

**CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY**

Cleveland, Ohio

Fall 2009

HSTY 250: *Issues and Methods in History*

Clark 302

Monday-Wednesday, 9:00-10:15 a.m.

Prof. Kenneth F. Ledford

Mather House 209

Office: 368-4144

E-mail: kenneth.ledford@case.edu

Office Hours:

Monday-Wednesday: 10:30 a.m.- Noon.

2:00-3:45 p.m.

Tuesday, 8:00 a.m.-Noon

Other Hours By Appointment

Mr. Jonathan Wlasiuk

Mather House 12

Office: 368-4108

E-mail: jonathan.wlasiuk@case.edu

Monday, Wednesday, Friday: Noon-3:00 p.m.

Other Hours By Appointment

What distinguishes the way that historians think from the ways of thinking of *other* disciplines? What makes history unique as an academic mode of inquiry? How do historians go about the business of their craft, choosing topics and approaches to researching and writing about them? How *can* human beings claim to know about the past, about events and phenomena that they have never personally experienced and can never experience? If the fundamental belief of historians is that humans better understand *every* phenomenon or topic by understanding its history and historical context, how do historians apply that belief to their *own* discipline and profession? This course will pursue these and other questions while students sharpen their ability to think historically, to reason critically about history, to read critically books and articles about history, and to unravel the strengths and weaknesses of scholarship produced by historians.

BOOKS TO PURCHASE

You are **required** to purchase the following seven (7) books, available at the University book store on campus. You might save money if you buy them from any on-line bookseller.

John H. Arnold, *History: A Very Short Introduction* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), paperback, 146 pages

James M. Banner, Jr., and John R. Gillis, eds., *Becoming Historians* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), paperback, 312 pages

Geoff Eley and Keith Nield, *The Future of Class in History: What's Left of the Social?* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2007), paperback, 280 pages

Ellen Fitzpatrick, *History's Memory: Writing America's Past, 1880-1980* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), paperback, 336 pages

Peter Charles Hoffer, *Past Imperfect: Facts, Fictions, Fraud – American History from Bancroft and Parkman to Ambrose, Bellesiles, Ellis, and Goodwin* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2007), paperback, 336 pages

Jenny L. Presnell, *The Information-Literate Historian: A Guide to Research for History Students* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), paperback, 242 pages

Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), paperback, 648 pages

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Papers:

There will be two kinds of papers required in this course.

1) Each week, beginning Week 1, the student will hand in at the beginning of class on **Wednesday** a **typed** paper of 500-750 words (2-3 typed, double-spaced pages), that contains the student's reaction to the **current** week's readings. Examples of approaches would include disagreement with the reading, agreement with it, disputation of the premises of the author, questions that the student finds unanswered, (later in the semester) connection with prior readings, connection with the student's larger annotated bibliography project; these examples are illustrative only and are not meant to limit the student's options. The student should try to move beyond reproduction of the readings' arguments to some analysis or assimilation of the concepts and ideas presented.

No reaction paper will be due in Weeks 14 (Thanksgiving Holiday) or 15; thus, a total of 13 (thirteen) reaction papers are required.

Reaction papers **must** be handed in on time and in person; there will be **no** extensions. Reaction papers will be commented upon and returned but **NOT** graded. Successful completion of the 13 reaction papers will count for **twenty (20) percent** of the final grade.

2) Each student will choose a topic for a semester-long research project to result in a **critical historiographical essay** on an historical topic of the student's choice. By **Monday of Week 3**, each student should select an historical topic about which that student would wish to learn more, turning in a one-page, typed, double-spaced description of the topic. The instructors will review those topics and provide guidance to help the student sharpen the focus and arrive at a "do-able" topic. Over the balance of the semester, the student will search for resources that pertain to that topic, using the research methods presented in Week 2. The historiographical essay is due the **NEXT-TO-LAST** class in Week 15, **Monday, November 30**. Each student should expect to evaluate as many as 10 or 12 important books and/or journal articles that have framed the approaches historians have taken to the research topic and discuss critically the approaches taken by the profession, the strengths and

weaknesses of those approaches, the reasons for continuity or change in historical interpretation, the questions definitively answered, and the questions left unanswered and thus promising for future research. Final historiographical essays should be 15-25 (fifteen to twenty-five) pages long. The historiographical essay will represent **thirty (30) percent** of the student's final grade.

Footnotes should follow consistently one of the prescribed forms found in chapters 16 and 17 of the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th ed. (University of Chicago Press, 2003), 593-754. When you consider attribution, consider the "Policies to Note" below.

Exams:

1) There will be a mid-term examination, seventy-five (75) minutes long, in class, on **Wednesday, October 14**. Its format will include thirty (30) minutes of identifications and a forty-five (45) minute essay. The mid-term will represent **twenty (20) percent** of the student's final grade.

