

Prof. Sheryl Kroen  
stkroen@ufl.edu  
Class time: Monday, 1:55-4:55

219 Keene-Flint Hall  
273-3384  
Off. Hrs: Mo. 12-1:30; Th.:1-2:30

**Biography as Cultural History**  
EUH 4930

**Description:** Recently biography has enjoyed a renaissance, but it is not the biography of the old days. Subjects are often unknown men and women; stylistically biographies take many forms, from a straight monograph to a memoir, journal, or a novel. In this seminar we will read many examples of such new-fangled biographies, discuss together the methodological opportunities and consequences of this renewed genre, and then students will pursue their own research using biography of one form or another.

**Course Requirements:** This is a discussion-based seminar, and the assignments are designed to facilitate serious in-class work, and independent research. All students are required to attend and participate actively in seminar. In addition to reading the common weekly assignments, students will write 4 weekly, 1-2 page critical analyses of the readings, with an eye to facilitating discussion. Students will write a longer, 10-15-page research paper pursuing one of the topics raised by the seminar. All of the assignments have been designed to facilitate the writing of this research paper. This includes the abstract, the bibliography, the 5- and 10-page drafts, and the oral presentations. We will be sharing our work in seminar, reading each other's drafts, responding to oral presentations.

Attendance policy: one unexcused absence is permitted without penalty; thereafter the "attendance" part of class participation will go down one grade per absence (from A to A-, from A- to B+, etc.). No late papers will be accepted without penalty. To excuse lateness on assignments or absences official documentation will be required.

**Deadlines toward final project:**

Initial abstract:	2/16
Annotated Bibliography:	3/9
5 page draft:	3/16
meetings with Dr. K	3/23
10-page draft:	3/30
Full draft:	4/6
Presentations:	4/6 and 4/13
Final paper due:	4/20

**Required Reading:**

Natalie Zemon Davis, Women on the Margins: Three Seventeenth Century Lives (Harvard University Press, 1997) ISBN: 0674955218  
Jon Sensbach, Rebecca's Revival: Creating Black Christianity in the Atlantic World (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005) ISBN: 0674016890  
Edmund de Waal, The Hare with Amber Eyes: A Hidden Inheritance (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2010) ISBN 0374105979  
A.S. Byatt, Possession: A Romance (Vintage, 1991) ISBN: 0679735909

### **Grade Breakdown:**

<b>Weekly Writing Assignments</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>(Total 4: I will count the best 3)</b>
<b>Class participation</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>(attendance, discussion, workshop)</b>
<b>Final Paper</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>(includes oral presentation)</b>

Please do not hesitate to contact the instructor during the semester if you have any individual concerns or issues that need to be discussed. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/> The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

In writing papers, be certain to give proper credit whenever you use words, phrases, ideas, arguments, and conclusions drawn from someone else's work. Failure to give credit by quoting and/or footnoting is PLAGIARISM and is unacceptable. Please review the University's honesty policy at [www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/).

### **Week by week schedule:**

1/12 Introduction to class and Library Tour at 2:15PM at Library West 211 with Shelley Arlen (shelarl@uflib.ufl.edu) or another specialist in European history

### **No class due to MLK on 1/19: USE THIS TIME TO THINK ABOUT YOUR RESEARCH TOPICS**

1/26 Natalie Zemon Davis, Women on the Margins  
Carefully read the three "biographies," but also the footnotes, and come to class ready to discuss Davis's arguments and how she made them.

**Write:** 1-2 page review/critique.

2/2 Jon Sensbach, Rebecca's Revival: Creating Black Christianity in the Atlantic World  
Carefully read this biography, and be ready to discuss the kinds of arguments Sensbach is using biography to make. The author will make an appearance in our seminar, so be prepared!

**Write:** 1-2 page review/critique.

2/9 Edmund de Waal, The Hare with Amber Eyes: A Hidden Inheritance  
Carefully read this memoir/biography/autobiography, and come in ready to discuss the author's method, his evidence.

**Write:** 1-2 page review/critique.

2/16 No class: Meetings with Professor to discuss abstracts

**Submit a one-page abstract, or brief summary of paper topic for final research project.**

2/23 **Presentations of topics and sources. Brainstorming session**

3/2 Spring Break

3/9 A.S. Byatt, Possession: A Romance

Here we turn to the historical novel as an approach to biography. Come ready to discuss Byatt as a historian, using "biography" to capture the history of Victorian England as well as the world of modern scholarship.

**Write:** 1-2 page review/critique.

**Due today: Annotated Bibliography for your research paper**

3/16 **5-page draft of your final research project: Workshop in class**

3/23 No class, individual meetings with professor

3/30 **Workshop of 10-page drafts**

4/6 Everyone: **Full draft due**  
Presentation of final papers (1/2 the class)

4/13 Presentations of final papers (other 1/2 of class)

4/20 **Final drafts due, Discussion**