

ISSUES AND INTERPRETATIONS IN EUROPEAN HISTORY

HIST 7020, Fall 2008, CRN 87819
Tuesday 1:00-4:20; 34 Peachtree, room 2131
Office Hours: M/W 9:30 -11:00, and by appt.
Office location: 34 Peachtree, room 2034

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Course description

This reading seminar explores recent debates and approaches in European history from the medieval period to the present. Readings revolve around three themes: culture and politics; nation, class, and empire; and interdisciplinary approaches to “modernity.” The seminar’s focus on methodology and historiography will assist students regardless of area of specialization, as the debates raised and methods used by these books have had influence well beyond the area of European history. Seminar members are expected to read critically and to participate actively in discussion. Students are encouraged to contact the professor and their peers as they prepare for seminar and the various assignments.

Books available for purchase

- William H. Sewell, Jr., *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation* (2005)
Mario Biagioli, *Galileo Courtier: The Practice of Science in the Culture of Absolutism* (1994)
Anna Clark, *Scandal: The Sexual Politics of the British Constitution* (2004)
Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution* (2nd ed. 2004)
Mabel Berezin, *Making the Fascist Self: The Political Culture of Interwar Italy* (1997)
Patrick Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (2002)
David Bell, *The Cult of the Nation in France: Inventing Nationalism, 1680-1800* (2003)
Lisa Forman Cody, *Birthing the Nation: Sex, Science, and the Conception of Eighteenth-Century Britons* (2005)
Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination 1830-1867* (2002)
Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (1992)
Jan Goldstein, *The Post-Revolutionary Self: Politics and Psyche in France, 1750-1850* (2005)
Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (1989)
Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (2005)

Assignments and grading

- Active and meaningful participation in class discussions, including one in-class presentation posing questions on book read for that week (30 %).

Students should read the books carefully, and come to class having thought critically about the reading, particularly its methods and arguments. It is a good idea to do some research into the background of the author: is this a first book, a third book? Where has the person taught? What else has he or she written?

- Document analysis exploring the significance of a primary source that deals with one of the themes raised in the course and selected by the student (2-3 pages), due Sept. 16 (10 %)
- Three review essays
 - A book review on one book (2-3 pages), due Oct. 7 (10%)
 - A comparative book review on two books (4-5 pages), due Nov. 4 (20%)
 - A historiographical essay bringing together several of the books read for the course as well as some outside readings related to the theme selected (10-12 pages), due Dec. 9 (30%)

COURSE SCHEDULE

(Deviations may be necessary; students are responsible for changes announced in class.)

Tu. Aug. 19 Introduction: go over syllabus, assignments, themes of course

By way of introduction: recent historical and intellectual trends

Tu. Aug. 26 *AHR* Forum: Geoff Eley's *A Crooked Line*,
articles by Sewell, Speigel, Goswami, & Eley
American Historical Review 113 (April 2008): 391-437.

Tu. Sept. 2 Sewell, *Logics of History*

Theme One: Culture and Politics

Tu. Sept. 9 Biagioli, *Galileo Courtier*

Tu. Sept. 16 Clark, *Scandal*

Primary source analysis due in class (2-3 pages). Be sure to answer the “big five” questions: Who? When? Why? For whom? In what context?

Tu. Sept. 23 Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class*

Tu. Sept. 30 Berezin, *Making the Fascist Self*

Theme Two: Nation, Class, Empire

Tu. Oct. 7 Geary, *The Myth of Nations*

Book review due on Biagioli, Clark, Hunt, **or** Berezin (2-3 pages)

Review should follow format of reviews published in the *American Historical Review*: summary of book kept to a minimum, with focus on argument, methods, sources used, and the extent to which book succeeds in its goals. *AHR* book reviews usually have an 800 word limit. Try to stick to that.

Tu. Oct. 14 Bell, *The Cult of the Nation*

Tu. Oct. 21 Cody, *Birthing the Nation*

Tu. Oct. 28 Hall, *Civilising Subjects*

Theme Three: Interdisciplinary approaches to “Modernity”

Tu. Nov. 4
**ELECTION
DAY!**

Laqueur, *Making Sex*

Comparative book review due on two of the books read thus far (4-5 pages). One journal that often publishes dual reviews is *Social History*. Look through issues of this and other publications in your field to get ideas about how to approach this assignment. As with the first review, be sure to keep any summarizing of the books’ contents to a minimum and stay focused on comparing the approaches taken, methods used, and arguments made by the two historians.

Tu. Nov. 11

Jan Goldstein, *The Post-Revolutionary Self*

Tu. Nov. 18

Eksteins, *Rites of Spring*

Tu. Nov. 25

THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Tu. Dec. 2

Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever Until It Was No More*

Tu. Dec. 9

Historiographical essay due by 4 PM

This 10-12 page paper must deal with **one** of the three themes treated in this seminar. The paper should analyze the books assigned under that rubric, as well as several other books and articles that treat the same theme. Be sure to develop a coherent argument about the perspectives historians have used in dealing with this theme as well as the strengths and weaknesses of their different approaches. Make use of the bibliographies, notes, and historiographical discussions in the assigned books to find references to other related secondary sources. You can also use the database “Historical Abstracts,” which is available through the University Library website, to get citations. Students are encouraged to meet with the instructor as they build their bibliographies and work to narrow their focus in these essays.