



History 270: Historical Methods and

Interpretations

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**Office Hours – Tuesdays 3:45-4:45pm; Wednesdays 1-2pm; Fridays 1-2 pm
plus other times by appointment**

Welcome to History 270: Historical Methods and Interpretations!¹ This course aims to introduce you to how historians think and what historians do. It will probably be quite different from most of the other history courses you take in that it does not focus on a particular place or period. Instead, we'll be examining more closely the *process* of history and the ways that you – as an historian – make decisions about what data to use, about how to use it, about what you see as the main forces of change in history, and about the purposes of studying the past. In other words, we'll be studying the philosophy and history of history as a discipline (the historiography), but we'll also be applying it. Throughout the semester, you'll be researching and writing an historiographical essay on a topic of your choice. In this essay, you'll compare and contrast the approaches of the major historians in your area, assess their main arguments, examine the ways in which they use evidence, and identify the strengths and weaknesses of their work. In addition, you'll write readings journals and complete a number of smaller assignments, both in class and as homework. Compared with other history courses (especially introductory courses), you'll probably read

¹ For suggestions about the structure, topics, and assignments of this course, I am grateful to my colleagues in the History Department at Moravian College.

less in terms of volume, but the reading that you do will be much more challenging. You will also probably write and speak much more than in most other courses.

Our schedule is divided into two main types of classes: historiographical and methodological. On days when we address historiography (usually Wednesdays), class will be based around a discussion format. We will use this time to examine closely the arguments that various historians have made about the philosophy of history and to talk through the ramifications of each. Our discussions will be interspersed with 10-minute student presentations on particular historians who have shaped the course of history. On days when we address methods (usually Fridays), our approach will typically be more hands-on. For example, we will use databases intended for historians, focus on the mechanics of how to write historiographical essays, and examine such topics as the uses of the World Wide Web for historians.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, you should have improved your ability to:

1. appreciate the ways in which interpretations of history change across time and place.
2. articulate your own view of why history matters and what historians ought to be doing.
3. identify and explain the main ‘schools’ of historiographical thought.
4. locate and use the chief tools of historical research (books, journal articles, and electronic resources).
5. design and deliver effective oral presentations.
6. use the writing conventions appropriate to the discipline of history. Please note that this course is designated writing intensive. You will engage in three main types of writing, each with a particular set of conventions:
 - i. **Historiographical essay.** This paper must be written in formal, carefully proofread, academic prose, with complete footnotes and a bibliography. We’ll spend time in class talking about conventions for academic writing and how to meet them. Please note that you will be writing this paper in stages throughout the semester, with opportunities for feedback and rewriting between each stage.
 - ii. **Homework exercises.** On five occasions throughout the semester, you will be completing homework assignments, most of which include about 2 pages of writing. These, like your essay, need to be written in formal academic prose and proofread carefully.
 - iii. **Journal entries.** Throughout the semester, you will be writing weekly journal entries to reflect on the historiographical readings and to relate them – where applicable – to your historiographical essay. The main audience for these entries will be yourself – they will serve as a place for you to untangle ideas and make connections between readings. The secondary audience for the entries will be me – I will read over each entry to check that you are keeping up your journals and taking them seriously.

Readings

The following books and readings are required for this course. Books are available for purchase from the college bookstore:

1. Stefan Berger, Heiko Feldner & Kevin Passmore (eds.), *Writing History: Theory & Practice* (London: Arnold Publishers, 2003). [Hereafter ‘Berger, Feldner & Passmore’]
2. Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, 4th ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 4th edition, 2004). [Hereafter ‘Rampolla’]
3. A coursepack of photocopied readings. [Hereafter ‘CP’]. We will talk in class about how to get hold of this.

I am also assuming that you have retained your copy of *The Bedford Handbook* from your Writing 100 class at Moravian College. If you no longer possess *The Bedford Handbook*, you may find it useful to buy or borrow a copy. It is also available on reserve at Reeves.

Attendance Policy

I expect everyone to attend each class. Attendance is not required, but it is very highly recommended. Much of what we discuss will build on previous classes, and those who are absent will find it hard to understand the patterns and themes we are discussing.

Academic Honesty Policy

I expect that you will complete all readings journals, papers, and exams in this course individually and independently, and I will refer any cases of suspected cheating or plagiarism to the Academic Affairs Office. I strongly encourage you to ensure that you are familiar with Moravian's Academic Honesty Policy, found in the Student Handbook. As this policy explains, it is possible to commit plagiarism without intending to be dishonest, but serious consequences result regardless of intent.

Let me clarify two particular occasions in which it is legitimate (and even desirable) to use the help of others. First, while I expect that you will write all readings journals, papers, and homework assignments on your own, I *do* encourage you to discuss with each other the ideas and arguments contained in our course, both within class and outside of it. For example, you might run into a friend in the library and start talking about a chapter in Berger, Feldner, and Passmore. Perhaps, for instance, you find you disagree with the author of a particular chapter and want to check that you've understood his/her argument properly. Your friend, after listening to you, might make an observation or suggestion. As you write your readings journal entry, it is legitimate to explain and respond to that comment, *as long as you do not claim the idea as your own*. You might, for example, write something like, "In talking about this reading with [your friend's name], he/she suggested that [author x] might really have been saying that [your friend's suggestion]. This makes good sense to me because . . ." In other words, signal clearly which things are someone else's opinion and which things are your own. Second, I encourage you to seek help with writing. It is perfectly legitimate to ask others to read over your written work and look for errors of spelling, grammar, and expression. You might also ask others to look over your paper and help you with organization and structure. I am happy to read drafts of papers, especially if you give me advance warning. I also encourage you to use the Writing Center. It is good practice to insert a footnote in your paper in which you thank anyone who has read and commented on a draft or who has given you ideas. The footnote at the bottom of p. 1 of this syllabus provides an example.

