

HIS6061: INTRODUCTION TO HISTORIOGRAPHY (FALL 2025)



CLASS SCHEDULE: Tuesdays 3:00–6:00PM in the Keene-Flint Library (Keene-Flint 229)

Professor Anton Matytsin | matytsina@ufl.edu

Office: 230 Keene-Flint Hall

Office Hours: Tuesdays: 1:00–2:00PM, Thursdays: 1:00–3:00PM, or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course introduces beginning graduate students to some of the most essential issues and challenges involved in reading, researching, and writing history at the professional level. We will explore the various ways in which historians have approached the study of the past, examining different historiographical schools, theories, and philosophies of history. The readings will include both classic texts of historical scholarship and more recent work, exposing students to a broad range of approaches and methodologies. *This course is required for all History graduate students (MA and PhD).*

LEARNING GOALS:

- (1) The main goal of this course is to provide students with an overview of the various approaches to the discipline of history. We will explore the beginnings of professional history, explore key turning points and changes in the discipline, and analyze some of the major historiographical debates of the twentieth and twenty first centuries.
- (2) Students will encounter a variety of historiographical debates about methodology. One of the key themes that students will examine over the course of the semester is how scholars' theoretical approaches inform the practice of their scholarship.
- (3) Students will relate the different themes and debates of the course to their own geographical and chronological specializations.
- (4) The written assignments will allow students to develop skills in writing short review essays and longer literature overviews.
- (5) The preparations for leading discussion and in-class interaction will provide students with important experience in guiding collegial conversation and leading class discussion.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- 1) Sarah Maza, *Thinking About History* (University of Chicago Press, 2017) ISBN: 9780226109336
- 2) Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft* (Vintage, 1964) ISBN: 9780394705125
- 3) Anthony T. Grafton, *The Footnote: A Curious History* (Harvard UP, 1999) ISBN: 9780674307605
- 4) Daniel Lord Smail, *On Deep History and the Brain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008) ISBN: 9780520258129
- 5) Karl Marx, *Selected Writings* (Hackett Classics, 1994) ISBN: 9780872202184
- 6) Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (Vintage, 2014) ISBN: 9780375713965
- 7) Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, revised ed. (Johns Hopkins UP, 2013) ISBN: 9781421409887
- 8) Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge UP, 1988) ISBN: 9780521357456
- 9) Michel Rolph-Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, 2nd ed. (Beacon Press, 2015) ISBN: 9780807080535

ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION:

Participation and Professionalism (30%)

Presentation (10%)

Book Reviews (20% total/10% each)

Historiography Review Essay (40%)

Grading Scale:

A = 100–93 (4.0) B = 86–83 (3.0) C = 74–71 (2.0) D = 62–60 (1.0)

A- = 92–90 (3.67) B- = 82–79 (2.67) C- = 70–67 (1.67) D- = 59–56 (0.67)

B+ = 89–87 (3.33) C+ = 78–75 (2.33) D+ = 66–63 (1.33) F = below 55 (0)

For more information see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Please note that **grades** and percentages **displayed** on **Canvas** are merely **approximations** and do not accurately reflect your final grade. The grade book is there to provide you with grades for your individual assignments. Your **final grade for the course** is **calculated** by taking the **percentage value** of each assignment (in decimals) and **multiplying** it by the **grade point value** you received on that assignment. They are then added together.

Participation and Professionalism (30%):

(A) Attendance: This is a seminar course that will depend heavily on your **active** and **collegial participation** in class discussion to be successful. Students are expected to thoroughly read all assigned texts and to contribute regularly to class discussion. Students are expected to **attend all scheduled meetings**. If you are unable to attend, it is your responsibility to notify the instructor ahead of time and to determine the makeup assignment. Missing more than one meeting for the semester will significantly hurt your participation grade. Please **arrive** to the meetings **on time**. Punctuality is a show of respect for your instructor and classmates. Accommodations will be provided to any student who needs to miss class meetings for medical reasons. Guidelines for excused absences can be found here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/#absencestext>

(B) Participation in discussions: The success of the course depends in large part on the students' **active** and **consistent participation** in our weekly discussions. Bear in mind that "active participation" means asking **good questions** as well as proposing **good answers**. You are strongly encouraged to bring questions about the readings to class. If one of you had questions or difficulties, others certainly did as well.

