Course Outline

The French philosopher Jacques Rancière wrote that, “it is a rather unfortunate occurrence that [the word] history in our language [French], means at the same time: lived experience, its faithful narrative, its treacherous fictionalization, and its scholarly explanation.” *Les Noms de l’Histoire: Essai de Poétique du Savoir* (Seuil, 1992), 11.

This course is designed to investigate the ways in which history has emerged as a self-conscious body of knowledge concerned with exploring, explaining, and understanding the significance of human history. To write history demands reflecting on the very epistemological issues at stake in the writing of the past. This course’s overarching purpose follows intellectual historian Don Kelley’s claim that “the critical investigation of the past requires the understanding of traditions of interpretations separating us and yet connecting us to our object of investigation.”

We will therefore examine the various and rich traditions of interpretations that have tried to elucidate the meaning and nature of history: we will first briefly examine how authors and philosophers have understood and conceptualized history from the Ancient world to the 19th century. We will then focus our attention to the debates that have infused, influenced, and enriched our understanding of history as a practice and the ways in which knowledge is produced about the past.

Course Objectives:

. read and analyze historiographical, critical, and philosophical writings
. become acquainted with the main issues at stake in historiographical debates
. reflect on and address historiographical debates
. write critically on debates, issues, and authors

Course Readings:

One book will be required:

ALL OTHER READINGS WILL BE ARTICLES ON RESERVE AT THE LIBRARY.
Some of the articles will be taken from the following collections:
Frank Ankersmit & Hans Kellner (eds.) *A New Philosophy of History* (University of Chicago Press, 1995)
Keith Jenkins (ed.) *The Postmodern History Reader* (Routledge, 1997)
Donald. R Kelley (ed.), *Versions of History: From Antiquity to Enlightenment* (Yale University Press, 1991)
Fritz Stern (ed.) *The Varieties of History: From Voltaire to the Present* (Vintage, 1973)

The following readings are recommended as they may be of interest to you:
[throughout the course, you will be provided with bibliographic references that pertain to the week’s topic.]
Gabrielle Spiegel, *Practicing History: New Directions in Historical Writing after the Linguistic Turn* (Routledge, 2005)

**Course Assignments:**

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<th>Assignment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Article Abstract</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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<td>Response Paper #1</td>
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<td>Final Critical Paper</td>
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**Participation:** you must make substantial comments in class and show that you have read the reading and have insights, questions, queries, and reflections.

**Abstract:** you will have to hand in a one single-spaced paragraph synthesis of a piece you have read from January 21 or January 28, to hand in by January 30.

**Response Paper:** you will be asked to hand in 3 response papers on the weekly topics of your choice. The paper will require you to bring in conversation 2 out of the 3 articles you have read under one topic and to show how they can be understood. The paper must be a minimum of 3 double-spaced pages and no more than 4 double-spaced pages. You may write on any topic of your liking. You may hand in your response(s) paper(s) at any point during the semester, but **at the latest by Aril 29**. I will not accept papers after that date.
Final critical Paper: you will be asked to write a lengthy critical paper on a topic of your choosing using the materials read in class as well as 2 other historical works of your choosing. Guidelines will be distributed later on during the semester.

Class structure: All classes will involve lecturing and discussion. You must therefore do your reading regularly and consistently and be prepared to discuss your reading.

Class participation:
Participation in class is crucial. Engaging with the material, being prepared for class and participating in class are essential for productive discussions:
- You will be expected to have done the reading.
- You are expected to bring the reading to class (textbook, book, online document)
- You are expected to make substantial remarks on the reading, providing insights & analysis in small and large group discussion: you will be assessed for your participation.

The classroom should be a pleasant, exciting, and rewarding experience: students are expected to be respectful of each other in demeanor, tone, and behavior. Rude or inconsiderate behavior and remarks will not be tolerated and I will ask you to leave if you exhibit such behavior.

