

## Historiography

History 6061, Department of History, University of Florida  
Mondays, 3-6 pm, Fall 2018

Professor N. Hunt

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*Office hours:* Fridays, make an appointment by Thursdays at noon (preferably earlier), and I will try to accommodate everyone before 3 p.m. You can try just showing up for a quick question; you may also text on Fridays to check on availability: 734.834.7902

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*Welcome!* This course offers an introduction to important theoretical debates defining historical writing and practices today. As such, it is a course in historiography: the theory, history, and practice of historical writing.

Academic courses in historiography used to emphasize the professional writing of history, that is, the work of critically examining sources, selecting details from those materials, and synthesizing details into a narrative that also may succeed before critical examination. Some still tend to begin with the development in the West during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries of “scientific” history and the emergence of history as an academic profession. This course is different. It is not a survey of historiography, neither in the Western, subalternist, Africanist, or any other tradition. On Canvas, I am mounting a superb Historiography syllabus of this type, but which goes well beyond; it is from the University of Warwick’s Department of History (HISTORIOGRAPHY (HI323), 2016-17, Dr. Charles Walton). It goes back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century and contains detailed bibliographies and many, many leads on how to find helpful sources. I recommend it to you. *Mine it, and mine it well.*

In our case, Sara Maza will mention Leopold Von Ranke for a split second (p. 121) in her important book which will conclude the class, *while our approach will be to (1) keep history “deprovincialized” (Chakrabarty 2000), (2) explore innovative and enduring approaches since the times of Marc Bloch, and (3) learn how to think and write historiographically for our times.* Most of our assigned books are models of superb history: analysis, interpretations, and writing that draw - explicitly or implicitly - on concepts to do so. A few are examples of a “school” or genre. We have no geographic or chronological focus.

The goal is rather to sharpen student awareness of analytical and theoretical tools that *cross* more than one “field” of history (with the word “field” being wide open to definition). Throughout, students will learn to think, read, and write – historiographically – in relation to *a field*, defined as such through clarifying a problem or concept(s) and – very important – also in light of practices founds in our common readings.

The course is premised on the idea that historians need to read and converse across fields to be any good at what they do, that fields are best kept porous, and the writing of excellent, sophisticated history develops out of such conversations, readings, and the porosity itself. At the same time, most of you have come to Florida with a field and a subject or theme in mind, and historiographical investigation is essential to developing a topic well. So, the course is designed to help you combine these things: digging deeper in what you already know and like, and stretching out

## ASSIGNMENTS AND REQUIREMENTS

This is a primarily a reading seminar but it is also a “doing” seminar.

**Exercises.** A series of four “stretching” exercises are designed to take students into unfamiliar waters in relation to journals, concepts, and themes. They will also help them develop a critical working bibliography to serve as the foundation for the final paper. The course is organized around these exercises that push students their field “envelopes” in search of exciting ideas, approaches, concepts, and methods. Sometimes I will force you to read in particular great journals, choosing favorite articles (and clinching why). At least once, I will make you work with theoretical or historiographical lexicons in choosing a trio of concepts that you might make yours. **It is pretty important that you circle back to your supervisor and other faculty in your field once in a while;** they can help point you to major turning points, authors, and historiographical innovations and journals in your field. Each exercise should produce a small bibliography.

### Exercise A: CONCEPTS

Investigate the 3 key theory lexicons on Reserves. Which do you like most and why? Identify a set of compelling concepts, ideally that do not all come from the same book, which you find inspiring in relation to your particular interests & a historiographical angle that you can sustain this term.

Write about your findings. How do you anticipate using them? What further research or reading might be needed.

Raymond Williams, *Keywords*

David Macey, *Dictionary of Critical Theory*

Gregory, *Dictionary of Human Geography*\* (let me know if it is still not on Reserves)

**LESS IMPORTANT:**

Ashcroft et al. *Key Concepts in Postcolonial Studies*

Stoler, et al, *Political Concepts*

### Exercise B: KEY CROSS-FIELD JOURNALS

Explore journals in History and related fields, which are NOT mainly field journals. Get to know the very best in History journals and the wide range. Search them first by their web presence; look at the last. Then use the UF library to search by keyword in previous issues. Work with a MINIMUM of 3. Be thinking toward your prospectus and final paper. Try to get a sense of what makes for a GREAT historiographic paper and why. Also read the journal's statement to authors: what are they looking for? Why? *What did you learn? What KEY article or 3-5 did you find for your final paper?*

