

History 382: Modern Classics of Historical Writing
Spring 2022: times to be arranged in HSSC A3226

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Friday 1-2

Course description

This course will introduce students to some of the most important themes, debates, and scholars in the field of history during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Over the course of 14 weeks, we will read important works of scholarship by Fernand Braudel, E. P. Thompson, Joan Scott, and others, examining the books and articles that helped pioneer fields like social history, gender history, and economic history. The class will follow a tutorial method, based on the system of graduate education at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, to provide students with advanced work in critical reading, analytical writing, and the cogent expression of ideas. The class will be writing intensive.

Course texts

Course readings can be found in several places:

- x Journal articles will be downloadable from a database accessible through the Grinnell College libraries, most often JSTOR or Project Muse. The course's syllabus and Pioneerweb page will provide links to these articles.
- x In some cases, scanned chapters of books will be available in the documents section of our course Pioneerweb page.
- x Books will be available on reserve at Burling Library or can be purchased from the college bookstore. If you do not purchase these books, please copy or scan the relevant pages and bring printout to class.

These books are available for purchase and are on reserve at Burling Library:

- x William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of Early New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2003 [1983]).
- x Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage, 1995 [1975]).
- x Sarah Maza, *Thinking about H* (New York: Vintage, 1966)

assigned to a tutorial group of either two or three students. For the rest of the semester, each tutorial group will meet with the professor ~~one~~ each week for a ~~one~~ hour session. Both students will complete the reading assignment of the week. The first student will also ~~write a~~ write a page essay on those readings, responding to ~~a~~ a pre-arranged essay question; the second student will prepare a brief response, according to a standard format. The students will switch roles the following week and alternate thereafter. (In tutorial groups with three students, in one week Student A will write a paper and students B and C will respond, and in the following week Students B and C will each write a paper and Student A will respond to one of those papers.) At the end of the semester, students will have the chance to revise one of their papers in response to the feedback they have received from the professor ~~or~~ their tutorial partner.

Course Objectives

This course will help students to ~~find~~ and improve their skills in the following areas:

- x Identifying, summarizing, and critiquing the arguments in classic works of historical writing, and examining debates between scholars;
- x Producing a brief analytical paper in response to a historical question;
- x Analyzing peers' writing and helping them with constructive feedback;
- x Discussing their ideas cogently and persuasively in class discussions.

Assignments and Grading

Your grade in this class will be based on the following requirements:

Attendance and participation 15%:

Attendance in this class is especially important ~~given~~ its tutorial format, so I will keep attendance records throughout the semester. Students may miss one class without penalty on a day when they are not writing an essay ~~in~~ this case, email the professor and your partner as soon as possible. Depending ~~on~~ the timing, the essay ~~writer~~ may meet with the professor for a one student tutorial session or may join another tutorial group for the day.

As noted below, I will drop your lowest essay mark when calculating grades. In practice, this means that you can submit only five essays (rather than six) and miss one class session when you would normally be the essay ~~writer~~, provided that you are willing to have your other five essays

You will be expected to participate actively in class discussions, which will not only help you to master the course material and improve your speakin

Did the feedback offer at least one (constructively) critical comment and helpful suggestion for implementation in future essays?

Did the feedback include a pertinent question

Extension Policy

The class's tutorial format makes it especially important for both (or all three) partners to fulfill their roles as planned, which makes it more complicated than usual to grant extensions in this course. Each student may therefore have only one extension on an essay this semester. It will nearly always be in your interests to save this extension until you are ill, since you will not be given a second extension unless you can provide documentation of an emergency. If you do need to take an extension, it is your responsibility to email the professor and your classmate(s) as early as you can to arrange a new time to meet.

Plagiarism

Your essays and your other writing this semester must of course be your own work. Your essays should be based only on the course readings—don't do further research on the issues involved in the reading of the week (unless you look at book reviews, which you should cite if you use). You are welcome to discuss the class and the readings with other students (in fact, ~~do~~ ^{do} help you to understand the material better) but you should write your papers on your own.

Academic accommodations

My goal is to create as inclusive a classroom as possible and to meet the needs of all of my students. I therefore encourage students with documented disabilities, including invisible or non-apparent disabilities such as chronic illness, learning disabilities, and psychiatric disabilities, to discuss reasonable accommodations with me. You will also need to have a conversation about and provide documentation of your disability to the Coordinator for Student Disability Resources, Jae Hirschman, who is located in Steiner Hall (x3089).

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 (week of January 24) 12pm: Introduction (no essay due)

observe “the underlying curr

Essay question: In Thompson's view, how was the English working class created? What are the advantages and disadvantages of his approach to the "making" of the English working class?

E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage, 1966 [1963]) 9-14, 189-212 (pay particular attention to these pages), 349-71, 174-6. For Purchase.

William H. Sewell Jr., "How Classes are Made: Critical Reflections on E.P. Thompson's Theory of Working-class Formation," in *E.P. Thompson: Critical Perspectives* (Philadelphia: Temple, 1990), pp. 50-7. PWeb.

Week 5 (begins February 2): Historicizing Power

(Student Y submits, X reviews)

Essay question: How does Foucault challenge standard assumptions about the history of punishment and the exercise of power? Is he convincing?

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (New York: Vintage, 1995 [1975]), Parts 1 and 2. Available online.

Week 6 (begins February 2): Gender

(Student X submits, Y reviews)

Essay question: Joan Scott argues that gender is "a primary way of signifying relationships of power. Changes in the organization of social relationships always correspond to changes in the representations of power, but the direction of change is not necessarily one way" (p. 1067). Judith Bennett proposes a theory of "patriarchal equilibrium" with a particular vision of how gender relations have played out in history. To what extent can their two visions of gender history be reconciled?

Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful category of historical analysis," *American Historical Review* (1986), 1053-75. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1864376>

Roger Chartier, "Text, Symbols and Frenchness." *The Journal of Modern History* 57:4 (1985), pp. 682-695. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1879771>

Robert Darnton, "The symbolic element in history," *Journal of Modern History* 58(1) (1986): 218-234. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1881570>

Week 10 (begins April 11): Intellectual History

(Student X submits, Y reviews)

Essay question: In the readings for this week, Skinner and LaCapra each present a manifesto for how to read history (Skinner, 1982, pp. 47-60; LaCapra, 1983, pp. 47-60). How do their views differ?

Essay question: Jonathan Rose seeks to “enter the minds of ordinary readers in history, to discover what they read and how they read it.” How successful are his attempts to reconstruct the literary tastes and autodidact culture of British workers, when it comes to the reception of modernism and other literary works?

Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (New Haven: Yale, 2001), xi-xiii, 1-57, 116145, 393438. PWeb.

Christopher Hilliard, “Modernism and the Common Writer,” *The Historical Journal* 48:3 (3005), 769-787. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4091722>

Week 13 (begins May 2): Orientalism

(Student Y submits, X reviews)

Essay question: Said argues that “ideas, cultures, and histories cannot seriously be understood or studied without their force, or more precisely their configurations of power, also being studied,” while Varisco responds that “the real goal of serious scholarship should be to improve understanding of self and other, not to whine endlessly or wallow self righteously in continual opposition.” In your opinion, does Said advance serious understanding?

Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1994), 73. Three copies are on reserve.

Daniel Martin Varisco, *Reading Orientalism: Said and the Unsaid* (University of Washington, 2007), pp. 25-26, 290-305. PWeb.

Week 14 (week of May 9): Thinking about History (no essay due)

Sarah Maza, *Thinking about History*, pp. 83-239.