

HIST 610 (DL2): The Study and Writing of History

Professor Michael Chang

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Virtual office hrs on Zoom by appt

Course time and location:

online (Blackboard); synchronous meetings on Zoom
6:30-9:10 pm EST on Wednesdays

Course Description: This course is unique because it does *not* concentrate upon a specific geographic region or historical period, 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 and approaches including: the “*Annales* school,” Marxist history, micro-history, the “new social history,” the “new cultural history,” (“post-structuralist” and “post-colonial”) discourse analysis, gender history, environmental/ecological history, as well as transnational histories of commodities, labor, empire, and nationalism(s).

Required Texts:

1. *Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso, 1983, 1991 (reprint); or Revised edition Verso, 2006.
2. *Baptist, Edward E. *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism*. Basic, 2014, 2016 (paperback edition).
3. *Bloch, Marc. *Feudal Society, Volume 1: The Growth of Ties of Dependence*. Chicago, 1964, 1968.
4. *Braudel, Fernand. *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II, Volume 1*. California, 1996 (reprint).
5. Burke, Peter. *The French Historical Revolution: The Annales School, 1929-2014*. 2nd ed. Stanford, 2015.
6. Cronon, William. *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*. 20th anniversary ed. Hill and Wang, 2003.
7. *Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Vintage, 1979, 1995 (second edition).
8. Ginzburg, Carlo. *The Cheese and the Worms: the Cosmos of a Sixteenth Century Miller*. Johns Hopkins, 1976, 2013 (reprint).
9. Hershatter, Gail. *Women and China’s Revolutions*. Rowman and Littlefield, 2018.
10. Hunt, Lynn. *Writing History in the Global Era*. Norton, 2014.
11. *Mintz, Sidney W. *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*. Penguin, 1985.
12. *Ritter Harry. *Dictionary of Concepts in History*. Greenwood Press, 1986. [hereafter *DCH*]
13. *Rosenthal, Gregory. *Beyond Hawai’i: Native Labor in the Pacific World*. California, 2018.
14. *Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. Beacon, 1995, 2015 (rev ed).

Note: Book titles (above) and readings in the course schedule (below) marked by a **single blue asterisk (*)** are accessible online through the University Libraries catalog (JSTOR, HathiTrust, etc.). <http://library.gmu.edu/>

Except for Burke’s *The French Historical Revolution* and Ritter’s *Dictionary*, all titles listed above are available for online purchase at the campus bookstore. Used copies may also be found on <http://bookfinder.com>

Grading Scale:

97-100	A+	77-79	C+	59 and below	F
94-96	A	73-76	C		
90-93	A-	70-72	C-		
87-89	B+	67-69	D+		
83-86	B	63-66	D		
80-82	B-	60-62	D-		

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.

Note: *Calculations of cumulative course grades that appear in Blackboard are not necessarily correctly "weighted" and thus do not accurately reflect one's overall standing in the course. If you would like to know your overall course grade at any point in the semester, please contact the instructor via e-mail.*

- 1. Participation (25%):** Students are expected to attend all weekly class meetings on Zoom and to be fully prepared. This means finishing the assigned reading(s) before 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.

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

For more advice on how to generate more engaging and productive discussions, please see "Discussion Tips and Suggestions" on the course menu of the Blackboard site (left-hand side of page).

- 2. Facilitating Class Discussions (10%):** For each week's synchronous meeting (except the first one) a group of two or three (2-3) students will be responsible for facilitating and leading class discussion. Everyone must serve as a discussion facilitator for two (2) classes during the semester. We will discuss and decide upon the assignment of these tasks during our first synchronous meeting. Each of the two (2) classes for which you act as a discussion facilitator will count as 5% of your overall course grade.

For more guidance on leading class discussions, please see "Discussion Tips and Suggestions" on the Blackboard site's course menu (left-hand side of page).

- 3. Weekly Online Posts (35%):** **Students are required to submit online posts for a total of ten (10) separate Modules during the semester.** *Note: Neither the "self-introduction" nor the "Module 1 Post" (which are both due before our first synchronous class meeting) will count towards this total. During the semester, there are a total of thirteen (13) substantive Modules (Modules 2-14) for which we'll be discussing assigned readings, so you may skip three (3) of these thirteen (13) substantive Modules without penalty. However, if you are so inclined, you may submit posts for more than the requisite ten (10) Modules, in which case the ten (10) strongest posts will count towards your overall course grade.* For full credit, students must **post initial comments by 12:00 pm (noon) EST on Mon.** (2 days before class). **Follow-up responses** to classmates **should be posted by 12:00 pm (noon) EST on Wed.** (before class).

Your online posts for these ten (10) Modules will count as 35% of your overall course grade. In other words, each Module's post(s) will be worth 3.5% of your overall course grade. As such, your posts should be thoughtful, substantive, and intellectually engaging. Your task is to demonstrate that you have carefully read, understood, and thought about the assigned reading(s) and that you are able to make connections to the broader themes of the class. **For more detailed guidance** see the **"Weekly Online Posts" forum** on the Discussion Board.

- 4. Final Essay Project (30%):** This is a semester-long project that involves writing a 15-25 page essay. (For more detailed instructions, please see page 7 of this syllabus.)

In order to keep students on track, there are some smaller "scaffolding" assignments due throughout the semester:

-2-page statement identifying 2 concepts (1%)	due by 11:59 pm EST, Sun. 2/21/2021
-5-page essay on 1 of the selected concepts (4%)	due by 11:59 pm EST, Sun. 3/28/2021

The Final Essay is due (via Blackboard) by 11:59 pm EST, Sun., 5/9/2021. No late work will be accepted.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Module #0 (Wed. 1/20/2021): Course Orientation

Read: “Start Here: Welcome” and “Syllabus” pages on Blackboard course site.

Do: **Check** basic tech set-up, **activate** your Mason Zoom Basic account, and **verify** access to required books

Suggested (optional) Reading:

Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The “Objectivity Question” and the American Historical Profession*. (Cambridge, 1988), Introduction (1-17) and Part 1/Ch. 1-4 (21-108).

Module #1 (Wed. 1/27/2021): Course Introduction

Before Meeting #1: -post a brief self-introduction to the Discussion Board **by 11:59 pm EST on Mon. 1/25/2021**
-submit Module 1 Post **by 11:59 pm EST on Tue. 1/26/2021**

Read: *Handout containing “Tips for Class Preparation and Discussion.”

See the “Discussion Tips and Suggestions” link on Blackboard site’s course menu (left-hand side of page).

*Peter Stearns, “Why Study History?” (1998).

**“Introduction,” p. 1-12 in Anna Greene and Kathleen Troup, *The Houses of History: A Critical Reader in History & Theory, Second Edition*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016 [1999].

**“Series Forward” and **“Preface” in *Dictionary of Concepts in History [DCH]*.

Module #2 (Wed. 2/3/2021): *Annales School, I*

*Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society, Vol. 1: The Growth of Ties of Dependence* (1939, 1964).

Peter Burke, *The French Historical Revolution*, Introduction (1-6), Ch. 1 (7-12), and Ch. 2 (13-35).

**“Feudalism” and **“Periodization” in *DCH*.

Module #3 (Wed. 2/10/2021): *Annales School, II*

*Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (1949, 1966, 1996).

Please read: Table of Contents (5-10)

Preface to the English edition; Preface to the second edition; Preface to the first edition (13-22)

Part I:I The Peninsulas: Mountains, Plateaux, and Plains (23-102)

Part I:II The Heart of the Mediterranean: Seas and Coasts (103-167)

Part II:I.1 Economies: The Measure of the Century—Distance, the First Enemy (353-374 and 387-394)

Part II:II Precious Metals, Money, and Prices (462-542)

v. 2 Part II: VIII By Way of Conclusion: Conjuncture and Conjunctures (892-900)

v. 2 Part III: Events, Politics and People (901-903) and Conclusion (1238-1244)

Peter Burke, *The French Historical Revolution*, Ch. 3 (36-72) and Glossary (143-146).

**“Interdisciplinary History” and **“Social History” in *DCH*

Suggested (optional) Reading:

Lynn Hunt, *Writing History in the Global Era* (2014), Introduction (1-11) and Ch. 1 (13-43), especially passages on the “Annales school” (look up this term in the book’s index for exact pages).

Module #4 (Wed. 2/17/2021): Marxist History

(NOTE: For purposes of discussion, both online and in class, **please focus on the works by E.P. Thompson below.**)

*Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848), Chapter 1 “Bourgeois and Proletarians.” (*Marxist Internet Archive*)

*Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852), Ch. 1, beginning with “Hegel remarks somewhere” and ending with “Hic Rhodus. hic salta!” (about 7 pages). (*Marxist Internet Archive*)

*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 18th Century,” *Past & Present* 50 (1971): 76-136.

**“Radical History” and **“Historical Materialism” in *DCH*.

**“Chapter 2: Marxist Historians,” p. 33-43 in Green and Troup, *The Houses of History*.

Suggested (optional) Reading: **“Capitalism,” **“Class,” and **“Ideology” in *DCH*.

Lynn Hunt, *Writing History in the Global Era* (2014), Introduction (1-11) and Ch. 1 (13-43), especially passages on “Marx” and “Marxism” (look up these terms in the book’s index for exact pages)

Module #5 (Wed. 2/24/2021): From the “New Social History” to the “New Cultural History”—(Italian) Microhistory

Due this week: Write a 2-page statement identifying **1 concept** that you think should be **rewritten or removed** from an updated version of the *Dictionary of Concepts in History* and **1 concept** that you think should be **added**, including a brief explanation of your reasoning for each entry. **Post this to the Module 5 Short Statement Discussion by 11:59 pm EST on Sun. 2/21/2021. Reply to at least one classmate by 11:59 pm EST on Thu. 2/25/2021.** For more details see p. 7 below and folder for Module 5 on Blackboard.

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

*Istvan Szijarto, “Four Arguments for Microhistory,” *Rethinking History* 6.2 (2002): 209-215.

*“Biography,” * “Cultural History,” and * “Intellectual History, History of Ideas” in *DCH*.

Suggested (optional) Reading:

*Laurence Veysey, “The ‘New’ Social History in the Context of American Historical Writing.” *Reviews in American History* v. 7, no. 1 (March 1979): 1-12.

*Suzanne Desan, “Crowds, Community, and Ritual in the Work of E.P. Thompson and Natalie Davis,” p. 47-71 in Lynn Hunt, ed. *The New Cultural History* (1989).

Module #6 (Wed. 3/3/2021): Power/Knowledge and Discursive Formations (Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis)

*Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975).

*“Enlightenment” in *DCH*.

Lynn Hunt, *Writing History in the Global Era* (2014), Introduction (1-11) and Ch. 1 (13-43), especially passages on “Foucault” and “disciplinary society” (look up these terms in the book's index for exact pages).

Suggested (optional) Reading:

*Lynn Hunt, “Introduction: History, Culture, Text,” p. 1-22 in Lynn Hunt, ed. *The New Cultural History* (1989).

*Patricia O’Brien, “Michel Foucault’s History of Culture,” p. 25-46 in Lynn Hunt, ed. *The New Cultural History* (1989).

*Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (1983), Ch. 7 (143-167).

Module #7 (Wed. 3/10/2021): Environmental and Ecological History

William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (1983, 2003).

-start by first reading the “Afterword” (p. 171-185) of the 20th Anniversary edition (2003).

-then read the “Forward” by John Demos (p. xi-xiii)

*Visit and explore the website of the American Society of Environmental Historians (ASEH): <https://aseh.org/>

-in particular, look at: “About Us” → “Mission” and “History”

Module #8 (Wed. 3/17/2021): Nationalism(s)

*Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (1983, 1991, 2006).

*“Nation, Nationality,” * “Nationalism,” and * “National Character” in *DCH*.