2) There will be a final examination, three (3) hours long, during the period prescribed by the Registrar for this course, on **Monday, December 14, 2007, 8:30-11:30 a.m.**, and it will cover *all* material in the course, with an emphasis on that covered since the mid-term. I reserve the right to offer a final examination that is shorter than 3 hours; a final announcement will be made later in the semester. The final examination will represent **thirty (30) percent** of the student's final grade.

POLICIES TO NOTE

1. Because of the healthy enrollment in this year's HSTY 250, the Department of History has appointed Mr. Jonathan Wlasiuk, an advanced graduate student (and soon to be a defended dissertator), as co-instructor. Mr. Wlasiuk will share fully with Prof. Ledford in all the important decisions of the semester, will be active in teaching and leading discussion, and will participate also in formulation of all grades. I ask all members of HSTY 250 to grant Mr. Wlasiuk the full respect and deference that they would grant to Prof. Ledford or any other faculty member at CWRU.

2. This class will **start on time** and finish on time. The instructor will expect students to be just as courteous **by arriving on time and being ready to begin at 9:00 a.m.** The instructor will make all announcements important to the course at the **beginning** of class and will **not** repeat them, so it will benefit the student to arrive on time. Tardiness will count as non attendance.

3. Please turn off cellular telephones, PDAs, and other objects that ring, beep, vibrate, or otherwise distract during class time. Students whose devices distract will be asked to leave.

4. **Attendance, participation, and preparation policy.** Students are expected to attend all classes, unless excused by an appropriate note from the University Health Service or the Office of Undergraduate Studies. All students should participate fully in the discussions. Students are also expected to come to class having completed the readings for the week. In other words, attendance and preparation **are mandatory**; a failing grade in the course may be assigned for failure to attend, even if graded written work is passing. Attendance is an **additional** requirement of the course and is as important as a student's performance on tests, papers, and in discussion.

5. **Late paper policy.** The historiographical essay is due at the *beginning* of class on Monday, November 30, i.e., at 9:00 a.m., after which time it will be considered one day late. Late bibliographies will be penalized a letter grade for each day, or fraction thereof, late, **without exception**. Students know the due date now and should plan their semesters

6. In accordance with University policy, grades of **incomplete** will be granted only in truly extenuating cases.

7. **Co-Instructors.** Because of the happy circumstance that this year's section of HSTY 250 is quite large, the Department of History has assigned an advanced graduate student as co-instructor, to work along side the faculty member of record. The co-instructors will collaborate on all aspects of the course, planning, teaching, and grading alike. Students should accord each co-instructor coeval levels of respect.

8. **Plagiarism.** Students should have learned what plagiarism is and how to avoid it long before they seek and obtain admission to a university. Lest there be any confusion, however, I provide the following guidelines, which I adapt from Prof. Vernon Lidtke of The Johns Hopkins University:

The term plagiarism covers a multitude of sins. It involves the theft of words, ideas or conclusions from another writer. If an academic paper gives the impression that the writer is himself or herself the author of words, ideas or conclusions that are in fact the product of another person's work, the writer of that paper is guilty of plagiarism. In the following cases, such a misleading impression is given:

1. Failure to give credit in a footnote for ideas, statements of fact, or conclusions derived from another writer.
2. Failure to use quotation marks when quoting directly from another writer, whether an entire sentence or only a phrase is quoted. In addition, all quotations must *always* be footnoted.
3. Close and extended paraphrase of another writer even if credit is given in a footnote.
4. Footnoting directly to a source that is quoted or cited by another author but that has not been examined by the writer of the term paper, unless proper credit is given in a footnote.

These examples do not exhaust the forms that plagiarism may take. Plagiarism is committed whenever and however a writer appears to take credit for work done by another. An entire paper may be plagiarized, as when a student submits a paper written by someone else, or plagiarism may be limited to a single page. While plagiarism may be more or less extensive in a paper, it is always a fraud, and it is always a most serious offense.

Plagiarism need not be deliberate; it may be committed unintentionally through carelessness or ignorance. Since accidental plagiarism in a paper is indistinguishable from deliberate dishonesty, a student must be alert to avoid the sort of carelessness or ignorance that may leave him or her open to a charge of having plagiarized another's work. The safest rule to follow is: *When in doubt, footnote.*

The penalty in this course for plagiarism is a grade of “F” on the paper, and it will be calculated as a zero (“0”) into the student’s final grade. All cases of plagiarism will be reported to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies as prescribed in the current *General Bulletin* and *Student Handbook*.

9. If you **encounter difficulties or have a complaint**, talk to one of the instructors. We cannot help you if you do not ask!

SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS AND READINGS

Week 1 (Aug. 24, 26): What is History?

Readings: Arnold, *History: A Very Short Introduction*, complete.

