

HIST 607: Research Syllabus, Winter Term 2019

This course provides each participant the opportunity to produce a significant contribution to the writing of the dissertation (for Ph.D. students), thesis (for M.A. students), or one of the two required research papers for M.A. students choosing the two-paper option. The contribution will take a form corresponding to each one's particular circumstance. For most, this will mean a chapter, paper, or the equivalent in finished (not necessarily final) form. Each one's project will benefit from the same stepwise progression towards its completion. This progression will take the form of weekly written assignments. Project development in this stepwise manner will also benefit from ongoing feedback from fellow participants as well as from the instructor. The course is intended to be more like that of a workshop in which collaboration and interaction among all participants accompany the generation of each one's end product, ideally enhancing its quality.

In the initial weeks of the term, seminar sessions will also include discussion of certain interpretive directions and methodological approaches that have influenced historical scholarship over the last few decades. For these sessions, readings assigned for each theme will serve as a springboard for discussing the relevant theme. To facilitate such discussion, each participant will prepare a set of issues, questions, or problems elicited by the readings of the week to share with other participants in the seminar session. The themes of each session's readings do not always correspond to the focus of the same week's project assignment.

Course Structure and Assignments

The end product of the course is the project, for the completion of which each participant's individual work throughout the term is primarily directed. With the exception of one session, each session will have an associated writing assignment pertaining to a specified step directed towards completion of the project. This assignment is referenced here as "**project assignment.**" Some of these assignments involve reflection on matters of planning or assessment of research materials; others consist of the drafting of text. In both instances, the assignment itself is be undertaken in written form. Except for the drafting of text, the quality of the writing is itself not the object; rather, the quality of thought -- meaning primarily precision and clarity -- and engagement with the process are priorities for these assignments. The assignment, in written form, will be shared with other participants in advance of the weekly session, so that everyone can read each one's project assignment. Project assignments will serve as basis for discussion in the seminar session. Ideally each participant's assignment will receive individualized discussion in each session. The aim is participation of all seminar members in each one's progressive movement towards the completion of a project of quality. The final paper is due at the end of the term, during exam week. The paper should be 20-30 pages in length. Other specifications (number and type of sources, both primary and secondary) are subject to approval by each student's primary advisor.

In the sessions of January 17, 24, 31 and February 7, about half of the session will be devoted to discussion of readings pertaining to a specific theme of historical interpretation or approach. To facilitate discussion and to provide the instructor evidence of engagement with the readings, a second written assignment, called "**reading assignment,**" is required for each of these four sessions. Unlike the

project assignment, the reading assignment is to be given to the instructor alone at the end of the session, not communicated in advance to other seminar participants. Points made and issues elicited by the readings will be shared orally in the session to facilitate discussion. Specifications for each week's reading assignment are indicated on the syllabus. Length of the assignment: **1 page single-spaced**, except where noted otherwise. The assignment may be done in text or "bullet-point" format.

Evaluation and Grading

Evaluation serving ultimately as the basis for the course grade take place in two ways. One is the evaluation of the completed project. The primary consideration is quality in the larger sense, corresponding to the final purpose of the project. This means: (1) quality of composition and writing as well as the quality of content; and (2) achievement at a level approximating the intended use of the project as a chapter of the dissertation or thesis or an MA research paper. Each participant's primary adviser will participate in this evaluation. The other basis is performance on the range of activities and assignments throughout the term: weekly written assignments (both project assignments and reading assignments), participation in seminar discussions, and overall engagement in the course. The instructor will provide written feedback, without specification of grade, on each week's project assignment and, where less than satisfactory engagement is detected, on the reading assignment as well. A more extensive written evaluation, with specification of grade, will be provided two times in the course of the term: during the weeks of seminar sessions of January 31 and February 21). This periodic evaluation will address each participant's total performance up to that point in the term. The main purpose of these periodic evaluations is to provide each participant a realistic and timely assessment of areas of performance that can use improvement. Demonstration of significant improvement over the course of the term will be taken into account for this component of the final course grade.