Please turn off your cell phones BEFORE CLASS.
Please do not use laptop computers in class.
Students are therefore expected to come to class on time: this is a sign of respect towards your peers and myself. Any substantial lateness (more than 5 minutes) will be counted as an absence—unless documented or justified. If you anticipate being late on a regular basis (because of work obligations, family commitments, etc.), please come and inform me at the beginning of class so that I do not count you as absent.

Class Attendance:
Students are expected to attend all class sessions: I will grade attendance (which counts towards your participation grade). More than one unjustified absence will result in an F for your participation grade. A justified absence is one due to illness, work conflict, jury duty, etc.: please make sure to bring documentation.

Please be aware that irregular attendance usually makes it difficult to do well in this class. It is your responsibility to make sure you keep up with the work done when absent.

If you cannot come to class, or will be unprepared due to unforeseen events, it is best to contact me as soon and early as possible, preferably by email.
A policy of honesty is usually the wisest in communicating with me.
Academic Affairs

**Disability:** The Americans with Disability Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Disability Services Office: (361) 825-5816, or go and visit the office: Driftwood 101.

**Academic Dishonesty:**
There will be a no-zero tolerance policy on cheating (during quizzes or exams). Plagiarism will not be tolerated and means you will be failed for the entire course. Plagiarism is the “UNCREDITED USE (INTENTIONAL OR UNINTENTIONAL) OF SOMEONE ELSE’S WORDS OR IDEAS.” (http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01). Using a word, a group of words, a sentence structure, ideas without giving proper credit to the original author constitutes plagiarism.
To avoid plagiarism: always be safe rather than sorry! Cite (provide quotation marks, citation in MLA, or Chicago format, provide citation even when you are paraphrasing or using an idea or information) anything you may use for your paper. For best practices, see: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/03/
Note: wikipedia does not constitute an academic source that you may use.

How to cite Chicago-Style: you can find guidelines on how to use the Chicago citation style—which is used in history—on the website of the Tutoring & Learning Center.
http://falcon.tamu.edu/~tlcweb/wc.htm

Course Outline:

**Week 1**

Jan. 14  **Introduction: What is the Philosophy of History?**

**Week 2**

Jan. 21  **From the Ancients to the Enlightenment**
Reading: Herodotus, Thucydides, Lucian, Cicero, Bede, Christine de Pisan, Petrarch; all from: Kelley (ed.) *Versions of History: From Antiquity to Enlightenment*
Week 3

Jan. 28  
The 19th Century:  
Reading: Ranke, Macauley, Droysen, Marx; all from: Stern (ed.) Varieties of History: From Voltaire to the Present  
Recommended: history as an academic discipline, Mommsen: “On the training of historians”

Week 4
Objectivity & Evidence

Feb. 04  

Week 5
The Linguistic Turn

Feb. 11  

Week 6
Materialism, Marxism & Everyday Life

Feb. 18  

Week 7
The Cultural Turn

Feb. 25  
Week 8
Post-Structuralism I

March 04  Reading: Jean-Francois Lyotard, “The Post-Modern Condition” (excerpt); Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy & History”

Week 9
Post-Structuralism II


Week 10
SPRING BREAK

Week 11
Narrative I

March 25  Reading: Hayden White, chapter 1 & 2 in: The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation, Alan Megill, “‘Grand Narrative’ and the Discipline of History”

Week 12
Narrative II

Apr. 01  Reading: Saul Friedlander, “Probing the Limits of Representation;” Dominick Lacapra, introduction & conclusion (Representing the Holocaust), Henry Louis Gates Jr., “Authority, (White) Power and the (Black) Critic; It’s All Greek to Me”

Week 13
Heterologies I

Week 14
Heterologies II


Week 15
Heterologies III

Apr. 22  Reading: Edward Said, Orientalism (introduction); Gayatri Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?”, Robert Young, “White Mythologies: History and the West”

Week 16

Apr. 29  LAST CLASS
Reading: Rolph-Michel Trouillot, Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History (Beacon Press, 1995)

May 11  Final Critical Paper to hand in.