



UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY

Department of History

HTST 496
Historical Methods & Philosophy of History
Fall, 2022

Instructor: Dr. Frank Towers
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Scheduled Class Times: Fridays, 2:00- 4:45 p.m.
Room: SS 613
Course Delivery: in person
Office Hours: Wednesdays and Fridays 1 p.m. – 2 p.m.

Description: This course assists Honour's students in writing their thesis. It does so by surveying main themes of historiography and the methods professional historians use to write. Rather than ask, "what happened in the past?" The central question of this course is "how do historians discover and interpret what happened in the past?" Course assignments emphasize critical reading, verbal analysis, and long-form writing.

Learning Outcomes:

- * Be able to identify major themes in the study of historiography and historical methods.
- * Be able to connect themes in historiography and historical methods with other historical processes specific to particular times and places.
- * Be able to assess secondary sources to identify argument, structure, evidence, and contribution to their field.
- * Develop writing and research skills through an improved understanding of how historians learn about the past.
- * Improve critical thinking and analytical skills.

Reading Material

All of the readings assigned for this course are available in digital form through the University of Calgary Library. Simply find the title on the library search engine (<https://library.ucalgary.ca>) and click the "online access" link. The library also has some titles in paper form. **Therefore, no book purchases are required.** Of course, students are welcome to buy books if they choose.

For a list of assigned reading see the **Schedule of Meetings and Assignments** below.

Assessment:

Assessment Method	Weight	Due Date
In class participation	20%	weekly
Discussion questions	10%	weekly (after week 1)
Seminar leader	20%	TBD
Comparison of Hunt and Scott (900-1,500 words)	10%	Oct. 3
Book review (1,200-1,800 words)	10%	Nov. 18
Historiography paper (2,400-4,800 words)	30%	Dec. 14

Grading Policies

All grades are awarded as points on the Departmental Grading System (see below) with their corresponding letter included. The final calculation will be based on the numerical score for each assignment summed by weight (see above) and translated into a letter grade for submission to the Registrar. Students are expected to complete all assignments. Deadlines are firm. Two percentage points will be deducted from your grade for every day your paper is late. Requests for extensions should be submitted to the course instructor before the assignment due date. If you think your mark was unfair please see the instructor.

Details on Method of Assessment

In-class participation. 20% of course grade. Due weekly.

Student participation is essential to the success of the seminar. Each week students should prepare to discuss the assigned reading in class. The participation mark is based on the following factors:

- Regular attendance
- Consistent contributions to class discussion
- Demonstrate working knowledge of the assigned reading. In other words, your contributions show an accurate, informed understanding of the assignment's topic, evidence, and thesis.
- Critical analysis of the assigned reading that goes beyond summary. In addition to demonstrating a working knowledge of the text, you should also think about the strengths and weaknesses of the book and how the historian in question relates their ideas to other topics considered for this course.
- Moderation. Allow your classmates time to speak, and refrain from trying to dominate discussion, hijack debate, or drive the seminar off topic. Foul or abusive language will not be tolerated.

Discussion questions. 10% of course grade. Due weekly 24 hours before class, except week 1. Submit questions on D2L.

For each week's assigned reading, students will write two questions for seminar discussion. The questions should be big enough to generate a thoughtful discussion. It should also address issues specific to the assigned reading, i.e., not so general that the same question could be asked about any history book. These questions will be shared with the course instructor and the student seminar leader for that meeting, who may use them.

-- Example of a good question: In "How to Read for History" Caleb McDaniel argues that readers engage in "a conversation" with authors. Do you agree with this definition of reading? And if so, what is the role of the reader in the conversation?

That question addresses a main point in the text and then asks an open-ended question about it that we can debate. In contrast, we won't have much to discuss for a narrow, find-the-fact question. For example, in what country did Maximilien Robespierre lead a revolution? The answer is France. Not much more to say here. Similarly, a general question that applies to all books--such as, what is the book's thesis? —doesn't show that you have read the assignment, nor does it help us dig into the details of the author's argument.

Seminar leader. 20% of course grade. Date to be determined.