Because of the centrality of the project to the objectives of this course, the end product (chapter or paper) will be weighted most heavily in the course grade (in the range of 60-70% of the grade). The remainder of the grade will be based on the periodic evaluations, described above.

Procedures and Formats

Sessions

- For seminar sessions of January 17, 24, 31 and February 7, when approximately half of the session will be devoted to discussion of the readings, use your reading assignment to reference points and issues emerging from the readings. Submit the reading assignment to the instructor at the end of the session. The assignment should be printed (paper) format and should be 1 page single spaced, unless specified otherwise. The remainder of the session on these dates will be used for discussion of participants' project assignments.
- For seminar sessions following February 7, the entire session will be devoted to discussion of each participant's project assignment. This will be done individually. In addition, general issues raised by the assignment itself will be discussed by the group.

Project Assignments

Weekly written project assignments are to be made available in two formats:

- These are to be posted on **Canvas** by no later than 5:00 pm on the Tuesday preceding each week's seminar session. Post these in the section of **Canvas** called "Discussions." Everyone's assignment will be made available in this way to all seminar participants. Every participant is expected to read all of these postings prior to the seminar session of that week.
- In addition, either a printed paper copy or an e-mail attachment in Microsoft Word format, is to be given to the instructor. The printed copy may be given to the instructor at the end of the seminar session. The email with the attachment should be sent before the seminar session, preferably the day before. The instructor will use the printed copy or attached *Word* document to make written comments.

Instructor Contact Information

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Office hours: Tuesday 11:45 am – 12:30 pm and by appointment

Weekly Sessions and Readings

January 10

- Introductions, Description of the Course, Administrative Details
- Participants' Informal Presentations: Graduate Field, Description of Project Area
- Discussion of Pyne reading on Voice and Vision [*Canvas*]

January 17

- Project Assignment: Sources

Describe in detail the primary sources (published, manuscript, archival) that you intend to use as the **foundation** for the writing project that you will be undertaking this term. Indicate, as best as you can and at least in a general way, what use you intend to make of these sources. This may include methodological considerations, such as analysis of texts, quantification, and the like. While you will be making extensive use of secondary sources as well, this assignment calls on you to lay out, for your own benefit, your core materials for the undertaking. Do this in a manner that is comprehensible to someone who is not a specialist in your field. Minimum length: **three pages, double spaced**

- Readings: The Archives
 - Arlette Farge, *The Allure of the Archives* [Available for purchase in Duck Store]
- Reading Assignment: What impressions about discovering primary source materials and making creative use of such materials (archival or otherwise) did your reading of Farge bring to mind in both of the following ways: (1) as echoing your own experience of research and (2) as suggesting new ways that you might approach your own research material?

January 24

- Project Assignment: Contextualization of the Project

Situate the project you are undertaking in what you consider to be the arena of scholarly inquiry closest to the project. Articulate this with as much precision as you can at this point. This may include particular secondary studies, historical debates, or issues (or any combination). Address the way or ways that these studies or topics: (1) elicit your interest in the project as a matter of historical and intellectual curiosity, passion, commitment and (2) justify the direction or directions you are considering

in developing the project. Address these two points in a minimum of **three pages double-spaced**, followed by a list of ten secondary works that you have already read or have read in extensively that reflect either or both points.

- **Readings: Social History, Working-Class History**
 - Geoff Eley and Keith Nield, *The Future of Class in History: What's Left of the Social?* Chapters I and II. [Available for purchase in Duck Store]
 - Ira Katznelson, "Working-Class Formation: Cases and Comparisons" in *Working-Class Formation: Nineteenth-Century Patterns in Western Europe and the United States*, ed. Ira Katznelson and Aristide R. Zolberg [**Canvas**]
 - Joan Wallach Scott on "Women in *The Making of the English Working Class*," in *Gender and the Politics of History*, ch. 4 [**Canvas**]

