

Professor Michael Chang

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Office hrs: Wed 3-5 pm & by appt

Course time and location:

M 4:30-7:10 pm

Robinson A, Room 349

Course webpage: <http://hist610.wordpress.com>

Course Description: This course is unique because it does *not* concentrate upon a specific geographic region or historical era, nor upon a particular social, political, or cultural topic. Instead, the course focuses on historiography or “the history of history.” Our main goal will be to better understand the underlying theoretical and methodological questions that have informed the study and writing of history as a professional discipline from the late nineteenth century to the present. The course’s primary purpose is to introduce new graduate students to the major ideas, problems, and schools of thought in the field of history and to thereby promote a better understanding of the implications of our own and others’ choices in framing historical questions. We will examine the way that historians choose and interpret their sources, the elements that affect their interpretations, and how and why these interpretations have developed and changed over time. Students will engage with a wide variety of historical genres including: social history, microhistory, cultural history, gender history, environmental history, critical race studies as well as the histories of commodities, empire, and nationalism.

Required Texts: The titles below are all available for purchase at the GMU Barnes & Noble in Johnson Center.

1. Carr, Edward Hallett. *What is History?* Vintage, 1967.
2. Banner, James M., Jr. *Being a Historian: An Introduction to the Professional World of History*. Cambridge, 2012.
3. Esherick, Joseph W. *Origins of the Boxer Uprising*. California, 1987.
4. Cohen, Paul A. *History in Three Keys: the Boxers as Event, Experience, & Myth*. Columbia, 1997.
5. Ginzburg, Carlo. *The Cheese & the Worms: the Cosmos of a 16th Century Miller*. Johns Hopkins (reprint), 2013.
6. Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. 2nd revised ed. Beacon, 2015.
7. Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish*. 2nd ed. Vintage, 1995.
8. Allen, Theodore W. *The Invention of the White Race, v. 1: Racial Oppression & Social Control*. 2nd ed. Verso, 2012.
9. Cronon, William. *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*. 20th anniversary ed. Hill and Wang, 2003.
10. Mintz, Sidney W. *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*. Penguin (reprint), 1986.
11. Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised ed. Verso, 2006.
12. Savage, Kirk. *Monument Wars: Washington, D.C., the National Mall, and the Transformation of the Memorial Landscape*. California, 2009.

In addition to the titles above, readings in the schedule marked by a **single asterisk (*)** are available at the “Additional Material” page on our course website (password = historiography).

Recommended Texts:

Eley, Geoff. *A Crooked Line: From Cultural History to the History of Society*. Michigan, 2005.

Strunk, William, Jr. and E. B. White. *The Elements of Style*. 4th ed. Longman, 1999. (Avoid free or cheap older editions, which are often the original, non-updated version w/out White’s contributions. These are very dated.)

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 8th ed. Edited by Wayne C. Booth, et al. Chicago, 2013.

Requirements & Grading: You must complete (that is, demonstrate serious engagement with) every requirement in order to receive a passing grade. The instructor reserves the final right to determine what constitutes “completion” of a requirement.

1. Participation (25%): I expect you to attend every one of our scheduled meetings and to be fully prepared. This means finishing the assigned readings listed for that day before coming to class. *Active and informed participation in discussion is **the** core of this seminar.* Our meetings will consist almost entirely of discussion of the assigned readings, so it is essential that you do the reading and come prepared to discuss it.

Another crucial aspect of discussion is listening and responding to the ideas of other members of the class. Discussion does not simply mean making declarations and statements, or displaying one’s knowledge or erudition. Instead, discussion entails a genuine exchange of ideas that creates a more complete and sophisticated understanding of

historical works and scholarly debates than any single individual perspective can provide. Disagreement is a vital and natural part of this process of learning, and it is encouraged as long as it is expressed respectfully and constructively.

Participation is judged on *quality more than quantity*, but it's difficult to discern quality without a sufficient sample size. In fact, your active, regular participation contributes to the quality of the course as a whole—the course is more enjoyable and intellectually rewarding when as many people as possible contribute consistently to our discussions, both online and in class.

Each week 2-3 students will be responsible for generating and guiding our class discussion. You will be required to help lead two (2) class discussions over the course of the semester. (A sign-up sheet will be available during our first meeting.)