Beginning in week 6 (Oct. 15), each student will lead one seminar meeting. At our first or second meeting we will determine the schedule for student-led seminars. Although not required, it makes sense to choose a meeting for the book that you will write your historiography paper on.

The goal of each seminar is to further the learning outcomes listed above. Here they are in short form. **1)** identify themes in historiography. **2)** connect those themes to specific times and places (in other words, apply them to actual history). **3)** To achieve goals 1 and 2, we need to assess secondary sources to identify their argument, structure, evidence, and contribution to their field. **4)** Accomplishing goal 3 requires that we develop our writing and research skills. **5)** We work on goal 4 in the written assignments. In the seminar we move towards those skills by improving our critical thinking and analytical skills.

Leading a seminar requires

-- **Mastery of the assigned reading's contents.** That is, you know the book's argument, its evidence, and how the author assembles the evidence to make his or her case.

-- **A plan to advance learning outcomes 1, 2, 3, and 5** (above). Usually that begins by figuring out goal 3 and then building up to goals 2 and 1. In this process goal 5 is always in play. Your job is to get students to learn more about the book by thinking through its contents in a group setting. Lectures courses tend to use more passive learning methods (listening, watching) whereas seminars rely on active ones (talking and sometimes writing).

-- **Managing classroom dynamics.** You are the discussion leader. That means the direction comes from you, not anyone else. Balance achieving your plan against where the students meet you.

Don't assume students have read as closely as you have. In fact, don't assume they have read anything at all. A totally unprepared student is going to fail everything in that day's participation grade except showing up (that gets you to a D+/C- for the day, so do more). More common is someone who rushed their reading, or found the book too hard, too boring, or too long to get through.

Don't assume students are eager to participate. Even though we are honours students--people who want to excel as historians and possibly make history our profession--most of us hate, hate, and then hate some more the idea of spontaneous verbal answers to hard questions, i.e., talking in class.

-- **A plan for generating discussion.** Usually that means preparing a set of questions in advance that guide students through the important issues of the book. See above for what kind of questions generate discussion. You can use fellow students' questions, but you must also devise your own questions. For those concerned about exact ratios, at least half the questions come from you.

-- In case your first plan doesn't work, **have a plan B, C, D, and maybe more.** That is, what do you do when no one wants to talk? It's a problem seminar instructors often face. If only one or two students respond to your question(s), you need have a fallback plan ready to get them engaged. Here are some that work, and there are a lot of others.

-- Break your question down into smaller, more specific parts. For example, your big question is "what role does the environment play in this book?" That's really broad, especially if it's a book about environmental history. Break it down by bringing up specific plot points that a reader should remember. For example, "In chapter three, the author spends a lot of time describing factory smoke. What impact did industrial smoke have on the surrounding city?" If that's too broad, get more specific again. "How did smoke affect people's clothing?" Once students nail a few of these factual questions, and gain confidence in their understanding of the book, you can build back out to the big picture.

-- If students can't understand a key idea, give them a short passage to read and discuss. The passage can either be a photocopy of a page or a paragraph that has the key point, or a quote that you read out loud. Instead of a passage from the book, you might use one of its visual illustrations (photos, graphs, tables, diagrams). If the book doesn't have visuals, consider finding an image related to the topic and use it.

-- Comparison and metaphors. If students won't do much with direct questions about the book's ideas, then compare them to issues today that they will likely know about. That topic can be anything from politics to pop culture. For example, "the author makes an argument about despotism. Does the despot in his book seem similar or different to Star Wars' Darth Vader?" start by figuring out what kind of despot Vader was, and then compare him to the despot in the book." Comparisons

also work with the books we have already read. For example, Lynn Hunt said x and y matter for historians. Does this author care about x and y?

-- Break the room into pairs (if there's an odd number, pairs and one group of three) and give each pair something to do with the book-- devise a question answer a question, describe a character, etc.-- a question to answer in the next ten minutes. Bring the seminar back together and have each pair report its findings. From there you can usually get them back to the bigger issues.
-- Be creative. That is, come up with your own fall back.

-- **A plan for ending the seminar.** How do you wrap things up? Running out of time is one way to do it, but a bad one. Instead, as the discussion moves along think about how to summarize the day's work. What key points should the students take away from the meeting? Closing the seminar requires thinking on your feet as it progresses.

