

Hist 610-001  
 Spring 2012  
 R 7:20-10 pm  
 Krug 204  
 Office hours: Thursday 3-4;  
 Tuesday by appointment

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**ONLY TO EMAIL ASSIGNMENTS**

## THE STUDY AND WRITING OF HISTORY

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century trends in historical analysis. We will pay particular attention to the historical subfields that emerged since the 1960s (for example: the histories of race and ethnicities, women's and gender history, the history of imperialism and post colonialism, etc.). We will not look at all of these, but will try to understand the underlying processes behind new histories by examining some of them. Cultural and social history are the broad rubrics under which most of our work will fall, and we will also be interested in the ways disciplinary boundaries have been both crossed and enforced as history was influenced by trends in other disciplines and other disciplines turned to history. In examining changes in historical practice we will be looking both at how historical and social forces affected historical practices and at debates within and among historical camps. Attention to the ways that historians choose and interpret their sources, efforts to expand the realm of sources and the ways to use them, as well as changing forms of presentation will also form part of our discussions.

### BOOKS/READINGS

**PLEASE NOTE:** You will be reading many articles and a few excerpts from longer works. I will indicate how to access these online when I send you an electronic version of the syllabus and through frequent email communication.

**The following books have been ordered for the course** (available in the campus bookstore)

Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre*  
 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*  
 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*  
 Geoff Eley, *A Crooked Line: From Cultural History to the History of Society*  
 Kathy Peiss, *Zoot Suit*  
 Jefferson Cowie, *Stayin' Alive*  
 Daniel T. Rodgers, *Age of Fracture*

Over the course of the semester I may be adding and/or changing some materials that are not currently listed on this syllabus. These additional readings will be announced in class and on email. It is your responsibility to keep up with these additions and other class news.

### GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS See page 4 for explanation of each assignment

All assignments will be described in specific instructions and discussed in class at least a week before deadlines. All assignments need to be submitted electronically to [dcopelma@gmail.com](mailto:dcopelma@gmail.com). I may also ask you for hard copies of your assignments.

1. **Preparation for and participation in class discussions** (10% of the grade)
2. **Short Essay** 3-5 pages (10%)
3. **Take-home Midterm** 6-8 pages. (30%)
4. **Portfolio Prequel** c. 5 pages (10%)
5. **Portfolio** c. 20 pages (40%)

**WEEKLY SCHDEULE**

By Sunday evening I will usually send an email to the class highlighting the key themes and major issues we will be covering in the next class, along with news and reminders. It is your responsibility to make sure you are receiving these emails and I will expect you to have read them before class.

**January 26 Introduction**

Syllabus

*The Return of Martin Guerre* (movie)**February 2 Telling the Story**

Review Syllabus; check email

Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre*

"American Historical Review Forum: The Return of Martin Guerre"

**→→Short Essay Step 1 – due in class and online; see page 4****February 9 Historical Practices: Evidence, Methods and Theory**Howell & Prevenier, *From Reliable Sources*, selectionsGeoff Eley, *A Crooked Line*, Preface, Acknowledgements, pp. 1-47Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream*,

Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach"

Frederick Engels, "Historical Materialism"

Fernand Braudel, selections (this may not be discussed until 2/9)

**→→Short Essay step 2 – due online Sunday February 12, 11:59 pm; see page 4****February 16 Social History: Macro, Micro and Points In-between?**

E. P. Thompson, selections

Clifford Geertz, "Balinese Cockfight"

Eley, pp. 48-60

Suzanne Desan "Crowds, Community and Ritual in the Work of E.P. Thompson and Natalie Zemon Davis"

**February 23 Identities: Gender**

Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis"

AHR Forum: Revisiting "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis"

*Journal of Women's History*, 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary issue

Leonore Davidoff, "Class and Gender in Victorian England" [NB I might change this!]