(C) Readings: Please come to discussions having completed the assigned readings. "To complete the readings" means allowing yourself sufficient time both to **read through** the assigned materials and to **think** about them. Please have the **readings** readily **available during** the **class** discussion. It is your responsibility to contact me if you have difficulty locating the reading assignments.

You can use the **self-assessment questionnaire** below to understand how you are doing as a class participant. Please consider it from time to time as we go through the course and feel free to share your evaluation with me during office hours (this is not necessary, but always welcome):

- Are you prepared for discussions? Have you read the assigned texts carefully and thoroughly? Do you come to class with issues to raise in discussion?
- Do you participate regularly? Energetically? Do you participate actively in group activities?
- Do you listen to your fellow classmates and respond to them? Do you ask them questions?
- Do your interventions spark our discussions? Raise significant questions? Challenge our understanding of the readings and major themes? Offer insightful and unexpected reactions to discussions?
- How does your participation compare to that of other students? Are you a class leader or a follower? Do you try to take responsibility for what happens in class?

"Australian Rules" for Discussions

This format seeks to achieve several objectives: encouraging **active conversation**; cultivating a **common vocabulary** and identifying a set of **problems** and **questions** by the beginning of each meeting so that class time is devoted to exploring the readings in depth; making **writing** an essential part of the intellectual **dialogue**; developing skills in identifying and **engaging key arguments**; creating an **atmosphere** of **collegial participation** and **cooperation** as the foundation of intellectual inquiry and exchange.

The seminar is divided into **three groups**. In our first week of operation, group A will meet several days before class and develop a set of three or four written questions based on the readings. These questions, generally a short paragraph each, can treat the substance of the readings and/or problems of historical method and reasoning. They should be interpretive, rather than factual; that is, concerned not only with *what* authors say but *how* they frame or construct their major arguments. In general, interpretive questions are phrased in ways that do not invite simple yes-or-no answers. They tend to favor "how," "why," "in what sense," "what is at stake in..." and other gestures that stimulate conversation. **Questions must be posted** to our Canvas site by **6pm on Friday**, and should be labelled "Questions for Week X," where "X" is the coming week on the syllabus. Group B, after discussing Group A's questions, will respond in written form, devoting no more than 400 words to each one. Responses should address questions directly but can also critique the questions and move beyond them, according to the collective judgment of Group B. **Responses** should be posted to the Canvas site by **6pm on Sunday**.

Group C should meet Sunday evening or Monday during the day to **develop a commentary** on the **questions** and **responses**. Group C will need to rehearse its positions - which may include issues raised in the week's readings but not addressed by the original questions and responses - and to

divide speaking responsibilities. Group C's main **goal** should be to **launch a stimulating discussion**, using the work of Groups A and B as a platform. The idea is to make useful connections and distinctions, suggest areas in need of clarification, pose follow-up questions, and offer Group C's own take on what it considers the largest and most interesting issues.

The following week, groups will **exchange roles**: those who were in Group A become Group B, those who were in Group B become Group C, and those who were in Group C become Group A. The week after that, people migrate again, so that everyone has a chance to work in all three modes. After each three-week cycle, the composition of the groups will be scrambled.

The success of this format depends upon getting the **readings done** well in **advance** and sticking to **deadlines**.

Presentation (10%): Students will pick a week during which they will do a brief presentation at the start of the class. These presentations should provide relevant contextual information about the week's readings and scholarly approaches. They should be about 15 minutes in length. I would be happy to meet with you individually to discuss potential topics, themes, and outlines for the presentations.