Comparison paper of Hunt and Scott (900-1500 words). 10% of course grade. Due Sep. 30. Submitted via D2L dropbox. In our reading for Week 2, Lynn Hunt and Joan Wallach Scott each argue for the relevance of history today. In addition to the points below, compare their arguments for history's relevance as well as their prescriptions for how historians should write about the past.

More generally, a good comparative paper analyzes the similarities and differences of its texts. Points of comparison should be main elements of the books, not peripheral ones. Main elements consist of the thesis, method, sources, narrative logic (how the author assembles the sources to advance his or her thesis), style, implications for the argument for the book's time and place field and for historiography in general. Peripheral elements are things like footnote format, whether you think the writing was good or bad, the author's personal details, the formatting and layout of the book.

The comparison can consider the pros and cons of each book's method, but it does not need decide which book is better. Each has strengths and weaknesses.

Finally, consider what your comparison says about the big picture. That is, what does comparing these books teach us about history and historical writing?

Book review. 10% of course grade. Due Nov. 18. Submitted through D2L drobox. Choose one of the books assigned after week 2 (i.e., neither Hunt nor Scott) and write a scholarly review of it. Although not required, it makes sense to choose the book that you will write your historiography paper on.

A good review identifies the book's thesis; the logic of the argument (how the author advances his or her thesis); and the sources and methods. It also considers the book's significance for its period and place (for example, what does a book about science during the French Revolution reveal about France and Western Europe in the late 18th century?) as well as any general implications for studying the past. Finally, a good review assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the book's main elements. As with the comparison paper main elements include the thesis, method, sources, narrative logic, and larger implications.

Peripheral elements are things like footnote format, whether you think the writing was good or bad, the author's personal details, the formatting and layout of the book.

Two criticisms that don't work for books that have been through peer review at major scholarly presses: the book has no evidence; the book has no thesis. If that's what you think, you haven't read closely enough.

Historiography paper (2,400-4,800 words). 30% of course grade. Due Dec. 14. Submitted through D2L dropbox.

Choose a book assigned after week 2. Although not required, it makes sense to choose the book that you reviewed and/or led a seminar on. Write a paper that explains the book's historiographic field and the book's place in it. Historiographic field refers to the genre, or type of historical study that your book belongs to. For each week I have listed the main historiographic theme of the assigned book, but more than one field could apply. For example, Carl Nightingale's *Earthopolis* is both urban history and global history. A paper on that book could focus on one of those fields or both.

These historiographic themes differ from the general history of the book's time and place. For example, Rachel Van Cleves's *Charity and Sylvia: A Same-Sex Marriage in Early America* explores the history sexuality (its theme) in a particular time (the early 1800s) and place (the United States). A paper on this book considers the historical study of sexuality and how *Charity and Sylvia* add to and/or challenges prior studies in that field.

To learn more about your book's historiographic field consult its introduction and its bibliography. Search the U of C library catalog for scholarship on that subject. For good overviews of different types of historical writing see

- Anna Green and Kathleen Troup. *The Houses of History: A Critical Reader in History and Theory*. 2nd ed., Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016.
- Sarah Maza. *Thinking About History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017.
- Alun Munslow. *The Routledge Companion to Historical Studies, 2nd ed.* London: Routledge, 2006.

Paper style: Research papers must be properly documented according to the format described in [The History Student's Handbook](#). In addition, I highly recommend *The Chicago Manual of Style: 17th Ed.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017). The U of C library has digital access to the book (simply search the title on the library homepage). For its abridged online citation guide see:

http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

Learning Technologies Requirements: There is a D2L site for this course that contains relevant class resources and materials. In order to successfully engage in learning experiences in this class, students will need reliable access to the following technology: internet access and a computer, tablet, or other device to access D2L. (see d2l.ucalgary.ca).