Lepore, “Just the Facts, Ma’am,” *New Yorker*, March 24, 2008, on Blackboard.

Week 2 (Aug. 31, Sept. 2): Tools of the Trade.

Readings: Presnell, *The Information-Literate Historian*, complete

Katie Hafner, “History, Digitized (and Abridged),” *New York Times*, March 10, 2007, on Blackboard.

Stacy Schiff, “Know it All: Can Wikipedia Conquer Expertise?” *The New Yorker*, July 31, 2006, on Blackboard.

Marshall Poe, “The Hive: Can Thousands of Wikipedians Be Wrong? How an Attempt to Build an Online Encyclopedia Touched Off History’s Biggest Experiment in Collaborative Knowledge,” *Atlantic Monthly*, September 2006, on Blackboard.

Nicholson Baker, “The Charms of Wikipedia,” *New York Review of Books*, March 2008, on Blackboard.

Simson Garfinkel, “Wikipedia and the Meaning of Truth,” *Technology Review*, December 2009, on Blackboard

James Fallows, “File Not Found: Why a Stone Tablet Is Still Better than a Hard Drive,” *Atlantic Monthly*, September 2006, on Blackboard.

Robert Darnton, “The Library in a New Age,” *New York Review of Books*, June 2008, on Blackboard.

Ronald Musto, “Google Books Mutilates the Printed Past,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, June 2009, on Blackboard.

Nicholson Baker, “A New Page? Can the Kindle Really Improve on the Book?” *The New Yorker*, August 3, 2009, on Blackboard.

Week 3 (Sept. 9): History and Historians.

Labor Day Holiday, Monday, Sept. 7

Readings: Banner and Gillis, *Becoming Historians*, 1-25, 152-73, 259-88.

Week 4 (Sept. 14, 16): The Historical Project in America, I.

Readings: Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 1-108.

Week 5 (Sept. 21, 23): The Historical Project in American, II.

Readings: Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 111-411.

Week 6 (Sept. 28, 30): The Historical Project in America, III.

Readings: Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 415-629.

Week 7 (Oct. 5, 7): Novick's Historians

Readings: Banner and Gillis, *Becoming Historians*, 26-53, 54-75, 76-100, 101-21, 122-51, 174-203, 204-28, 229-58.

Week 8 (Oct 12, 14): History of/in the United States.

Readings: Fitzpatrick, *History's Memory*, complete

Wednesday, October 14, Mid-Term Examination

Week 9 (Oct 21): Historians Behaving Badly.

Fall Break, Monday, October 19

Readings: Hoffer, *Past Imperfect*, complete

AHA Standards, Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct

<http://www.historians.org/pubs/free/professionalstandards.cfm>

AHA curriculum: Plagiarism: Curricular Materials for History Instructors

http://www.historians.org/governance/pd/Curriculum/plagiarism_intro.htm

Week 10 (Oct 26, 28): History and Theory, Culture and Environment.

Readings: Hayden White, "Introduction," from *Metahistory*, 1-42, posted on Blackboard

Donald R. Worster, "Doing Environmental History,"

<http://ssil.uoregon.edu/geog410/pdfs/1206/worster.pdf>

Richard White, "Historiographical Essay, American Environmental History: The Development of a New Historical Field," 54 *Pacific Historical Review* (1985): 297-335

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/3639634.pdf>

Week 11 (Nov. 2, 4): History and Gender.

Readings:

Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91 (1986):1053-75

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/1864376.pdf>

Bonnie G. Smith, "Gender and the Practices of Scientific History: The Seminar and Archival Research in the Nineteenth Century," *American Historical Review* 100 (1995): 1150-77

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/2168205.pdf>

Week 12 (Nov. 9, 11): Historians Grapple with Theory

Readings: Eley and Nield, *The Future of Class in History*, complete.

Week 13 (Nov. 16, 18): The Historian's Life.

Readings:

Robert B. Townsend, "Feds Report Rising Undergraduates and Declining Ph.D.s in History," *Perspectives*, May 2009, on Blackboard.

Robert B. Townsend, "2009 Salary Report: Falling Further Behind," *Perspectives*, May 2009, on Blackboard.

Patricia Cohen, "Great Caesar's Ghost! Are Traditional History Courses Disappearing?" *New York Times*, June 11, 2009, on Blackboard.

Week 14 (Nov. 23): History Has a History Too.

Thanksgiving Holiday, Wednesday, November 25, No Class

Readings: Anthony Grafton, "The Footnote from de Thou to Ranke," *History and Theory* 33 (1995): 53-76.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/2505502.pdf>

Week 15 (Nov. 30, Dec. 2): The Future of History.

Readings: None

**HISTORIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY DUE, MONDAY, DECEMBER 2
FINAL EXAMINATION, MONDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2009, 8:30-11:30 A.M.**