Historical Methods andPhilosophies of History

The purpose of this seminar is to introduce students to the traditions and practices of the craft of history. In this seminar, there will be three parts or sections.

Part I: This section will focus on the foundations of historiography. It will cover some of the major philosophic or intellectual influences in western historiography, specifically the classics, the Judeo-Christian tradition, the role of philosophy and the Enlightenment, and the rise of science.

Part II: This section will focus on the main current of western historiography over the last century. The emphasis will be on modernism and its focus on national history. We will also explore the post-modernist challenge to the main features of modernist history, especially its reliance on the meta-narrative to explain national experience. These seminars will concentrate on both the perspective and methodology.

Part III: This section will explore public history—how history is remembered and understood in the public sphere. Emphasis will be on how the public commemorates, celebrates and uses the past. Methods to convey the past to a wide or popular audience will also be explored.

Assignments

A) Term Paper

Weight 50%


Due: Last Week of Classes, Wed. Dec. 9th.
N.B. There is no seminar that day as classes end Dec. 8th.
Students are to develop their own historiographical topic in consultation with the instructor, and perhaps their Honour’s advisor. Historiographical papers often focus on how historians have interpreted a certain topic or how a major event has been interpreted by historians over the generations. Other approaches include studying a school of historical thought or practice or analyzing the work of an influential historian and its influence.

Any topic covered in the seminars can also be expanded into a term paper.

**B) Seminar Participation**

**Weight 30%**

Students MUST come to every seminar prepared to discuss the readings. The quality of the seminar is determined by the willingness of the students to discuss the readings and debate with each other. Mere attendance at seminars without lively and informed participation does not meet the standard of excellence expected of Honour’s students.

**C) Seminar Presentation**

**Weight 20%**

Students will be responsible for one seminar presentation. They will select a book or series of articles from any of the seminars in Parts II or III and deliver a book report to the class. These reports should stress the historiographical contribution of the work under review. They are not to be summaries of the contents. Student should design their reports so that historiographical issues are explicitly defined for class discussion.

Schedule of Seminar Topics and Recommended Readings

**Part 1: Roots**

All the readings for this section will be from:
- Burrow, John, *A History of Histories: Epics Chronicles, Romances and Inquiries from Herodotus and Thucydides to the Twentieth Century* (available in the textbook store)
- Tosh, John, *The Pursuit of History*

**Sept. 16**: Seminar #1 Classical Roots

**Sept. 23**: Seminar #2 Judeo-Christian Roots

**Sept. 30**: Seminar #3 Philosophical (Enlightenment) Roots

**Oct. 7**: Seminar #4 Scientific Roots
Part II: Approaches, Methods, Sources

Oct. 14: Seminar #5 The Modernist Approach (National History)

Case Study: The Frontier Thesis and the American National Character

Readings:
- Turner, Frederic Jackson, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History”
- Benson, Lee, “The Historical Background of Turner’s Frontier Essay” Agricultural History Vol.25, No.2, April 1951
- Nash, Gerald B., Creating the American West: Historical Interpretations
- Hofstadter, Richard, The Progressive Historians: Turner, Beard, Parrington Part II Chapters 2-4 on Turner

Oct. 21: Seminar #6 Post-Modernism

Challenging Turner

Readings:
- Limerick, Patricia, Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West
- Limerick, Patricia, et al., eds., Trails: Toward a History of the New West
- Worster, Donald, “New West, True West: Interpreting the Region’s History”, Western Historical Quarterly, Vol.18, No.2, Apr. 1987

Oct. 28: Seminar #7 The Post-Modern Approach (Micro-History)

Readings:
- Davis, Natalie Zemon, The Return of Martin Guerre
- Ginzberg, Carlo, The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth Century Miller
- Corbain, Alan, Village of Cannibals?: Rage and Murder in France, 1870
- Demos, John, The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from Early America
- Ulrich, Laurel Thatcher, A Midwives Tale: the Life of Martha Ballard Based on her Diary, 1785-1812
- Colley, Linda, The Ordeal of Elizabeth Marsh: A Woman in World History
- Cooper, Afua, The Hanging of Angelique: the Untold Story of Canadian Slavery and the Burning of Old Montreal
- Brewer, John, A Sentimental Murder: Love and Madness in the Eighteenth Century

Nov. 4: Seminar #8 New Sources: Material History and Photographs
Readings:
- Burke, Peter, Eyewitnessing History: the Uses of Images as Historical Evidence
- McDannell, Colleen, Material Christianity: Religion and Popular Culture in America
- McDannell, Colleen, Picturing Faith: Photography and the Great Depression
- Sandweiss, Martha, Print the Legend: Photography and the American West
- Williams, Carol, Framing the West: Race, Gender and the Photographic Frontier in the Pacific Northwest

- Ames, Kenneth, Death in the Dining Room and Other Tales of Victorian Culture
- Ulrich, Laurel Thatcher, The Age of Homespun: Objects and Stories in the Creation of an American Myth

Part III Memory, Myth and Public History

Nov. 18: Seminar #9 Remembering and Commemorating the Past
Readings:
- Winter, Jay, Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: the Great War in European Cultural History
- Winter, Jay, Remembering the War: The Great War Between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century
- Gregory, Adrian, The Silence of Memory: Armistice Day
- Vance, Jonathan, Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning and the First World War

**Nov. 25:** Seminar #10 Myth and the Creation of a Usable Past
-Reid, Jennifer, *Louis Riel and the Creation of Modern Canada: Mythic Discourse and the Post-Colonial State*

Celebrations and History in the Public Square
-Rudin, Ronald, *Founding Fathers: The Celebration of Champlain and Laval in the Streets of Quebec*
-Coates, Colin & Cecilia Morgan, *Heroines & History: Representations of Madelaine Vercheres and Laura Secord*
-Nelles, H.V. *The Art of Nation-Building: Pageantry and Spectacle at Quebec’s Tercentenary*

**Dec. 2:** Seminar #12 History and Film

“Canada: A People’s History”
“The Valour and the Horror”
Part 1, Savage Christmas, Hong Kong, 1941”
Part II, Death By Moonlight: Bomber Command”
Part III, In Desperate Battle, Normandy 1944”
-Bercuson, David & Sid Wise, eds., The Valour and the Horror Revisited

“Passchendaele” produced by Paul Gross

Monographs on History & Film
-Highes-Warrington, Marnie, History Goes to the Movies: Studying History on Film
-Toplin, Robert, Reel History: In Defense of Hollywood
-Rollins, Peter, Hollywood as Historian: American Film in Cultural Context

Emergency Evacuation
Assembly Points have been identified across campus in case of an emergency evacuation. Should an emergency occur, our class would assemble at the Social Sciences Food Court. See the following link for a complete list of assembly points:
http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints