Course Meets: Mondays, 3-6pm  
Location: in the seminar room on the ground floor of Keene Flint

Instructor: Dr. Louise Newman, Associate Professor of History, lnewman@ufl.edu  
Office Hours: Wed, 3-4pm, in Keene Flint 212

“The very possibility of historical scholarship as an enterprise distinct from propaganda requires of its practitioners that vital minimum of ascetic self-discipline that enables a person to do such things as abandon wishful thinking, assimilate bad news, discard pleasing interpretations that cannot pass elementary tests of evidence and logic, and, most important of all, suspend or bracket one’s own perceptions long enough to enter sympathetically into the alien and possibly repugnant perspectives of rival thinkers.”

--Thomas L. Haskell, “Objectivity is not Neutrality” (1990), 132.

Course Description

This course introduces graduate students to some of the key concepts and challenges faced by practicing historians today, in reading, researching, and writing history at the professional level. The syllabus is divided into three parts; First we will read some theoretical/philosophical works that examine the assumptions and methods of academic historians, exploring how the discipline has changed over recent decades and considering such concepts as objectivity, narrativity, causality, agency, representation, truth, evidence, etc. Then we will study some exemplary monographs drawn from students' major fields of interest, enabling us to explore how historians frame their questions, engage in conversations with others, and justify the significance, or usefulness of their work. In the final segment of the course, students will write an historiographical essay on scholarship of their choosing. Although the course does not cover examples of historical writing that were published earlier than the 20th century, students who want to examine writers of history from earlier periods may do so during the final segment of the course.

Definitions of historiography that this course will investigate:
1. The process of writing history (i.e. what you’ll do when you write an MA thesis or Ph.D dissertation)
2. The study of the history of historical writing (e.g. Lynn Hunt’s monograph, Writing History in the Global Era, the first assigned reading in this course.)
3. Published (written) historical knowledge about a field/subfield of history: e.g. historiography on U.S. slavery
4. Non-written forms of historiography, including (but not limited to) photographic exhibits, paintings, films/documentaries, podcasts, and oral histories.
Course Objectives

- Enable students to improve the skills they need to become successful professional historians, notably critical reading, thinking and writing skills.
- Foster independence among students in terms of their being able to set for themselves an intellectual agenda and then pursue that agenda with minimal faculty supervision.
- Introduce students to the various ways in which historians understand the development of the academic discipline of history and the forms/conventions of writing that have been most prevalent in recent decades.
- Familiarize students with the vocabulary historians use to describe recent historiographic trends and practices, including such concepts as “bottom up versus top down,” “the new social history,” Marxist or materialist approaches to the study of history, imagined communities, collective memory, “deconstructionist approaches,” Annales school, La longue durée, Mentalités, zeitgeist, Postmodernism, the Linguistic or Cultural Turn, etc.
- Increase students’ ability to put their fingers on the pulse, i.e., to discern future historiographic trends in their subfields and the discipline at large.

Course participants

- Dr. Louise Newman (AMH, instructor), inewman@ufl.edu
- José Alvarez, jealvarez@ufl.edu
- Adrian Banegas (AMH, Newman), abanegas81@ufl.edu
- Michael Barry (AMH, Kendi), mbarry14@ufl.edu
- Cortney Cantrell (EUH, Effros), cecantrell@ufl.edu
- Nicholas Dzoba (Political Science), ndzoba@ufl.edu
- Heather Gonyeau (LAH, Guerra), hgonyeau@ufl.edu
- Colin Kearney (Journalism and communications), ckearney1@ufl.edu
- David Meltsner (AMH, Pearlman), dmeltsner@ufl.edu
- Ethan Williamson (EUH, Curta), ethanjwilliamson@ufl.edu

Guest Facilitators

- Dr. Eric Segal, seminar takes place at Harn Museum, week 5, Feb 6
- Dr. Bonnie Effros, week 6, Feb 13
- Dr. Lauren Pearlman, week 7, Feb 20
- Dr. Ibram Kendi, week 8, Feb 27

Required-- Common Readings

Books—need to be purchased and brought to class on the days that they are discussed. Listed in the order in which they will be read.
• **Hunt, Lynn.** *Writing History in the Global Era.* New York: W. W. Norton, 2014. (Need to have read by the first class meeting on January 9; reflection paper due January 8)

• **Brown, Peter.** *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350-550 AD* (2012)

• (read for Feb 13)

• **Kendi, Ibram X.** *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America.* New York: Nation Books, 2016. (read for Feb 27)


**Note:** Students will be choosing and adding their own readings (identifying key monographs in their fields of interest) for the second and third segments of the course.