Module #9 (Wed. 3/24/2021): Commodity History and Imperial Formations (Empires)

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

*“Imperialism,” and * “Modernization, Modernity.” in *DCH*.

Suggested (optional) Reading:

*Bernard S. Cohn, “History and Anthropology: The State of Play.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22.2 (April 1980): 198-221.

Module #10 (Wed. 3/31/2021): Gender, Gender(ed) History, and Women’s History

Due this week: Write a 5-page essay justifying your selection of 1 of the concepts for your Final Essay project. Discuss why this concept should be added or why it should be removed. Please support your ideas with evidence from at least three (3) readings we have already discussed in class this semester. **Please submit your 5-page essay as a Word document via Blackboard by 11:59 pm EST on Sun. 3/28/2021.** For more details, see p. 7 below.

(NOTE: For purposes of discussion, both online and in class, **please focus on the works by Joan Scott and Joanne Meyerowitz below.**)

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

*Joanne Meyerowitz, "A History of 'Gender'." *American Historical Review* 113:5 (Dec. 2008): 1346-1356.

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

Gail Hershatter, *Women and China's Revolutions*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2018.

Please read: Acknowledgements and Introduction (xi-xx)
Chapter 1: The Gendered Labor of Empire, 1800-1840 (1-22)
Chapter 2: Disturbances, 1840-1900 (23-55)

Suggested (optional) Reading:

*Joan W. Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*. 30th Anniversary Edition. Columbia, 2018.

-“Preface to the Thirtieth Anniversary Edition,” p. ix-xvi

Lynn Hunt, *Writing History in the Global Era* (2014), especially passages on "gender" and "Scott, Joan" (see index).

Module #11 (Wed. 4/7/2021): Knowledge Production & Questions of Power (Postcolonial Discourse Analysis)

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

*“History,” * “Positivism,” and * “Constructionism, Constitution” in *DCH*

Suggested (optional) Reading: * “Event,” * “Fact,” * “Narrative,” and * “Philosophy of History” in *DCH*.

Module #12 (Wed. 4/14/2021): Slavery, Capitalism, and Economic History

*Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (2014).

-read * “Afterword to the Paperback Edition,” p. 421-437 first.

*“Pain of the Past: Lessons from a Fight between Economists and Historians.” *The Economist* (9 Dec. 2016).

*Marc Parry, “Shackles and Dollars: Historians and Economists Clash Over Slavery.” *Chronicle of Higher Education* (8 December 2016).

Suggested (optional) Reading:

*Richard Ernsberger, Jr., “Slavery as an Industrial Cornerstone: Interview with Edward E. Baptist.” *American History* (February 2015).

*“Capitalism,” * “Econometric History, New Economic History, Cliometrics;” * “Economic History;” * “Industrial Revolution, Industrialization;” and * “Race, Racism, Racialism” in *DCH*.

Module #13 (Wed. 4/21/2021): Labor and Globalization

*Rosenthal, Gregory. *Beyond Hawai'i: Native Labor in the Pacific World*. California, 2018.

Suggested (optional) Reading:

*Naumann, Katja. “Long-term and decentered trajectories of doing history from a global perspective: institutionalization, postcolonial critique, and empiricist approaches, before and after the 1970s.” *Journal of Global History* 14.3 (Nov. 2019): 335-354.

Module #14 (Wed. 4/28/2021): Historiography

Lynn Hunt, *Writing History in the Global Era* (2014).

*“Historiography” in *DCH*

Exam Period: Mon. 5/3/2021 – Mon. 5/10/2021

FINAL ESSAY DUE by 11:59 p.m. EST on Sun. 5/9/2021 (via Blackboard).

No late work will be accepted for this assignment.