In order to help the designated discussion leaders prepare for class, everyone else who is not leading discussion in any given week will be required to share some immediate thoughts, reactions, and questions regarding the assigned reading(s). These contributions will be posted before class (by 2:00 p.m.) on an online discussion platform—known as a “Slack” domain (<https://hist610-f16.slack.com>)—which I will demonstrate and “invite” each of you to join (via your official Mason e-mail account) during our first meeting.

2. “Weekly” Reaction Papers (20%): You must write a total of 7 reaction papers (1-2 pgs., double spaced) on the books we read (weeks when we read multiple articles are not suitable for this assignment). There are a total of 10 books (not counting those by Carr and Banner), so you can select which 7 you will write on—this is up to you and does not need to be decided in advance, just make sure you complete and submit a total of 7 reaction papers over the course of the semester. Reaction papers are due IN CLASS on the day we discuss the book(s) about which you are writing.

The reaction papers should have **one or two paragraphs summarizing the book's argument** and historiographical significance as accurately and succinctly as possible, and **another paragraph or two on your critical response** to the book's argument and historiographical orientation. In this case “critical” does not necessarily mean negative, but rather engaged and analytical. Your response should focus on substantive intellectual and interpretive issues rather than matters that are primarily aesthetic or formal (e.g., there were too many big words, it was boring, you felt maps would have been useful, or you would have preferred footnotes to endnotes, etc.).

3. Review of Reviews (20%): This is a 5-page paper comparing and contrasting at least 4 scholarly book reviews of one book written by Ginzburg, Allen, Cronon, Mintz, Anderson, or Savage. The paper is due in class on the week that we read the particular book, the reviews of which you've decided to review. You should compare the reviewers' overall impressions of the book and consider more specific issues such as: Which elements of the book do the reviewers think are most important or innovative, which do they think are effective, and which do they think are problematic? Is there a general consensus among the reviewers about these issues and the book overall, or are there sharply contrasting reactions? Why? Which reviews are most valid, in your opinion? Which are most useful in understanding the book and its historiographic significance?

4. Historiographical Essay (35%): This is a semester-long project that involves writing a 15-20 page historiographical essay on a topic of your choosing. The point of writing this paper is to explore the evolution of the scholarly literature on a topic in light of the trends and ideas that we have studied this semester. This means that choosing a topic of appropriate scale and significance is important: if the topic is too broad (say, the French Revolution) it will be unwieldy and your treatment will necessarily be extremely superficial; if it is too narrow or technical (say, the firearms used by Napoleon's army) there will not be enough significant literature connected to broader disciplinary trends. Similarly, choosing appropriate books is also important. You will need to identify works that are well known and influential in the context of your topic—ones that have actively shaped the discussion and interpretation. To facilitate this, there are several smaller steps/assignments due throughout the semester, including:

- an initial topic description (due by 12:00 noon on Mon. 9/26/2016)
- a preliminary bibliography (due by 12:00 noon on Tue. 10/11/2016)
- an annotated final bibliography (due by 12:00 noon on Mon. 11/21/2016), and
- a draft thesis/argument (due by 12:00 noon on Mon. 12/5/2016).

The final historiographic essay is due at 12:00 p.m. (noon) on Mon., 12/19/2016. No late work will be accepted for this.

Course Policies, Reminders, and Helpful Tips

a) Class absences: Students are expected to attend all meetings of the course. In the event that you must miss class, you are responsible for the contents of the lecture or discussion. **Students are expected to come to class on time.** Late arrivals are disruptive, and late-comers may miss important information or hand-outs.

b) Cell phones: During class all phones must be switched off and put away. Neither students nor instructors should compose, read, or respond to text messages during class. If you are an emergency responder (such as an EMT) and must receive calls or messages, please notify the instructor within the first week of class.

c) Laptop computers: Students who wish to use a laptop computer for note-taking are welcome to do so. However, *students who use laptops for purposes other than taking notes (i.e., email, instant messaging, internet browsing unrelated to the course) will be asked to leave and no longer be permitted to use a computer in class.*

d) Submission of written work: All written work is due at the time(s) and on the day(s) indicated on the syllabus. All written assignments should be typed, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins and in a 12-point font. Your name should be on the paper, and all pages should be stapled and numbered. You should retain electronic copies of all written work, and your instructor may ask for an electronic copy of your paper in order to use it as an example in teaching or to submit to a plagiarism detection site like Turnitin.com.