#### CHECK OUT & CHOOSE FROM:

*Comparative Studies in Society and History*  
*Past & Present*  
*History Workshop Journal*  
*Positions*  
*American Historical Review*

#### WORTH CONSIDERING AS WELL PERHAP:

*A History of the Present: A Journal of Critical History* (Joan Scott)  
*Critical Historical Studies* (William Sewell)  
*Rethinking History: The Journal of Theory & Practice*  
*Somatosphere* (STS)  
*Public Culture*  
*Annales* [in French]  
*History & Theory*  
*Journal of the Philosophy of History*

**Please suggest other possibilities as we go along.**

### Exercise C: ORALITY – MEMORY WORK - MATERIALITY READINGS

See instructions under CALENDAR.

### Exercise D: KEY ARTICLES + OTHER TEXT IN YOUR OWN FIELD

Be sure to consult with your supervisor on identifying the most important journals.

**Prospectus.** The final essay's definition as a problem worth investigating will be laid out in **the prospectus**. The grades of students who somehow get off track in terms of the final paper's definition will suffer greatly. Thus, it is VERY important to assemble your **exercise work into a working bibliography and produce a prospectus statement by the due date** that speaks to your historiographic problem (or matter of intrigue or perplexity).

**Final Paper.** Your final paper is not an exercise in writing empirical or narrative or contextual history based on primary sources. Ideally, it is an intellectual space to think through some kind of historiographical angle on the books in this course, your Exercise-based selections, and work in your field.

It might be based on a historiographic or methodological problem: like, why did gender history begin so late in my field? Or, why are the historians in some fields so unwilling to embrace orality, or metaphorical archives, or decolonization as an approach or concept? These are quick examples. Yours will allow you to tightly focus on a theme that might just carry you forward with empirical seminar papers to come, while doing some cross-talk (What would Marc Bloch or Sarah Maza or my favorite historian say about scale or memory work or conceptual history?). Thus, it means you do enough research to answer your precise question.

Thus, your final essay will be a substantial, original historiographical essay and it will be completed by the end of the semester. It will be a historiographical analysis or reflection related to your (own) *definition* of **a problem or matter of intrigue or perplexity** in your (self-defined) field of specialization. The format of the paper should conform to the rules of the *Chicago Manual of Style*. The timely completion of the paper will be part of its evaluation.

**One ungraded intellectual self-introduction.** 500 words at the beginning of the term.

**Up to 10 weekly reaction papers**, due not later than Saturdays at midnight, mounted on Canvas, and of roughly 2 double-spaced pages at 11 font; these should be of a rather formal, academic set of critical comments or questions; you may use the first person. (Every student may take one week off, thus writing 9 in all). These weekly writing assignments are designed to develop mastery of the material we are reading, improve the quality of our class discussions, and allow you to track your own developing questions and interests. It is fully expected that students will return to theirs more than once and especially in developing their final work for the course. Sometimes I will pose a question or two for you to consider.

**Attendance and participation:** regular, consistent, active attendance: thus finding ways to participate in class. Seminars are social experiences: the back-and-forth of ideas and argument are important, and I encourage everyone to engage in the analysis of each text, before you get there and once you arrive. Missing class is not acceptable

## LIBRARY & RESEARCH SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Every historian is only as good as their library skills can take them. And, there is no way to develop those skills without the assistance of some of the best research librarians around. The George A. Smathers Libraries has many superb and superbly helpful librarians; see the enclosed list at <http://apps.uflib.ufl.edu/staffdir/SubjectSpecialist.aspx>, as many regions and themes have their own specialist. History's subject specialist is Shelley Arlen, [shelarl@uflib.ufl.edu](mailto:shelarl@uflib.ufl.edu), 516 Library West. For remote services in "Asking a Librarian," see <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>. While I advise you to schedule appointments with the best subject specialists related to your field (there may be more than one!), it is also highly recommended that you also try dropping in at the Research Assistance Desk at Library West (hours roughly M-F, 9-5) as you will have the chance to cross with many minds with diverse tips on searching and search strategies here: <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/librarywest/researchassistancedesk>

## OTHER POLICIES & MATTERS

**HOW TO SUCCEED.** As always, in graduate seminars, *be selfish* and *take risks*. Do something that allows you to explore an avenue to which you might return later in your graduate career. Stretch beyond your comfort zone. Historiography can be a wonderful free space intellectually, one where historians try out ideas and test them in relation to not (or less) historical evidence but to historical writing and theorization, thus enabling kinds of writing not permitted in the staple of graduate training: content-based seminars. So, don't miss out.