- **Reading Assignment:** Choose one of the following books. Skim the content and report your impressions in any one or several of the terms offered or points made in the readings on social and working-class history
 - E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*
 - Anna Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class*
 - Gareth Stedman Jones, *Outcast London*
 - Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788 -1850*
 - John Blassingame, *Black New Orleans*

January 31

- **Project Assignment: Project Definition**

As the first major step towards design of your project, articulate as precisely as you can what you are up to in undertaking the project. Think of this assignment as getting yourself positioned at the outset, just before putting pen to paper (or keyboard to screen), such that, as you anticipate pursuing your project further down the line, you expect to be satisfied with the direction you have chosen now. Involved here are two related matters in the craft of writing history, called "voice and vision." "Voice" conveys how you want the reader to *hear* what you are saying. The accent is on the reception of your work by a reader, which you as an author have the capacity to shape by the "voice" you convey in your writing. "Vision" is more about exactly what you intend to convey – what your subject is, what message or argument you want to bring to your subject, what, in other words, is the central purpose that provides the core guidance for and framework of the work as a whole. "Vision" like "Voice" is your decision. There is no one way to prescribe, other than *your way*, the result of your choice. (Read Pyne on Voice and Vision [**Canvas**] for elaboration of these concepts). Write **three pages, double-spaced** of project definition with these perspectives in mind. Try to articulate what you perceive as the "voice" you would like your readers to hear and the "vision" that best represents what your project is about.

- Readings: Cultural History, Postmodernism in History
 - Lynn Hunt, ed., *The New Cultural History*, Introduction and chapters 1 and 6 [**Canvas**]
 - Geoff Eley and Keith Nield, *The Future of Class in History*, chapters III - VI
- Reading Assignment: Based on the above readings, how would you define “cultural history”? What is the meaning of “culture” as relevant to the kinds of research and writing undertaken by historians? In what sense did the emergence of cultural history present a challenge to social history? Are the two irreconcilable, or is it possible to conceive of a meaningful and rigorously executed combination or hybrid?

February 7

- Project Assignment: Complete your research/reading for your project, enough to enable you to draft a substantial project outline
- Readings: Silences in History
 - Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* [Available for purchase in Duck Store]
- Reading Assignment: Offer points, both favorable and critical, on this reading. What issues does this reading call upon the reader to consider in each of the following ways: (1) taking notice of what is and is not present in a historical work and (2) what needs to change in the nature of research, the analysis of sources, or the interpretations derived from existing source materials? Length of assignment: **three pages double-spaced**

February 14

- Project Assignment: Project Outline

Write a detailed outline of your chapter or paper. Think of this as a map of the expected product that includes all the sections now under consideration as well as the relevant clusters of information. The outline should apply what is called, in the literature on writing history, “design.” **Design** is about framing, and about the arrangement of different parts of the account in relation to that framing. Such framing is foundational, in the sense that it provides the entire work both the shape of the whole and the relation of parts to the whole: their proportions, dimensions, color and the like. It holds the account together – provides coherence – but also does more than that. It provides the necessary ground enabling the text to flow evenly, naturally, freely, even when that text is complex or unorthodox.

February 21

- **Project Assignment: Project Introduction**

Write a 3-5 page introduction to your chapter or paper. Do this as though this text will serve as an actual introduction to a thesis chapter or to the thesis or dissertation as a whole. Everyone should do this, regardless of the nature of the project. Think of the introduction as an actual beginning of the chapter or paper, even though you will most likely revise it, or discard and replace it, in the final version of your project.

February 28

- **Project Assignment: Oral Presentation**

Each participant will make a 15-20 minute presentation to the seminar that focuses on the content of the project. Think of this as a pre-writing draft of the chapter or paper. Besides laying out the content, the presentation should include comment on any challenges being faced. The format would be similar to that of delivering a conference paper; it may include power points, visuals, and the like. Each presentation will be followed by discussion of the project's content among all seminar participants.

March 7

- **Project Assignment: First Draft of Project (due on *Canvas* by midnight Monday, March 11)**

March 14

- Discussion of each participant's project draft

Week of March 18 – 22: Final Paper Due