**Articles** (book chapters and excerpts)—These common readings need to be downloaded and hard copies brought to class on the days that they are discussed. These are listed alphabetically. Schedule at the end of this syllabus has due dates.


**Additional Relevant Readings for Part 1 (to assist students who want to study the theory/philosophy of history in more depth)**

**Philosophy of History/Reflections on Historical Writing/Methods**

• Carr, Edward Hallett. *What is History?*
• Gaddis, John. *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past.*
• Jameson, Frederick. *The Political Unconscious.*
• Lowenthal, David. *The Heritage Crusade.* (Cambridge, 1997); how history is used by society for good and ill

Still need to add more works on historical memory, oral history, interpreting visual sources, digital history, etc.


**Histories of Historiographical Paradigms (Discourse Theory, Annales, Structuralism, Post-Structuralism, Postmodernism, Postcolonialism)**


**Examples of Exemplary Monographs—Additional Recommended Readings for Part 2 (to assist students in identifying monographs that have been highly influential in shaping the discipline in recent decades.)**
• Najmabadi, Afsaneh. *Women with Mustaches, Men Without Beards*.
• Coates, Ta-Nahisi. [https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/01/my-president-was-black/508793/](https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/01/my-president-was-black/508793/)
• Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. (1978); find more updated edition.

**Instructor still needs to add more works; students encouraged to make their own lists.**

Additional exemplary monographs can be located by identifying monographs that have been awarded national prizes, e.g. the AHA’s Bancroft Prize, or by reading book reviews in prominent journals.

[http://library.columbia.edu/about/awards/bancroft/previous_awards.html](http://library.columbia.edu/about/awards/bancroft/previous_awards.html)

**Exemplary Articles**


**Journals to peruse**

• *American Historical Review*
• *Diacritics*
• *Gender & History*
• *History & Theory*
• *Representations*
• *Reviews in American History*

**Students encouraged to add titles of journals from their own subfields**

**Assignments (1000 pts)**

• Attendance at one public talk (suitable talks will be announced several weeks in advance)
• 4 out of 7 possible Weekly reflection essays (300-600 words) electronic copy due Sunday before class at midnight and hard copy brought to class in designated weeks (200 pts)
• Two short essays (5-7pp) due weeks 5 and 11 (200 pts), see below
• Create a course syllabus (100 pts), due week 14
• Lead discussion, twice during the semester (200 pts)
• Longer historiographical review essay (10-15pp); final draft due week 16 (300 pts)

**Instructions for Short Essay 1 (5-7pp), due week 5**
Describe a philosophy, or approach to history that you find appealing by discussing the work(s) of a historian (theorist or philosopher) whose reflections on the practice of history resonate for you. Make sure you choose someone who has written about the practice or discipline of history—not just someone who has written a great monograph, and make sure that the person you select has garnered a significant amount of recognition, not just within a subfield, but from the profession as a whole (e.g. someone on the order of John Tosh, Joan Scott, Hayden White, Karl Marx, Marc Bloch, Edward Said, etc.) A list of suitable writers appears above under “Additional Relevant Readings for Part I” but you may choose someone whose name does not appear on this list provided you receive the instructor’s approval in advance.

**Instructions for Short Essay 2 (5-7pp), due week 11**
Choose a monograph you admire that has had a significant impact on your field of interest. Analyze the philosophy of history, theoretical assumptions and research methods that inform the work you have chosen and explain what impact this work has had on the scholarship in your subfield. The work may be one published decades ago that is now considered to be a classic in its field, or it may be a book that has been recently published and has called for the revision of some traditional understanding of a problem, or has set a new research agenda, or is having an influence on the academic practice of history writing more broadly. Regardless of when it was published, the work you choose must have had (or is in the process of having) a major influence on a subfield of history, or on the discipline as a whole, transforming how subsequent scholars think about the questions that need to be asked, the methods that need to be employed, the sources that need to be re-examined and/or the conclusions/narratives that need to be rethought and rewritten. Make sure that you are dealing with a different writer of history from the one you explored in your first essay assignment.