**GROUP WORK.** Many occasions will arise for joint, collaborative or group work, including reading each other's weekly papers and co-preparing seminar themes, questions, and critique.

**OFFICE HOURS.** Wisest is to stay in touch, through your weekly papers and with at least a couple of individual meetings with me during the term.

**EXTENSIONS.** Students who need an extension on an assignment must consult the professor *prior* to the deadline. An extension will be granted only in cases of genuine emergency, so plan accordingly. Turning in an assignment late without an official extension will result in a lowering of the grade

**PURCHASE OR NOT???** Though most texts are available on Reserves in the library, I urge you to purchase copies whenever possible. It is a different and usually more profound reading experience

**SYLLABUS CHANGES.** I will be tweaking the syllabus as the course progresses, notably adding a single article to complement the monograph assigned.

**OFFICE HOURS AND EMAIL** Students are strongly encouraged to come to office hours to introduce yourself to the professor as well as to discuss any substantive questions, comments, or concerns you might have about the course material.

## UNIVERSITY POLICIES:

**PLAGIARISM:** Students are expected to abide by the university academic honesty policy, which includes properly citing all sources used in your course assignments. When in doubt, cite! For more information, see <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.php>. ALL CASES OF SUSPECTED PLAGIARISM WILL BE REPORTED TO THE APPROPRIATE UNIVERSITY AUTHORITIES. *NO EXCEPTIONS.*

**SPECIAL NEEDS:** Should you have special medical needs, please discuss this with me at the beginning of the semester. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office ([www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](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.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:** Student records are confidential. UF views each student, not their parent(s), as the primary contact for all communication. For more information, see: [www.registrar.ufl.edu/ferpahub.html](http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/ferpahub.html)

## SCHEDULE

27 August

Class 1, Introductions

3 September

UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY, no class

**Assignment: Self-introduction due, 5 September at midnight, on Canvas. Ungraded. About 500 words??**

**Take a peek at the Warwick syllabus; perhaps print out and mark up those parts you find useful.**

10 September: *The Annales and the Senses*

Class 2, Discussion of: Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft: Reflections on the Nature and Uses of History and the Techniques and Methods of Those Who Write It*, Vintage, 1964.

*Extra reading:*

Epstein, S. R., 'Marc Bloch: The Identity of a Historian', *Journal of Medieval History*, 19 (1993), 273-83.

Lyon, B., 'Marc Bloch: Did He Repudiate *Annales* History?', *Journal of Medieval History*, 11 (1985), 181-92, & reprinted in S. Clark (ed.), *The Annales School: Critical Assessments* (4 vols, London, 1999), IV, 200-212

Maza, *Thinking about History*, 166-70

17 September, *Fortuitous Archives*

Class 3, Discussion of: Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812*, Vintage, 1991.

*G no. 1 due: More details with follow, but you will work across three theoretical lexicons from different fields (critical theory, geography, and Raymond Williams himself). The idea is to choose 2-3 concepts that suggest to you an interpretive or methodological tool. And to write about the experience in a separate text and share your findings in class. **Word count. Citations/lexicons***

24 September, *Microhistoria* (Microhistory)

Class 4, Discussion of: Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: the Cosmos of a Seventeenth-Century Miller*, Johns Hopkins U Press, 1992.

1 October, *Critical Events and Memory*

Class 5, Discussion of: Shahid Amin, *Event, Metaphor, Memory: Chauri Chaura, 1922-1992*, U of California Press, 1995.

*Exercise no. 2 due this week (on the Thursday).*

8 October, *Critical Events and Ethnography*

Class 6, Discussion of: Richard Price, *The Convict and the Colonel: A Story of Colonialism and Resistance in the Caribbean*, 1998 (reprint 2006, Duke).