Book Reviews (20% total/10% each): Each student will pick **two books** to review during the course of the semester. These should not be books on which you are presenting, although one of the books can come from the syllabus. At least one of the books should be from your field and may be used for your final essay. The reviews should be approximately **1000 words** in length and engage with the key arguments of the texts. Specific instructions and examples will be provided.

Historiography Review Essay (40%): By the end of the semester, each student will write a substantial historiographical essay. The paper should focus on each student's research field and interests and should provide an overview of 4-5 monographs. Students must meet with the instructor no later than Week 10 to discuss their topics. The final assignment should be submitted electronically (via Canvas) **by Sunday, December 7th by 11:59PM**.

COURSE POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS:

Extensions and Late Penalties: The penalty for turning in late assignments is one letter grade (A to B, B to C, and C to D) for each day that the assignment is late. Assignments that are over three days late will not be accepted and will automatically receive an F. Extensions will only be granted in case of extenuating circumstances, such as documented medical emergencies. **Please note that you must complete all of the assignments in order to pass the course.**

Classroom Etiquette: Please engage each other collegially and with respect. You are welcome and encouraged to disagree with your peers, but please do so graciously, focusing on ideas and not posing *ad hominem* arguments. Please **use electronic devices** (such as **laptops** and **tablets**) only for the purposes of **taking notes** or **consulting the readings**. The improper use of electronic devices can be distracting to both you and your classmates, disrupting the learning experience. The instructor reserves the right to **prohibit** the use of electronic devices in cases where students use them **inappropriately**. The use of **phones** is **not permitted** during class time.

Contact: The University of Florida requires that you use your UF Gatorlink account for university related e-mail communication. Please see <http://www.it.ufl.edu/policies/#email> to read more on this policy. It is important to check Canvas and your UF e-mail accounts regularly. I will do my best

to respond to all course-related emails within 24 hours on weekdays and 48 hours on weekends and during breaks. Please note that if you contact me about an assignment at the last minute, I may not have time to respond. Like most UF faculty, I treat e-mail as a formal means of communication.

Office Hours: My office hours are **Tuesdays 1–2PM, Thursdays 1–3PM**, or by appointment, in Keene-Flint 230. You are required attend office hours at least once during the semester to discuss your final paper, but I encourage you to come as often as you wish. I would like to get to know each of you individually.

STATEMENT REGARDING ACADEMIC HONESTY:

Students are expected to uphold the Academic Honor Code of the University of Florida. 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 by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The [Conduct Code](#) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. See the UF Conduct Code website for more information. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class. An excellent website that discusses plagiarism, correct citing of references, and correct use of quotations is:

<http://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/mediasite/Viewer/?peid=adaa44500eaf460a84f238e6b9a558f9>.

Unless otherwise instructed, you are **not permitted to use generative A.I.** (such as Chat GPT) to generate your essays or other assignments. The use of such software will be considered **equivalent** to **plagiarism**. Please consult UF guidelines regarding the use of such technologies.

Any assignment demonstrating evidence of **plagiarism** or otherwise **violating** the Academic Honor Code will automatically receive a **failing grade** and be **reported** to the Dean of Students.

UF ACADEMIC POLICIES AND RESOURCES:

This course complies with all UF academic policies. For information on those policies and for resources for students, please see [this link](#). (The direct link is <https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>.)

WEEKLY TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Note: Readings Marked as [C] are available for download on Canvas

WEEK 1 (AUGUST 21–23): NO MEETING

WEEK 2 (AUGUST 26): INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS HISTORIOGRAPHY?

