

HIST 8000: HISTORICAL METHODS & THEORY
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What was history, and what is it now? Why is theory useful? How we can practice history? This reading seminar engages with a series of texts that illuminate questions of theory and methodology as well as historical events and experiences. After an introduction to historiography, it takes us from one possible point of departure – Marxism, an important source of modern historical thought – to a variety of destinations, including social and subaltern history, cultural and gender history, and diasporic and transnational history. One goal of the seminar is to demystify “theory” and enable us to understand key categories and concepts increasingly found in historical literature. Another goal is to demonstrate the open-ended nature of fields of inquiry and empower us to produce our own original and insightful studies of history.

This syllabus provides a general plan for the seminar; deviations may be necessary. The format of the seminar is discussion, supplemented by film screenings and group work. We will read a total of fifteen books (one quite short and three only selections). All are required. I expect you to be a critical reader, open-minded discussant, and clear and thoughtful writer. You should regularly attend seminar because your presence and contribution matter. *Unless otherwise directed, please turn off and stow all electronic devices, including cellphones and computers, during seminar meetings.* You should complete all assignments on time. I have paired many books to resist the canonical status attached to some of them and to create opportunities instead for contextualization, comparison, critique, and, above all, ongoing conversation. To stimulate seminar discussion, we will oftentimes break into small groups to discuss a book and then present it to other members of the seminar. I am willing to allow a *very limited* number of excused absences arising from family, health, and work emergencies, but I cannot grant them automatically. Two or more unexcused absences will affect your final course grade. Grading in this seminar uses plus and minus grades.

The final course grade is derived from fifteen reading questionnaires (30%), a final ten-page paper (30%), and participation (40%). The *reading questionnaires* consist of six questions, most of which call for paragraph-length responses. The *paper* involves reflecting on your changing conception of history, highlighting two or three particularly intriguing “keywords” (categories and concepts) we have encountered in our reading, and discussing how they could enhance a project you may undertake in academic or public history. The paper’s scholarly apparatus (notes, bibliography, etc.) should be complete, consistent, and correct. Our authorities will be Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*, 7th ed. (2007) and William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White, *The Elements of Style*, 4th ed. (2000). Please acquire copies of the current editions of these two books as soon as possible and always keep them within reach of your writing table. More details will be provided in due course. *Late written work, without a legitimate excuse, will be marked down.* Needless to say, it is understood that you will be honest in submitting

written work for credit and I will be fair in grading it. In addition to regular attendance, *participation* involves a cooperative approach to our group work and active contribution to our seminar discussions.

The seminar meets 5:30-8:50 PM Monday in 707-G. Comments and questions are welcome inside and outside the seminar room. Please send messages to icfletcher@gsu.edu; type "Hist 8000" in the subject line. My office hours are 4:30-5:30 PM Monday, 1:30-2:30 PM Wednesday, and by appointment (404/413-6355) in 834-G.

BOOKS

Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (1995)
Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (1973)

Luisa Passerini, *Autobiography of a Generation: Italy, 1968* (1996)

Geoff Eley, *A Crooked Line: From Cultural History to the History of Society* (2005)

Robert C. Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2d ed. (1978)

David Forgacs, ed., *The Antonio Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings 1916-1935* (2000)

*Ranjit Guha, *Dominance without Hegemony: History and Power in Colonial India* (1997)

*Ernesto Laclau, *On Populist Reason* (2005)

Catherine Belsey, *Poststructuralism: A Very Short Introduction* (2002)

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1978)

*Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, 3d ed. (2003)

*Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992)

*Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 3d ed. (2006)

*Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern* (2003)

*Janet Hart, *New Voices in the Nation: Women and the Greek Resistance, 1941-1964* (1996)

*Jocelyn Olcott, *Revolutionary Women in Postrevolutionary Mexico* (2005)

*Jacqueline Nassy Brown, *Dropping Anchor, Setting Sail: Geographies of Race in Black Liverpool* (2005)

*Andrea L. Smith, *Colonial Memory and Postcolonial Europe: Maltese Settlers in Algeria and France* (2006)

*Kristin L. Hoganson, *Consumers' Imperium: The Global Production of American Domesticity, 1865-1920* (2007)

*Afsaneh Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches and Men without Beards: Gender and Sexual Anxieties of Iranian Modernity* (2005)

Ann Laura Stoler, ed., *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History* (2006)

* To be read by one half of the seminar; do not purchase until these books are allotted to members of the seminar.