*Finalize method for Class no. 8: who will co-investigate what in advance of class time? Who will co-present which pairs or trios in texts? This will be an excellent occasion to learn the value – and perils – of reading book reviews and also of investigating historian's intellectual trajectories and personal lives.*

15 October, *Big Scale 1*

Class 7, Discussion of: Jan C. Jansen and Jurgen Osterhammel, *Decolonization: A Short History*, Princeton University Press (2017).

*Exercise no. 3 (due on Thursday of this week). Now it is time for your field journals. Your historiographic research has begun.*

22 October, *Orality, Memory, Silence, Senses, Autobiography (Egohistoire), Material Traces/Debris*

Class 8, *Reconfigured* into *Exercise no. 4*: collaborative study and methods workshop with “crash course” collective investigations into a knot of methodological themes:

**In chronological order**

(with Africanist items = \*)

\*Jan Vansina take 1, *Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical Methodology*, English translation, 1965.

Ronald Fraser, *Blood of Span: An Oral History of the Spanish Civil War*, 1979.

“An Interview with Ronald Fraser,” *Oral History* 8, (Spring, 1980): 52-57

Ronald Fraser, *In Search of a Past: The Rearing of an English Gentleman, 1933-45*, 1984

\*Vansina take 2, *Oral Tradition as History*, 1985

\*Bazin, “The Past in the Present: Notes on Oral Archaeology,” 1986

Passerini, *Fascism in Popular Memory: The Cultural Experience of the Turin Working Class*, 1987

\*Barber, *Discourse and its Disguises: The Interpretation of African Oral Texts*, 1989

Carolyn Steedman, *Landscape for a Good Woman*, 1986

Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli*, 1991.

Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 1995

\*Hunt, *A Colonial Lexicon*, 1999.

\*Luise White, *Speaking with Vampires: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa*, 2000

\*L. White, Miescher, Cohen, eds., *African Words, African Voices: Critical Practices in Oral History*, 2001

Mrazek, *A Certain Age: Colonial Jakarta through the Memories of Its Intellectuals*, 2010

Stoler, ed., *Imperial Debris*, 2013 (with Hunt, *An Acoustic Register* and many more)

\*Geissler et al, *Traces of the Future: An Archaeology of Medical Science in Africa*, 2016

29 October, *Big Scale 2, plus STS*

Class 9, Discussion of: Tiago Saraiva, *Fascist Pigs: Technoscientific Organisms and the History of Fascism*, MIT Press, 2016.

5 November, *Research & Study Time*.

Complete Exercise 4, at least in a preliminary way. Rethink and assemble Research Exercises 1-4 and including (if you like) the Orality-Memory-Silence Work. You are now fully on the way to your paper prospectus and final paper. *No formal class, but likely group work in our regular classroom. And write your prospectus: 500 words is fine. But nail it! With bibliography from all the exercises. Due on Canvas, 9 November, midnight.*

12 November

**University Holiday, no class on Monday.**

A Class 10 to be arranged as extra workshop time for each student to present their exercise results, their paper prospectus, and their paper plans. Ideally, **Tuesday 13 November, 6-9 pm** somewhere with pizza.

19 November, *Memory, Fragments, Science*

Class 10, Discussion of: Alison Winter, *Memory: Fragments of a Modern History*, University of Chicago Press, 2013.



26 November, *Rethinking Archives*

Class 11, Discussion of *what is the archive?* with comparison between Shula Marks, *Not Either an Experimental Doll*, Indiana U Press, 1988; and Kirsten Weld, *Paper Cadavers: The Archives of Dictatorship in Guatemala*, Duke University Press, 2014. *Workload to be divided, but all students to be familiar with each work.*

We will also find a way to do some final draft paper manuscript workshop work between our 26 November class, our 3 December class and the 6<sup>th</sup> of December. Students will be signed a workshop group of 3-4, all will participate in critique.

3 December, *Thinking about History & Historiography*

Class 12 = our last class, Final discussion of Maza, *Thinking about History*, University of Chicago Press 2017.

**Final Papers due: Monday, 10 December at midnight, on Canvas but also a hard copy to me (Grinter, under my office door or to my mailbox in the Main African Studies office).**

*Roughly 18-20 pages long. Quality (not quantity) is what matters. These should be footnoted, using Chicago Manual of Style.*