

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Instructor: C. Joseph Genetin-Pilawa

Office: My house

Email: cgenetin@gmu.edu

Office Hours: By appointment (Zoom/Google Meet)

Description

This course examines trends in historical analysis and focuses primarily on the work of twentieth- and twenty-first-century scholars working in the United States. Although most of the texts are about early modern Europe and the Americas, this class is focused on historiography rather than on a specific region or time period. We will discuss 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.

Goals

In this course, students will:

- Enhance their knowledge of the study of history in the United States.
- Explore the connections and development of United States historiography.
- Practice critical reading and analysis of recent scholarship.
- Consider how interdisciplinarity shapes the field of United States history

Required Texts

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

Rosenzweig and Thelen. *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (2000)

Handler, Richard and Eric Gable. *The New History in an Old Museum: Creating the Past at Colonial Williamsburg* (1997)

Cronon, William, *Changes in the Land* (1983)

Foucault, Michel, *History of Sexuality, Vol 1* (1990, reprint)

Obeyesekere, Gananath, *Apotheosis of Captain Cook* (1992)

Gaddis, John Lewis, *The Landscape of History* (2002)

Banner, James, *A Century of American Historiography* (2010)

Kinzer, Stephen, *Overthrow* (2008)

In addition, we will read articles and book chapters throughout the semester. These will be available on Blackboard.

Assignments

100 points - Class Participation

100 points - Weekly Responses

100 points - Class Discussion Leader (2)

200 points - Final Paper

500 points - TOTAL

**** - You must complete all graded work in the class.**

Attendance and Participation

Because this is a discussion-based course, attendance and active participation are crucial to its success. I expect you to attend class regularly and promptly. Please let me know in advance if you will not be able to attend a session. You are expected to participate actively in class discussions, posing questions to your classmates and asking for their thoughts on challenging portions of the reading. Since I expect these things of every student, I will not grade participation separately. Only if your contributions are deficient will I factor that into your final course grade.

Grading Scale:

500-470 = A	384-365 = C
469-450 = A-	364-350 = C-
449-435 = B+	349-335 = D+
434-415 = B	334-315 = D
414-400 = B-	314-300 = D-
399-385 = C+	299-000 = F

Class Discussion Leader

Each student will lead a portion of class discussion during two class meeting this semester. The discussion leader should prepare 5-10 specific and/or open-ended questions to stimulate discussion and should be ready to provide follow-up questions as the discussion evolves. Prior to the class session, the discussion leader should meet with Dr. GP to help prepare. After the class session, the student should write a one-page reflection, summarizing his/her thoughts on the discussion. The grade for this assignment is based upon the questions, the written summary/reflection, and the discussion leader's preparedness/professionalism.

Weekly Responses

Each week, students are required to write a brief response to the weekly reading and submit them to the Discussion section of Blackboard by 12pm on the day our class meets. The responses are designed to help you prepare for the class discussions, read actively, think critically about the readings, and write critically, but respectfully about scholarly work.

- The responses should:

- 1) Summarize the thesis of the book or of a particular chapter in the book (in the case of an edited volume).
- 2) What kinds of primary sources does the author engage?
- 3) What are the three most important secondary sources the author engages? State briefly how s/he engages these works i.e., draws on them for support, refutes existing arguments/ paradigms, borrows a theoretical model, etc.
- 4) What questions does the work leave unanswered or raise for future study? (Note: this is not a place to critique the author's style or tone unless it is germane to the questions raised by the book.)

Final Project

DUE Friday May 6. Please email the papers to me in Word.

Please look at Harry Ritter, *Dictionary of Concepts in History*; Greenwood Press, 1986 (available at Fenwick Library and online through HathiTrust) and discuss:

- a) two entries in the 1986 text that would not appear in a 2020 version
- b) two entries that are not in the 1986 text that would appear in a 2020 version

Explain your answers and tie them together with an overarching thesis that explains some aspect of the historiography we have discussed this semester. Support your ideas with information from at least six texts that we have discussed in class. Feel free to bring in texts and ideas from your other classes, past and present.

The goal of this paper is to demonstrate that 1) you understand the issues we've discussed in class and 2) that you can talk about the books we've read in a confident and comprehensive way.

Due dates related to this paper:

February 21: Please email me one term that you think would not be in a 2020 version and one that you think should be in a 2020 version.

April 1: Five-page essay explaining one of the terms you have chosen. Why should this term be included or why should this term be excluded? Please support your ideas with evidence from at least three readings we have done this semester. Please email it to me in Word.

Friday May 6: Final paper. Please email it to me in Word.