e) Late policy: All students are responsible for knowing and adhering to the deadlines for course assignments. Late work will be penalized **ONE FULL LETTER GRADE (10 pts.) per day (including weekends & holidays)**. The only exceptions will be when you have explicit, advance permission from your instructor. If you anticipate a problem in completing or submitting your work on time, you must contact the instructor in a timely manner. If you do not hear back from your instructor, you should assume that your work is due on the original date. Regardless of whether or not you have been granted an extension, you must contact your instructor for how to submit late work. Late assignments will not be considered as “received” until a copy is in the instructor’s hands. **No late work will be accepted for the final assignment (historiographical essay).**

f) Plagiarism: Don’t do it. It’s easy to spot & can result in expulsion from the University and loss of degree. **What is plagiarism?** As noted by the American Historical Association (AHA), “Writers plagiarize... when they fail to use quotation marks around borrowed material and to cite the source, use an inadequate paraphrase that makes only superficial changes to a text, or neglect to cite the source of a paraphrase.” For details see pgs. 3-4 of this document: http://www.historians.org/Documents/Plagiarism/Curriculum_Plagiarism.pdf

If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, or about when or how to properly cite a source, talk to your instructor before you write! For more information see this website:

<http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm#plagiarism>

g) Academic accommodations. If you are a student with a documented condition that warrants academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 703-993-2474. **All academic accommodations must be arranged through ODS** (<http://ods.gmu.edu/>). Additional support may be obtained through Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): <http://caps.gmu.edu/>

h) Electronic communication. It is best to contact me at mchang5[at]gmu[dot]edu. I usually check email during normal business hours, namely M-F, 9 am-5 pm. Please allow 24-48 hours for a reply to an email request or inquiry (excluding weekends). Please sure to indicate your course number in your email subject line and include both your first and last name in your signature. For general advice on the best way to communicate via email, see:

<http://web.wellesley.edu/SocialComputing/Netiquette/netiquetteprofessor.html>

i) Academic Integrity: All George Mason University students have agreed to abide by the letter and the spirit of the Honor Code (<http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>)

All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee for review.

j) Administrative Deadlines

Last day to add classes:	Tue. 9/6/2016	Last day to drop (33% tuition penalty): Tue. 9/20/2016
Last day to drop (no tuition penalty):	Tue. 9/6/2016	Last day to drop (67% tuition penalty): Fri. 9/30/2016

k) Final disclaimer: This syllabus is subject to revision as the semester proceeds. Announcements of changes will be made online and during class meetings. Students are responsible for being aware of any changes.

COURSE SCHEDULE

UNIT 1: Epistemological and Professional Issues

Week 1 (8/29/2016): Introduction

Edward Hallett Carr, *What is History?* (1961), p. 3-9; we will read and discuss this short passage in class.

-According to Carr, what is “history”? And how is it different from “the past”? How are “facts about the past” different from “facts of history”?

Week 2 (9/5/2016; LABOR DAY—no class)—finish reading E. H. Carr, *What is History?* (1961).

Post self-introduction on “Slack” domain before our library session on Wed.

Wed. 9/7/2016, 4:30-5:30 p.m.: library session with George Oberle (**Fenwick Library, Rm. 1014B**)

-If your schedule will not allow you to attend the session above, you may join different library session for another section of HIST 610, which will be held at 7:30 p.m. on Tue. 9/6/2016 (Fenwick Library, Rm. 1014B). If you plan on attending the alternate (Tuesday) session, please let me know in advance.

Week 3 (9/12/2016): What does it mean (or might it mean) to be a “professional” historian?

James M. Banner, Jr. *Being a Historian: An Introduction to the Professional World of History* (2012).

*American Historical Association, “Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct” (2011).

UNIT 2: Varieties of Social History

Week 4 (9/19/2016): Social History, c. 1920s-1980s

-Study and familiarize yourself with the “Glossary of Historiographic Terms” under the “Course Links” section (along the right-hand side) of our course website (<https://hist610.wordpress.com/>).