Schedule of Meetings and Assignments

Date	Topic & Reading	Assignments/Due Dates All papers must be submitted through our course's D2L digital dropbox.
Sep. 5-9 Week 1	Introduction Assigned reading: Caleb McDaniel, " How to Read for History " (2008)	
Sep. 12 – 16 Week 2	Why History Matters Assigned reading: Lynn Hunt, <i>History: Why It Matters</i> (Medford, MA: Polity Press, 2018); Joan Wallach Scott, <i>In the Name of History</i> (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2020)	
Sep. 19 – Sep. 23 Week 3	Past as Prologue Assigned reading: Eric Cline, <i>1177 B.C.: The Year Civilization Collapsed. Revised and Updated</i> (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021)	
Sep. 26- Sep. 30 Week 4	September 30 is National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, a federal holiday. No class scheduled.	No class meeting
Oct. 3-7 Week 5	Myth and Fact Assigned reading: David W. Blight, <i>Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory</i> . Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002.	Comparison of Scott and Hunt due Oct. 3. Upload to digital dropbox on D2L assignments page.
Oct. 10-14 Week 6	Transnational Assigned reading: Timothy Snyder, <i>Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin</i> (New York: Basic Books, 2010)	
Oct. 17-21 Week 7	Deep History Assigned reading: James C. Scott, <i>Against the Grain: A Deep History of the Earliest States</i> (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017)	
Oct. 24-28 Week 8	Sexuality Assigned reading: Margot Canaday, <i>The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America</i> (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009)	
Oct. 31- Nov. 4 Week 9	Decoloniality Assigned reading: David A. Chang, <i>The World and All the Things upon It: Native Hawaiian</i>	

	<i>Geographies of Exploration</i> (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 2017)	
Nov. 6-11	Reading Week – No Classes	
Nov. 14-18 Week 10	Environmental Assigned reading: Ling Zhang, <i>The River, the Plain, and the State: An Environmental Drama in Northern Song China, 1048-1128</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016)	Book review due Nov. 18 Upload to digital dropbox on D2L assignments page.
Nov. 21-25 Week 11	Urban/global Assigned reading: Carl Nightingale, <i>Earthopolis: A Biography of Our Urban Planet</i> (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2022)	
Nov. 28-Dec. 2 Week 12	Comparative Assigned reading: Kenneth Pomeranz, <i>The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy</i> (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000)	
Dec 5-9 Week 13	No class meeting. Term ends on Wednesday Dec. 9	Historiography paper due Dec. 14 Upload to digital dropbox on D2L assignments page.

Departmental Grading System

The following percentage-to-letter grade conversion scheme is used in all Canadian Studies, History, and Latin American Studies courses, except for HTST 200.

Percentage	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	Description
90-100	A+	4.00	Outstanding performance.
85-89	A	4.00	Excellent performance
80-84	A-	3.70	Approaching excellent performance
77-79	B+	3.30	Exceeding good performance
73-76	B	3.00	Good performance
70-72	B-	2.70	Approaching good performance
67-69	C+	2.30	Exceeding satisfactory performance
63-66	C	2.00	Satisfactory performance
60-62	C-	1.70	Approaching satisfactory performance.

Percentage	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	Description
56-59	D+	1.30	Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject
50-55	D	1.00	Minimal Pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject.
0-49	F	0	Failure. Did not meet course requirements.

Please Note: Students are expected to reach the grade range to receive that letter grade (i.e., to receive an A- a student will have earned an 80 or 3.7 in the course). Assume that there will be no rounding up unless a faculty member announces otherwise.

Writing

All written assignments and written exam responses are assessed partly on writing skills. Writing skills include surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) and general clarity and organization. Research papers must be properly documented according to the format described in [The History Student's Handbook](#).

Inclusiveness, Accommodation, Privacy, and Conduct

I am committed to creating an inclusive learning environment for all registered students. If you have conditions or circumstances that require a formal accommodation, be sure to register with Student Accessibility Services as soon as possible. Such circumstances may include disability or illness whether temporary or permanent, visible or invisible.

Academic Misconduct

Academic Misconduct refers to student behavior which compromises proper assessment of a student's academic activities and includes cheating; fabrication; falsification; plagiarism; unauthorized assistance; failure to comply with an instructor's expectations regarding conduct required of students completing academic assessments in their courses; and failure to comply with exam regulations applied by the Registrar.

For more information, please see the University of Calgary [Student Academic Misconduct Policy](#) documents, and visit the [Academic Integrity Website](#).

Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs when students submit or present the ideas and/or writing of others as if they were their own or when they submit their own work to two different classes. Please see [The History Student's Handbook](#) for more details, but to summarize, plagiarism may take several forms:

- Failing to cite sources properly
- Submitting borrowed, purchased, and/or ghostwritten papers
- Submitting one's own work for more than one course without the permission of the instructor(s) involved
- Extensive paraphrasing of one or a few sources, even when referenced properly, unless the essay is a critical analysis of those works

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence, and written work that appears to contain plagiarized passages will not be graded. All such work will be reported to the Faculty of Art's associate deans of students who will apply the penalties specified in [the university calendar](#).

Academic Accommodation

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations according to the [Student Accommodations policy](#). Students needing an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) in accordance with the [Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities](#). Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than Disability should communicate this need in writing to their instructor.

SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit [Student Accessibility Services](#).

Research Ethics

Students are advised that any research with human participants – including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation – must have the approval of the [Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board](#) or the [Conjoint Health Research Ethics Board](#). In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subjects research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required. Some courses will include assignments that involve conducting research with human participants; in these cases, the instructor will have applied for and received ethics approval for the course assignment. The instructor will discuss the ethical requirements for the assignment with the students.

Instructor Intellectual Property

Course materials created by instructors (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

Copyright Legislation

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on [Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright](#) and requirements of [the Copyright Act](#) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorised sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under [the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy](#).

Copyright of Educational Materials

The University of Calgary has opted out of the Access Copyright Interim Tariff proposed by the Copyright Board. Therefore, instructors in all University of Calgary courses will strictly adhere to Copyright Act regulations and the educational exceptions permitted by the Act for both print

and digital course material. No copyrighted material may be placed on course D2L or web sites without the prior permission of the copyright holders. In some cases, this may mean that instructors will require you to purchase a print course pack from the University of Calgary bookstore or consult books on reserve at the library. Please see the [University of Calgary copyright page](#).

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy

Student information will be collected in accordance with usual classroom practice. Students' assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty and teaching assistants. Private information related to the individual student is treated with the utmost regard.

MEDIA RECORDING IN LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Media Recording for Study Purposes (Students)

Students who wish to audio record lectures for personal study purposes need to follow the guidelines outlined in [Section E.6 of the University Calendar](#). Unless the audio recording of lectures is part of a student accessibility requirement, permission must be sought by the course instructor to audio record lectures.

Media recording for lesson capture

The instructor may use media recordings to capture the delivery of a lecture. These recordings are intended to be used for lecture capture only and will not be used for any other purpose. Recordings will be posted on D2L for student use and will normally be deleted at the end of term. Students are responsible for turning off their camera and/or microphone if they do not wish to be recorded.

Media recording for assessment of student learning

The instructor may use media recordings as part of the assessment of students. This may include but is not limited to classroom discussions, presentations, clinical practice, or skills testing that occur during the course. These recordings will be used for student assessment purposes only and will not be shared or used for any other purpose. The recording will be destroyed as specified by [retention rule 2000.01](#) "Examinations and Student Assignments".

Media recording for self-assessment of teaching practices

The instructor may use media recordings as a tool for self-assessment of their teaching practices. Although the recording device will be fixed on the instructor, it is possible that student participation in the course may be inadvertently captured. The recording will be destroyed as specified by [retention rule 98.0011](#) "Draft Documents & Working Materials".

Sexual Violence Policy

The University recognizes that all members of the University Community should be able to learn, work, teach and live in an environment where they are free from harassment, discrimination, and violence. The University of Calgary's sexual violence policy guides us in

how we respond to incidents of sexual violence, including supports available to those who have experienced or witnessed sexual violence, or those who are alleged to have committed sexual violence. It provides clear response procedures and timelines, defines complex concepts, and addresses incidents that occur off-campus in certain circumstances. Please see [the sexual and gender-based violence policy](#).

Other Useful Information

Please see the Registrar's [Course Outline Student Support and Resources](#) page for information on:

- Wellness and Mental Health
- Student Success
- Student Ombuds Office
- Student Union (SU) Information
- Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Information
- Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points
- Safewalk
- Campus Security 220-5333

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