- 1) Sara Maza, *Thinking About History* (2017)

WEEK 3 (SEPTEMBER 2): THE ROLE OF THE HISTORIAN

- 1) Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft* (1949; 1964 edition)
- 2) R. G. Collingwood, selections in *The Idea of History* (1946; 1956 edition), 1–13, 205–249 [C]
- 3) E. H. Carr, selections in *What Is History?* (1961; 1990 edition), 7–30 [C]
- 4) Carlo Ginzburg, “Checking the Evidence: The Judge and the Historian,” *Critical Inquiry* 18, no. 1 (1991): 79–92 [C]

WEEK 4 (SEPTEMBER 9): ANTIQUARIANISM AND HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

- 1) Anthony T. Grafton, *The Footnote: A Curious History* (1999)
- 2) Arnaldo Momigliano, “Ancient History and the Antiquarian,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 13, nos. 3/4 (1950): 285–315 [C]
- 3) Zachary S. Schiffman, selections in *The Birth of the Past* (2011), 1–13, 245–278 [C]
- 4) Jeremy Popkin, selections in *Herodotus to H-Net: The Story of Historiography* (2020), 47–67 [C]

WEEK 5 (SEPTEMBER 16): FROM UNIVERSAL HISTORY TO MACROHISTORY

- 1) Daniel Lord Smail, *On Deep History and the Brain* (2008)
- 2) Voltaire, *An Essay on Universal History* (1756) 1–35 [C]
- 3) John Robert McNeill and William Hardy McNeill, *The Human Web: A Bird's-eye View of Human History* (2003), vxii–xviii, 3–14, 319–327 [C]
- 4) David Christian, “The Return of Universal History,” *History and Theory* 49 (2010): 6–27 [C]

WEEK 6 (SEPTEMBER 23): MARX AND SCIENTIFIC HISTORY

- 1) Karl Marx, *The German Ideology* (1846), *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), ‘The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte’ (1852), *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859), in *Selected Writings* (1994), 103–126, 157–213
- 2) E. P. Thompson, selections from *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963), 9–14, 807–832 [C]
- 3) Albert Soboul, “The French Revolution in the History of the Contemporary World,” in *The French Revolution: Recent Debates and New Controversies*, ed. Gary Kates (1998), 23–40 [C]
- 4) Stuart Hall, “Rethinking the ‘Base and Superstructure’ Metaphor [1977],” in Stuart Hall, *Essential Essays, Volume 1: Foundations of Cultural Studies* (2018), 143–171 [C]

FIRST BOOK REVIEW DUE BY THE END OF FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 26TH

WEEK 7 (SEPTEMBER 30): CAPITALISM AND GLOBAL ECONOMIC HISTORY

- 1) Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (2014)
- 2) Eric Williams, selections from *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944), vii–viii, 169–196, 209–212 [C]
- 3) Fernand Braudel, selections from *Civilization and Capitalism* (1979), v.1: 23–29, 559–563; v.2: 21–23, 600–601; v.3: 17–20, 619–632 [C]
- 4) Sebastian Conrad, selections from *What Is Global History?* (2016), 37–89 [C]

WEEK 8 (OCTOBER 7): MICROHISTORY

- 1) Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms* (1976; 2013 edition)
- 2) Giovanni Levi, “On Microhistory,” in *New Perspectives on History*, ed. Peter Burke (1992), 97–119 [C]
- 3) Jill Lepore, “Historians Who Love Too Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography,” *The Journal of American History* 88, no. 1 (2001): 129–144 [C]
- 4) Lara Putnam, “To Study the Fragments/Whole: Microhistory and the Atlantic World,” *Journal of Social History* 39, no. 3 (2006): 615–630 [C]

WEEK 9 (OCTOBER 14): THE THEORETICAL TURN AND INTELLECTUAL HISTORY

- 1) Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of The Human Sciences* (1966), ix–xxvi, 19–64, 375–422; *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1971), 3–17, 126–156, 166–177, 199–211; *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975) 3–31; *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 2: The Uses of Pleasure* (1984), 3–32 [C]
- 2) Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), 1–22, 66–76, 92–110 [C]
- 3) Quentin Skinner, “Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas,” *History and Theory* 8, no.1 (1969): 3–53 [C]