MEETINGS, READINGS, ETC.

7 JAN. WHAT IS HISTORY?

14 JAN. THE INTERPLAY OF PAST AND PRESENT

Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*

READING QUESTIONNAIRE #1 DUE IN SEMINAR

21 JAN. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. HOLIDAY

28 JAN. PLOTTING THE PAST

White, *Metahistory*

READING QUESTIONNAIRE #2 DUE IN SEMINAR

4 FEB. MAKING HISTORY

Passerini, *Autobiography of a Generation*

READING QUESTIONNAIRE #3 DUE IN SEMINAR

11 FEB. TURNING HISTORY

Eley, *A Crooked Line*

READING QUESTIONNAIRE #4 DUE IN SEMINAR

18 FEB. “A RELATIONSHIP, AND NOT A THING”

Tucker, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ix-xlii, 3-6, 16-25, 143-200, 294-438, 577-585, 594-617, 653-677

READING QUESTIONNAIRE #5 DUE IN SEMINAR

25 FEB. (COUNTER)HEGEMONY?

Forgacs, *The Antonio Gramsci Reader*, 10-55, 76-78, 110-112, 135-137, 142-164, 171-185, 189-378

READING QUESTIONNAIRE #6 DUE IN SEMINAR

3 MAR. *SPRING BREAK*

10 MAR. *SUBALTERNS/SUBJECTS OF HISTORY*

*Guha, *Dominance without Hegemony*

*Laclau, *On Populist Reason*

READING QUESTIONNAIRE #7 DUE IN SEMINAR

17 MAR. “*BORN FREE, AND EVERYWHERE IN CHAINS*”

Belsey, *Poststructuralism*

Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*

READING QUESTIONNAIRES #8 & 9 DUE IN SEMINAR

24 MAR. *IMPERIAL POWER/KNOWLEDGE*

*Said, *Orientalism*

*Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*

READING QUESTIONNAIRE #10 DUE IN SEMINAR

31 MAR. *NATION AND EMPIRE IN QUESTION*

*Anderson, *Imagined Communities*

*Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*

READING QUESTIONNAIRE #11 DUE IN SEMINAR

7 APR. *GENDERING WAR AND REVOLUTION*

*Hart, *New Voices in the Nation*

*Olcott, *Revolutionary Women in Postrevolutionary Mexico*

READING QUESTIONNAIRE #12 DUE IN SEMINAR

14 APR. *SPACE, PLACE, MEMORY, AND DIASPORIC FORMATIONS*

*Brown, *Dropping Anchor, Setting Sail*

**Smith, Colonial Memory and Postcolonial Europe*

READING QUESTIONNAIRE #13 DUE IN SEMINAR

21 APR. TRANSNATIONALIZING CULTURE, QUEERING MODERNITY

**Hoganson, Consumers' Imperium*

**Najmabadi, Women with Mustaches and Men without Beards*

READING QUESTIONNAIRE #14 DUE IN SEMINAR

28 APR. EVERYDAY FORMS OF EMPIRE

Stoler, Haunted by Empire (selections to be determined)

READING QUESTIONNAIRE #15 DUE IN SEMINAR

5 MAY PAPER DUE IN OFFICE (5:30 PM)

12 MAY GRADES DUE TO REGISTRAR

NAME

DATE

READING QUESTIONNAIRE #

COMPLETE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL CITATION

- 1) How would you describe this book's subject or theme? How would you summarize its principal argument(s)?
- 2) What would you identify as the book's two or three most important "keywords" (categories and concepts)? Can you briefly define them?
- 3) What do you think is the most interesting sentence in the book?
- 4) What most impressed or intrigued you about the book? Would you do anything differently?
- 5) Avoiding generalities, how would you connect this book to other books we have read? Are these connections empirical, theoretical, and/or methodological?
- 6) What are two or three questions for our seminar discussion?

***PLEASE REPRODUCE THE ABOVE FORMAT AND QUESTIONS
IN YOUR COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE***

***YOUR COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE
SHOULD BE TYPEWRITTEN OR COMPUTER-GENERATED***