
- Joanne Meyerowitz, Heidi Tinsman, Maria Bucur, Dyan Elliott, Gail Hershatter, Wang Zheng, and Joan Scott, AHR Forum: "Revisiting 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,'" *The American Historical Review* Vol. 113, no. 5 (2008): 1344-1430.
- Nancy Hirschmann, ed., *Revisioning the Political: Feminist Interpretations of Traditional Concepts in Western Political Theory* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996).
- Mary Shanley and Uma Narayan, eds., *Reconstructing Political Theory: Feminist Perspectives* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997).

FALL BREAK [October 10 – 13]

Week Seven – **Historical Plots** – October 19

- Jorge Luis Borges, "Kafka and His Precursors" [1951], in *Selected Non-Fictions*, ed. by Eliot Weinberg (London: Penguin, 2000), 363-365.
- Hayden White, "The Fictions of Factual Representation," in *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 121-134.
- Hayden White, "The Question of Narrative in Contemporary Historical Theory," in *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 26-57.
- Reinhart Koselleck, "Perspective and Temporality: A Contribution to the Historiographical Exposure of the Historical World," in *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004 [1985]), 130-155.
- Gillian Beer, "Introduction" in *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth Century Fiction*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009 [1983]), 1-21.

Week Eight – **Can the Subaltern Speak?** – October 26

- Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979), selections.
- Ranjit Guha, "Prose of Counterinsurgency," in *Selected Subaltern Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 45-84.
- Gayatri C. Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in C. Nelson and L. Grossberg, eds. *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271-313.

Prasenjit Duara, "The New Imperialism and the Post-Colonial Developmental State: Manchuko in Comparative Perspective," *Asia Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* Vol. 4, no. 1 (2006), Article ID 1715: 18 pp. Available online: <https://apjif.org/-Prasenjit-Duara/1715/article.html>

Fernando Coronil, "Latin American Postcolonial Studies and Global Decolonization," in: *Postcolonial Studies: An Anthology*, ed. by Pramod K. Nayar (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 204-224.

Week Nine – **Has Critique Run out of Steam?** – November 2

Vanessa R. Schwartz, "Walter Benjamin for Historians," *The American Historical Review* Vol. 106, no. 5 (2001): 1721-1743.

Bruno Latour, "Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern," *Critical Inquiry* Vol. 30, no. 2 (2004): 225-248.

Ethan Kleinberg, "Haunting History: Deconstruction and the Spirit of Revision," *History & Theory* Vol. 46, no. 4 (2007): 113-143.

Joan Scott, "History-Writing as Critique," in K. Jenkins, S. Morgan, and A. Munslow, eds., *Manifestos for History* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 19-38.

Peter Gordon, "Contextualism and Criticism in the History of Ideas," in M. McMahon and S. Moyn, eds., *Rethinking Modern European Intellectual History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 32-55.

Wild On Collective (Ethan Kleinberg, Joan Scott, Gary Wilder), *Theses on Theory and History* (May 2018), 11 pp.

Week Ten – **The Politics of "Recognition"** – November 9

Barbara Jeanne Fields, "Slavery, Race and Ideology in the United States of America," *New Left Review* No. 181 (1990): 95-118.

Sadiah Qureshi, "Displaying Sara Baartman, the 'Hottentot Venus,'" *History of Science* Vol. 42, no. 2 (2004): 233-257.

Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, "The Forest of Collaborations," in *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 245-268.

Sara Ahmed, "A Phenomenology of Whiteness," *Feminist Theory* Vol. 8, no. 2 (2007): 149-168.

Glen Sean Coulthard, "Introduction: Subjects of Empire," in *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 1-24.

Ruha Benjamin, "Black AfterLives Matter: Cultivating Kinfulness as Reproductive Justice," in Adele Clarke and Donna Haraway, eds. *Making Kin not Population: Reconceiving Generations* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2018), reprinted in the *Boston Review*, <http://bostonreview.net/race/ruha-benjamin-black-afterlives-matter>.

Week Eleven – **Non-Human Agency** – November 16

William Cronon, “A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative,” *The Journal of American History* Vol. 78, no. 4 (1992): 1347-1376.

Lance van Sittert, “The Nature of Power: Cape Environmental History, the History of Ideas and Neoliberal Historiography,” *Journal of African History* Vol. 45 (2004): 305-313.

Dipesh Chakrabarty, “The Climate of History: Four Theses,” *Critical Inquiry* Vol. 35, no. 2 (Winter 2009): 197-222.

Linda Nash, “Furthering the Environmental Turn,” *The Journal of American History* Vol. 100, no. 1 (2013): 131-135.

Thomas S. Mullaney, “Introduction: There is No Alphabet Here,” in *The Chinese Typewriter: A History* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2017), 1-33.

Week Twelve – **Trust in Data?** – November 23

Fernand Braudel, “History and the Social Sciences: The *Longue Durée*” [1958], trans. Immanuel Wallerstein, reprinted in *Review* Vol. 32, no. 2 (2009): 171-203.

David Armitage and Jo Guldi, “The Return of the *Longue Durée*: An Anglo-American Perspective,” *Annales HSS* Vol. 70, no. 2 (2015): 219-247.

Lynn Hunt, “Does History Need a Reset?” *Annales HSS* Vol. 70, no. 2 (2015): 249-254.

Deborah Coen, “Big is a Thing of the Past: Climate Change and Methodology in the History of Ideas,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* Vol. 77, no. 2 (2016): 305-321.

Sarah Igo, “Me and My Data,” *Historical Studies in the Natural Sciences* Vol. 48, no. 5 (2018): 616-626.