WEEK 10 (OCTOBER 21): GENDER AND RACE

- 1) Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (1988; 2018 edition), 1–11, 15–50 [C]
- 2) George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890–1940* (1994), 1–29, 207–225, 355–361 [C]
- 3) Henry Louis Gates Jr., “Writing ‘Race’ and the Difference It Makes,” in “Race,” *Writing, and Difference*, ed. Henry Louis Gates Jr. (1986), 1–20 [C]
- 4) Karen Fields and Barbara Fields, *Racecraft: The Soul of Inequality in American Life* (2012) 1–74 [C]

TOPICS FOR FINAL ESSAY DUE BY THE END OF THE END OF FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24TH

WEEK 11 (OCTOBER 28): POSTCOLONIALISM AND SUBALTERN STUDIES

- 1) Edward Said, *Orientalism* (1979), xi–xxv, 1–28 [C]
- 2) Robert Irwin, *Dangerous Knowledge: Orientalism and Its Discontents* (2006), 1–8, 277–304 [C]
- 3) Ranajit Guha, “Introduction” and “Chandra’s Death” in *A Subaltern Studies Reader: 1986–1995*, ed. Ranajit Guha (1997), ix–xxi, 34–62 [C]
- 4) Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (2000), 3–23, 237–255 [C]
- 5) Vivek Chibber, *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital* (2013) 1–27 [C]

WEEK 12 (NOVEMBER 4): OBJECTIVITY AND HISTORY

- 1) Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (1988)
- 2) Thomas Haskell, "Objectivity Is Not Neutrality: Rhetoric vs. Practice in Peter Novick's *That Noble Dream*," *History and Theory* 29, no. 2 (1990): 129–157 [C]
- 3) Matthew Karp, "[History as an End: 1619, 1776, and the Politics of the Past](#)," *Harper's Magazine* (July 2021)
- 4) [Florida House Bill 7](#) (2022), section 3, a–h (pp. 12–16) [C]

SECOND BOOK REVIEW DUE BY THE END OF FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7TH

WEEK 13 (NOVEMBER 11): NO CLASS: VETERANS' DAY

WEEK 14 (NOVEMBER 18): THE LIMITS OF HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE

- 1) Michel Rolph-Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (1995; 2015 edition)
- 2) Hayden White, "The Burden of History" *History and Theory* 5, No. 2 (1966): 111–134 [C]
- 3) Hayden White, "Interpretation in History," *New Literary History* 4, No. 2, (1973): 281–314 [C]
- 4) Joan Wallach Scott, "The Evidence of Experience," *Critical Inquiry* 17, No. 4 (1991): 773–797 [C]
- 5) Achille Mbembe, "The Power of the Archive and its Limits," in *Refiguring the Archive*, Carolyn Hamilton et al. eds. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 19–27 [C]

NOVEMBER 24–28: THANKSGIVING BREAK

WEEK 16 (DECEMBER 2): CONCLUSIONS: THE FUTURE OF HISTORY

- 1) Erik Alterman, "[The Decline of Historical Thinking](#)," *The New Yorker* (2019) [C]
- 2) Daniel Besser, "[The Dangerous Decline of the Historical Profession](#)," *The New York Times* (January 14, 2023) [C]
- 3) The AHA's "[Guiding Principles for Artificial Intelligence in History Education](#)," *The American Historical Association* (July 29, 2025)
- 4) D. Graham Burnett, "[Will the Humanities Survive Artificial Intelligence](#)," *The New Yorker* (April 26, 2025) [C]
- 5) Bill Wasik, "[A.I. Is Poised to Rewrite History. Literally](#)," *The New York Times* (June 16, 2025)
- 6) David A. Bell "[A.I. is Shedding Enlightenment Values](#)," *The New York Times* (August 2, 2025)

FINAL PAPER: DUE, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7TH BY 12:00PM (NOON)