The final paper should be between 12 and 15 pages, 12 point font, double-spaced.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Week 1 (Jan 28): Course Introduction and History as a Profession

Class Introduction

Readings:

- ****Please read this before you come to class on the first day.****

American Historical Association, *Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct*. <https://www.historians.org/jobs-and-professional-development/statements-and-standards-of-the-profession/statement-on-standards-of-professional-conduct>.

Week 2 (Feb 4): History as Philosophy

Readings:

- Gaddis, *The Landscape of History*
- Banner, "Introduction"

Week 3 (Feb 14): Producing Histories

Readings:

- Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*
- Banner, "Main Currents in American Cultural History"

Week 4 (Feb 21): Popular Uses of History

Readings:

- Rosenzweig and Thelen, *The Presence of the Past*
- Banner, "More Than Great White Men"

Due today: By the beginning of class please email me one term that you think would not be in a 2020 version of the Dictionary of Concepts in History and one that you think should be in a 2020 version. This is related to the final assignment (discussed below).

Week 5 (Feb 28): Creating the Past at Colonial Williamsburg

Readings:

- Handler and Gable, *The New History in an Old Museum*
- Banner, "The Changing Contours of African American History"

Week 6 (Mar 4): Discourse and Social Construction

Readings:

- Foucault, *History of Sexuality; Vol 1*
- Banner, "American Political Histories"

Week 7 (Mar 11): Historiography of Race

Readings:

- Barbara J. Fields, "Ideology and Race in American History," in *Religion, Race, and Reconstruction*, 1982. (Blackboard)
- Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, "African-American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race," *Signs* 17(2): 251-274 (1992)

- Michael O'Malley, "Specie and Species: Race and the Money Question in Nineteenth-Century America," *The American Historical Review* 99 (2): 369-95 (1994)
- Nell Irvin Painter, "Thinking about the Languages of Money and Race: A Response to Michael O'Malley, "Specie and Species"." *The American Historical Review* 99 (2): 396-404 (1994)
- Michael O'Malley, "Response to Nell Irvin Painter," *The American Historical Review* 99 (2): 405-08 (1994)
- Nell Irvin Painter, YouTube talk on *The History of White People* (2011) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mDZUBX_nY_0

Week 8 (Mar 18): Environmental History

Readings:

- Cronon, *Changes in the Land*
- Banner, "The Rise of Environmental History"

Week 9 (Mar 25): Gender History

Readings:

- 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.
- Banner, "A Century of Struggle"
- 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 10 (Apr 1): Post-Colonial History

Readings:

- Obeyesekere, *Apotheosis of Captain Cook* (1992). This is available online through the library as an ACLS Humanities e-book
- Bernstein, "Books of the Times; Cook Was (a) God or (b) Not a God," May 24, 1995 *New York Times*.
- Banner, "America and the World"

Due today: Five-page essay explaining one of the terms you have chosen for your final essay:

Discuss why this term should be included or why it should be excluded. Please support your ideas with evidence from at least three readings we have done this semester. Please email it to me in Word by the beginning of class.

Week 11 (Apr 8): Class Cancelled, Work on Final Essay Assignment

Week 12 (Apr 15): American Interventions

Readings:

- Kinzer, *Overthrow*
- Banner, "American Military History"

Week 13 (Apr 22): Zoom Meetings with Dr GP during Class Time

- Every student will schedule a 10-minute meeting with Dr GP during our regular class time to discuss their final essay.

Week 14 (Apr 29): What Did We Miss?

Readings:

- Banner, "American Intellectual History"
- Banner, "Expanding Boundaries"
- Banner, "American Religious History"
- Banner "A Century of Scholarship"

Final Project Essay DUE - May 6

A Note about Academic Integrity:

Mason is an Honor Code university; please see the Office for Academic Integrity for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely.

The integrity of the University community is affected by the individual choices made by each of us. Mason has an Honor Code with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity. Three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct. Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving the person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes. Paraphrased material must also be cited, using MLA or APA format. A simple listing of books or articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in the academic setting. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me.

Disability Accommodations

If you have a learning or physical difference that may affect your academic work, you will need to furnish appropriate documentation to the Office of Disability Services. If you qualify for accommodation, the ODS staff will give you a form detailing appropriate accommodations for your instructor. In addition to providing your professors with the appropriate form, please take the initiative to discuss accommodation with them at the beginning of the semester and as needed during the term. Because of the range of learning differences, faculty members need to learn from you the most effective ways to assist you. If you have contacted the Office of Disability Services and are waiting to hear from a counselor, please tell me.

A Note about Communication

Student privacy is governed by the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)** and is an essential aspect of any course. Email is a necessary part of life in the digital age. I will communicate with you via email throughout the semester and will use your Masonlive. I do not accept "I did not check my email" as a valid excuse. I check my email frequently and will strive always to respond to your questions and concerns as soon as possible. See <http://masonlive.gmu.edu> for more information.