**University Policies**

• Students are expected to arrive on time, be attentive and respectful during class, and remain until class is over. Habitual or severe lateness will be treated as an “absence” and penalized with grade deductions. If something unexpected comes up that prevents you from attending class, please notify the professor immediately, either by email or text: 352 318-9796.

• In general, no late work will be accepted unless accompanied by documentation from the Dean of Students or Health Services offices. However, in the case of exceptional or unforeseen circumstances, students needing an extension of a deadline may request one from the instructor in advance of the deadline.
- Cell phones should be turned off before entering the classroom. Computers (laptops, tablets) are permitted, but students caught using them inappropriately—e.g., emailing or using social media—will be asked to leave the classroom and will be counted as absent from the session.

- Students requesting accommodation for disabilities must register with the Dean of Students Office (https://www.dso.ufl.edu/) and obtain proper documentation to be submitted to the instructor during the first week of the semester. **Instructors are not obligated to grant accommodations after the first week of the semester.**

- Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course. These evaluations are conducted online <https://evaluations.ufl.edu> during the last two weeks of the semester. A summary of the results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>.

- All students must adhere to the University of Florida’s standards of academic honesty. UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge, which states: “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code.” On all work submitted for credit, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (http://www.dso.ufl.edu/scrr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/) also specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions that may be applied to those found guilty of violating the code. Students are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel (usually the instructor).

- Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

All students must observe the University of Florida’s standards of academic honesty. http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.php

Acts of dishonesty, cheating and plagiarism include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Turning in a paper that was written by someone else (i.e., papers written by another student, a research service, or downloaded off the Internet); or written by you for another course.

- Copying, a portion of text from the work of another author without using quotation marks and acknowledging the source through a commonly accepted style of footnoting

- Paraphrasing (i.e., restating in your own words) text written by another author without referencing that author, both within in the text and by using a commonly accepted style of footnoting
• Using a unique idea or concept, which you discovered in a specific reading, website, blog, discussion board, etc., without acknowledging the original author and source, both within the text and by using a commonly accepted style of footnoting.
Schedule

Part 1. Introduction to the Philosophy and Practice of Writing History

Week 1 (Mon, Jan 2)—No class meeting because classes begin on Wednesday, Jan 4.

However, there is a reading and writing assignment due Monday Jan 9, week 2.

Week 2 (Mon, Jan 9). Historicizing History, or what is the purpose of writing history in the 21st century?

History is always under construction but perhaps never more so than in the twenty-first century. The dominant paradigms of the twentieth century [modernization, Marxism, the Annales school, and identity politics] have fallen into disrepair…. [but] narratives, whether at the level of ethnic identity, national unity, the history of the West, or the history of the world, are crucial for establishing a sense of place in a wider order and for changing that order itself.

--Lynn Hunt, Writing History in the Global Era (2014, 119, 122)


Reflection due, 300-600 words, due Sunday, January 8 by midnight. Email .doc to instructor, lnewman@ufl.edu; bring hard copy to class on Monday, January 9.

Week 3 (Mon Jan 16). No class meeting- MLK Holiday

During this week, students will be customizing this syllabus, adding key monographs and articles that come out of their own subfields to the readings required in weeks 3-10.

Customized Syllabus due Sunday, January 15 by midnight. Email .doc to instructor lnewman@ufl.edu; bring hard copy to class on Monday, January 16.

Week 4 (Mon, Jan 23). In defense of objectivity … Are there common values, practices, or goals shared by most academic historians? Honesty? Fairness? Detachment? Truth-telling?

I see nothing to admire in neutrality. My conception of objectivity (which I believe is widely, if tacitly, shared by historians today) is compatible with strong political commitment. It pays no premium for standing in the middle of the road and it recognizes that scholars are as passionate and as likely to be driven by interest as those they write about. It does not value even detachment as an end in itself, but only as an indispensable prelude or preparation for the achievement of higher levels of understanding.