*Geoff Eley, *A Crooked Line: From Cultural History to the History of Society* (2005), p. 25-60.

*J.H. Hexter, “Fernand Braudel and the *Monde Braudellien*,” *Journal of Modern History* 44 (1972): 480-539.

*E.P. Thompson, “Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism,” *Past & Present* 38 (1967): 56-97.

*E.P. Thompson, “The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century,” *Past & Present* 50 (1971): 76-136.

-How has the definition of “social history” shifted over time? Who were the major (most influential) practitioners of “social history” from the 1920s through the 1990s?

Week 5 (9/26/2016): Event History

Joseph W. Esherick, *Origins of the Boxer Uprising* (1987).

-How, if at all, might this work be considered an example of “social history”?

Initial Topic Description for Historiographical Essay due: By 12:00 p.m. (noon) at the latest, email me a short (1 page) description of you chosen topic and some of the key interpretive and historiographical issues it involves.

Week 6 (10/3/2016): History as Event, Experience, & Myth

Paul A. Cohen, *History in Three Keys: the Boxers as Event, Experience, & Myth* (1997).

-How does this work differ—in terms of methodology and/or approach—from Esherick’s *Origins of the Boxer Uprising*?

Week 7 (10/10/2016—Cols. Day; Mon. classes meet on Tue. 10/11/2016): (Italian) Microhistory

Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: the Cosmos of a Sixteenth Century Miller* (1976).

-How, if at all, might this work be considered an example of “social history”? How is it similar to or different from other types of “social history” that we’ve read thus far?

Preliminary Bibliography for Historiographical Essay due: By 12:00 p.m. (noon) on the day of class, email me a properly formatted, word-processed bibliography (i.e. not just an email list) of works you have identified for potential inclusion in the historiographical essay. This list should be longer than what you eventually end up with—it should

not just be a book or two, but rather the initial result of a process of bibliographic exploration (using the various resources introduced in our library session on Wed. 9/7/2016).

UNIT 3: Knowledge Production and Questions of Power

Week 8 (10/17/2016): Historical Knowledge & Questions of Power

Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (1995).

Week 9 (10/24/2016): the “Linguistic Turn” and History of Discursive Formations (discursive analysis)

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (1974).

Week 10 (10/31/2016): Gender History

*Joan W. Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” *American Historical Review* 91:5 (December 1986): 1053-1075.

*Joanne Meyerowitz, “A History of ‘Gender,’” *American Historical Review* 113:5 (December 2008): 1346-1356.

*Joan W. Scott, “Unanswered Questions,” *American Historical Review* 113:5 (December 2008): 1422-1430.

*Toby L. Ditz, “Shipwrecked; or, Masculinity Imperiled: Mercantile Representations of Failure and the Gendered Self in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia,” *Journal of American History* 81:1 (June 1994): 51-80.

Week 11 (11/7/2016): Race and Racial Ideologies

Theodore W. Allen, *The Invention of the White Race, v. 1: Racial Oppression and Social Control* (1994).

UNIT 4: Themes in Transnational and Comparative Histories

Week 12 (11/14/2016): Environmental History

William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (1983).

-read back matter/20th anniversary essay first

Week 13 (11/21/2016): Histories of Commodities and Imperial Formations (Empires)

Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (1985).

Final Annotated Bibliography for Historiographical Essay due: This should be a properly formatted, word-processed bibliography of the works you are actually planning on using in your historiographical essay. You should include a couple of sentences describing each book, its topic and argument, and when possible its general place in the literature. Please send via email by 12:00 p.m. (noon) on the day of class.

Week 14 (11/28/2016): Nationalism(s)

Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (1983).

Week 15 (12/5/2016): History, Monuments, and Memory

Kirk Savage, *Monument Wars: Washington, D.C., the National Mall, and the Transformation of the Memorial Landscape* (2009).

Historiography Draft Thesis/Argument due: This should outline the overall argument and key points that you will develop more fully in your historiographical essay. It should be 1-2 pages long, double-spaced. Due via email by 12:00 p.m. (noon) on the day of class.

FINAL HISTORIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY DUE by 12:00 p.m. (noon) on Mon. 12/19/2016 (via e-mail).