Instructions and Guidelines for Final Essay Project

In addition to completing the assigned readings, you should also be engaging in two other activities:

1. **trying to identify and comprehend the broader themes** of the course and **the major historiographical developments**, especially as reflected in the content and organization of the course syllabus; and
2. **familiarizing yourself with Harry Ritter’s *Dictionary of Concepts in History*** (Greenwood Press, 1986) [hereafter cited as *DCH*].**

In practical terms, this means that you should read as many entries as possible in the *DCH* and consider how these concepts relate to the broader themes of HIST 610, again, as reflected in the assigned readings and the organizational framework of the “Course Schedule” on the syllabus. The “Course Schedule” for HIST 610 includes a number of entries from Ritter’s *DCH* as either required or suggested readings. Why might this be the case? What’s the relationship between the concepts from the *DCH* and the assigned readings for any given week? Are there any concepts or ideas from the assigned readings or the course syllabus that are *absent or missing* from Ritter’s *DCH*? Why might this be the case? What might this reveal about the historical profession in the early- to mid-1980s? These are the types of questions worth keeping in mind as you work on the final essay project and its associated “scaffolding assignments” (see below).

As you engage in this process, **you should be building towards writing a 15-25 page essay which discusses:**

- A. **two (2) concepts or terms**—drawn from the assigned readings or course syllabus for HIST 610—that do not appear in the original 1986 version of the *DCH*, but **that you would add** to an updated version; and
- B. **two (2) concepts or entries** in the original 1986 text **that you would remove** from a revised edition for 2021.

In your essay, you should:

- A. **Explain your choices** and **try to develop your points into an overarching thesis (or central argument)** that relates to some aspect(s) of the main historiographical developments (changes over time in the study and writing of history) that we have studied and discussed during the semester; and
- B. **Support your ideas and arguments** with information from **at least six (6) works** that we have read and discussed in HIST 610. Material from the *DCH* itself (prefaces, entries, etc.) *will not* count towards this total; however, you should feel free to cite it as well as texts and ideas from your other classes, past and present.

Remember, for the final essay, your main task is to demonstrate:

- A. your understanding of the historiographic developments and conceptual issues that we’ve explored in HIST 610, and
- B. your ability to discuss and evaluate the works we’ve read in an accurate, confident, and comprehensive way.

Due dates: To help you stay on track, there are some smaller “scaffolding” assignments due throughout the semester.

Module 5 (Sun. 2/21/2021): Write a short 2-page statement that identifies **one (1) concept** (drawn from the assigned readings or syllabus for HIST 610) that you think should be **added** to a revised edition of Ritter’s *DCH* and **one (1) concept** from the *DCH* that you think should be **removed** from an updated version of this work. Please include preliminary arguments (i.e. a brief 4-5 sentence explanation of your reasoning) for each concept. Total length should be 500-600 words (2 pages). *Note: You are not necessarily obligated to stick with these two (2) concepts, especially if your thinking changes during the semester. However, you should give some serious thought to your initial choices, since switching concepts midway through the semester may set you back in terms of time.* **Post your short statement (via Blackboard) by 11:59 pm EST, Sun. 2/21/2021.** Then **reply to at least one classmate by 11:59 pm EST on Thu. 2/25/2021.** For more details see folder for Module 5 on Blackboard.

Module 10 (Sun. 3/28/2021): Write a 5-page essay explaining one (1) of the concepts you have chosen. Why should this concept be added to (or removed from) an updated version of the *DCH*? Please support your ideas with evidence from at least three (3) assigned readings that we have already discussed in class this semester, again, not including material (prefaces, entries, etc.) from the *DCH* itself. **Submit 5-page essay as a Word document via Blackboard by 11:59 pm EST, Sun. 3/28/2021.**

Exam Period (Sun. 5/9/2021): The Final Essay should be between 15-25 pages. See substantive guidance above. **Submit Final Essay as a Word document via Blackboard by 11:59 pm EST, Sun. 5/9/2021.** *No late work will be accepted.*

** A scanned copy of the *DCH* may be digitally “checked-out” using the “Emergency Temporary Access Service” provided by the HathiTrust via the University Libraries online catalog (sign-in to an official Mason account is required): <http://library.gmu.edu/>
Used copies of the *DCH* are also available for purchase at: <http://bookfinder.com>