--Thomas L. Haskell, “Objectivity is not Neutrality” (1990)

Reflection, 300-600 words, due Sunday January 22 by midnight. Email .doc to instructor lnewman@ufl.edu, bring hard copy to class on Monday, January 23.

Additional readings to be determined by students.

Week 5 (Mon, Jan 30). Memory, Narrativity and Representation: Written, Oral, Visual and Digital Forms of Remembering and Conveying History

“[C]ollective memory is an exploration of a shared identity that unites a social group, be it a family [a community] or a nation, whose members nonetheless have different interests and motivations…. [T]he crucial issue in the history of memory is not how a past is represented but why it was received or rejected…. Memory is viewed here as a subjective experience of a social group that essentially sustains a relationship of power. Simply stated, it is who wants whom to remember what, and why.”

- Najmabadi, Afsahneh. Excerpt from Women with Mustaches, Men Without Beards.

Additional readings to be determined by instructor and students.

Reflection, 300-600 words due due Sunday January 29 by midnight, Email .doc to lnewman@ufl.edu, and bring hard copy to class on Monday, January 30.
Week 6 (Mon, Feb 6). Deciphering Art as a Means of Accessing Forgotten Memories

When we interpret a work of art, we cannot assume that images are the transparent expressions of political and social values, for in fact artistic style is a most treacherous key for ascertaining political and social developments. In short, the work of art cannot speak for itself; to decipher its meaning, we must examine intermediaries between the social world and the artistic representation.


Visit to the Harn Museum, Eric Segal facilitator

  http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/587918?seq=2#page_scan_tab_contents

Additional readings to be determined by students.

First Short Essay Due Mon Feb 6, (5-7pp, 1500-2000 words), hard copy, bring to class

Part 2. Exemplary Monographs & Articles

Week 7 (Mon, Feb 13). Early Christians and their beliefs about wealth
Bonnie Effros, facilitator

- Brown, Peter. Through the Eye of a Needle (2012)

  Reflection 300-600 words, due Sunday February 12 by midnight.
  Email .doc to lnewman@ufl.edu; bring hard copy to class

  Talk at UF’s Humanities Center, February 16.

Week 8 (Mon, Feb 20). The Long Civil Rights Movement
Lauren Pearlman, facilitator


**Reflection, 300-600 words, due Sunday February 21 by midnight. Email .doc to lnewman@ufl.edu; bring hard copy to class**

**Week 9 (Mon, Feb 27). Comparative Histories—The case of Revolutions**

• Keith Michael Baker and Dan Edelstein, eds., *Scripting Revolution: A Historical Approach to the Comparative Study of Revolutions* (2015); chapters to be selected.

**Additional readings to be determined by students.**

**Reflection 300-600 words, due Sunday February 26 by midnight. Email .doc to lnewman@ufl.edu; bring hard copy to class**

**Week 10 (Mon, Mar 6). Spring Break—No Class**

**Week 11 (Mon, Mar 13). Rethinking Racism  
Ibram Kendi, facilitator**

• Kendi, Ibram X. *Stamped from the Beginning* (2016), pages to be determined.
• Jacobson, Matthew Frye. *Whiteness of a Different Color*.
• Arendt, Hannah.
• Said, Edward. *Orientalism*

**Reflection, 300-600 words, due Sunday, March 12 by midnight. Email .doc to lnewman@ufl.edu; bring hard copy to class**

**Week 12 (Mon Mar 20)—No regular class meeting?/Library Workshop instead?**

*Second Short Essay (5-7pp, 1500-2000 words), due Monday, March 20; Email .doc to instructor, lnewman@ufl.edu;*
Part 3. Mapping the Historiography of a subfield or research topic

Week 13 (Mon, Mar 27). Student presentations and student-led discussion

Additional readings to be determined by students.

Week 14 (Mon, Apr 3). Student presentations and student-led discussion

Additional readings to be determined by students.

Devise a syllabus for a course you could teach in your own subfield, due Sunday April 2; email .doc to instructor, and then bring hard copy to class.

Week 15 (Mon, April 10). Student presentations and student-led discussion

Additional readings to be determined by students.

Week 16 (Mon, April 17). Last Class Meeting

Historiographical Review Essay due by April 24; email .doc to instructor.