**March 1 Identities: Race, Region and Representations**

Barbara Fields, "Ideology and Race in American History"

David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness*

Walter Johnson, "The Slave Trader, the White Slave, and the Politics of Racial Determination in the 1850s"

**March 8 Identities: Nations, Nationality**Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*Edward Said, *Orientalism*

Additional materials to be assigned

**March 15 Spring Break****March 22 No Class—work on midterm**

→→**Take-home Midterm** – due online March 22, 11:59 pm; see page 4

- March 29**      **Power, Culture, Language**  
 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*  
 Patricia O'Brien, "Michel Foucault's History of Culture,"  
 Joan Scott, "The Evidence of Experience"
- April 5**        **Being an Historian**  
 Geoff Eley, *A Crooked Line*, finish the book  
 Natalie Zemon Davis, "A Life of Learning"  
 Nicolas Eustace, "When Fish Walk on Land: Social History in a Postmodern World" OR  
 Paula Fass, "Cultural History/Social History: Some Reflections on a Continuing Dialogue"
- April 12**      **History Today I**  
 Kathy Peiss, *Zoot Suit*  
 Digital history—readings to be assigned
- April 19**      **No class**  
**Individual meetings to plan Portfolio**
- **Portfolio Prequel** – due online April 22, 11:59 pm; see page 4
- April 26**      **History Today II**  
 Jefferson Cowie, *Stayin' Alive*  
 Public history—readings to be assigned
- May 3**         **History Today III**  
 Daniel T. Rodgers, *Age of Fracture*
- May 10**        **Keep open in case of make-up class.**
- May 14**        →→ **Portfolio** – due electronically by 11:59 pm; see page 4

### **DISABILITY**

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at (703) 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

**HONOR CODE** Honor Code can be found online at <http://honorcode.gmu.edu>

Submit work under your own name, and remember that plagiarism is a violation of the GMU Honor Code. The Honor Code states, "Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work." Plagiarism means using words, ideas, opinions, or factual information from another person or source without giving due credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes; a simple listing of books and articles consulted is not sufficient. Nor is rearrangement of another person's phrasing (paraphrase) enough eliminate the need to document your sources. Plagiarism is a form of fraudulently claiming someone else's work as your own, and as such is the equivalent of cheating on an exam. **A serious academic offense, plagiarism is grounds for failing at least the assignment, if not the whole course.** If you are unclear about what you should document, consult with me. When in doubt, document. (*Adapted from the English Department Statement on Plagiarism*)

**LAST DAY TO ADD/LAST DAY TO DROP**

January 31, 2012 is the last day for students to add a class to their schedules. Similarly, January 31, 2012 is the last day for students to drop classes and receive a 100% refund. The last day a student can drop without obtaining special permission is February 24, 2012.

**ASSIGNMENTS****Short Essay – due February 2 and February 12 (see below)**

**Martin Guerre and beyond:** You've seen the movie! You've read the book! You've "heard" the debate! Now evaluate them:

- Is Martin Guerre a good historical movie—why?
- What does the book add to your understanding?
- Who is more convincing in the debate about the book—why?

You will submit this in two steps:

- Step 1 (1-2 pages; due in class and online February 2) will be your first reactions to the questions above.
- Step 2 (3-5 pages; due online February 12, 11:59 pm) will be a revision of Step 1. You will incorporate 1) reflections after our class discussion; 2) points raised in class readings on historical practices; and 3) use comments I provided on your Step 1 submission.
- Only Step 2 will be given a letter grade.

**Take-home Midterm – due online March 25, 11:59 pm**

Choice of essay question that will ask you to synthesize and analyze key readings covered in the first half of the course. 6-8 pages

**Portfolio Prequel – due online April 22, 11:59 pm**

See below—you will submit one of the three assignments to be included in your Portfolio (which you will be able to revise for final submission)

**Portfolio – due online May 14, 11:59 pm**

Your final project for the class will be a portfolio of three assignments (c. 5 pages each) and an introductory essay explaining your choice of assignments, what you learned and how it connected to class discussions and readings. You will choose 3 from the list below (more choices might be added)

- Delve deeper into the topic/readings of a specific week of the syllabus
- Research a key historian
- Select a journal, examine its origins and development, how it has changed, etc.
- Choose a roundtable about a specific book, read the book, engage with the discussants
- Review a book, website or exhibit
- Explore some area or method not covered in class (e.g. environmental history)
- Develop an annotated bibliography on a topic you are interested in (with some links to course!)

**IMPORTANT:** I have to approve your portfolio assignments. In order to give you time to explore what to choose and to discuss your possible choices with me, I will meet with each student the week of April 19.