Inclusive Language Policy

Moravian College policy strongly encourages the use of inclusive, non-discriminatory language in all academic writing and communication. For instance, rather than writing about "mankind," write about "people" or "humankind." Rather than use the term "he" when referring to a person in the abstract (as opposed to a specific individual), replace it with "they" or "he/she." This mindfulness about language reflects Moravian's commitment to a tolerant and inclusive campus community. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have about inclusive language or to work with you to find ways to make your language more inclusive.

Evaluation

Library Assignments	6%
Readings Journal Entries	24% (2% each)
Abstracts for Historiographical Essay	15%
Historiographical Essay	25%
Homework Assignments	20% (4% each)
Participation	10%

Library Assignments (6%)

These will consist of two brief assignments (worth 3% each) in the first month of class to help familiarize you with the most important databases and help you on your way to finding useful materials for your historiographical essay. They are due by Friday February 10 and Friday February 17.

Readings Journal Entries (24%)

Please see the separate handout on what these entail. Each entry will be graded out of 2 (entries that do not meet the 1.5 page minimum will be penalized, along with entries that are lame or do not reflect careful reading). Late entries will be penalized ½ point per day, beginning at the start of class. In other words, if you arrive late or if you turn your journal in after class, it can receive a maximum of 1½ out of 2; if you turn it in the following day it can receive no more than 1 point out of 2, etc. The first class for which journal entries are due is on Wednesday January 25.

Abstracts for Historiographical Essay (15%)

We'll talk in class about what is required for these. You'll need to write at least 12 abstracts (½ page single-spaced each). Start early and plan ahead to get books and articles on interlibrary loan! Abstracts are due on Friday March 17.

Historiographical Essay (25%)

Your final paper for this class should be 8-10 pages double-spaced. It must cover three main areas: 1). a brief discussion of the main primary sources used by historians in learning about your topic; 2). the historiography of the topic; 3). what you see as the most interesting aspects of the topic already covered and what you would like to see historians work on in the future. You'll get plenty of guidance on this as we proceed through the semester, and a number of the homework assignments will also relate in some way to your historiographical essay. It is due on Friday April 21 and must be very well written and carefully proofread. Late assignments will be penalized 10% per day, beginning at the start of class the day that it is due (e.g., if you arrive and turn it in at 2:25pm, you will lose 10%; if you turn it in the next day, you will lose 20%).

Homework Assignments (20%)

These short assignments must be completed and turned in at the beginning of class on particular days as marked on the syllabus. There will be five homework assignments throughout the semester, each comprising 4% of the final grade. Late assignments will be penalized 10% per day, beginning at the start of class the day that they are due.

Participation (10%)

Participation will be assessed according to your contributions to class discussions and your completion of a variety of in-class exercises throughout the semester. Participating in discussions and asking thoughtful questions of me and of your fellow students demonstrate your engagement in and understanding of the subject matter. They also demonstrate your ability to seek out information you do not understand or know (a vital skill for historians). An implicit part of participation is regular and timely attendance: people who skip class regularly or who come in late will be unable to score well in participation.

It is within my purview as an instructor to apply qualitative judgment in determining grades. I will do my utmost to be fair and consistent in applying this judgment.

Students can expect to work, on average, 6-7 hours per week outside of class preparing for this course. Some weeks will require less; others (especially before an assignment is due or a presentation is scheduled) will require more. Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Learning Services Office as soon as possible to enhance the likelihood that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

Class and Readings Schedule

Please note: this schedule is subject to change. In the event that a change is made, I will inform you in class and – if the change is a major one – hand out a revised copy of the schedule.

Wed Jan 18	Introduction: What is history? What do historians do?
Fri Jan 20 Assignments:	Strategies for success in history classes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rampolla, pp. 1-4. • This syllabus, pp. 1-5 (it's important that you know what you are getting into!). • John Tosh, <i>The Pursuit of History</i>, pp. 1-25; CP 1-13.
Wed Jan 25 Assignments:	Historiography: How history was viewed prior to the nineteenth century <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark T. Gilderhus, <i>History and Historians: A historiographical introduction</i>, pp. 12-41; CP 14-28. • Journal Entry 1 due.
Fri Jan 27 Assignments:	Methods: Finding a topic; Effective oral presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richard Marius & Melvin E. Page, <i>A Short Guide to Writing About History</i>, pp. 85-91; CP 29-32. • Hampden-Sydney College Speaking Center Online, http://people.hsc.edu/faculty-staff/cdeal/mainsections/student.html. Links on <u>speaking anxiety</u>, <u>ethical speaking</u>, and <u>preparation and delivery of your presentation</u> (under this last link, follow links on <u>organizing and outlining your presentation</u> and <u>rehearsing and delivering your presentation</u>). Available also in CP 33-45. • Homework exercise 1 due at the beginning of class: Please write a 2-page (typed, double-spaced) paper on the best lecture or oral presentation that you can remember. If you cannot think of a specific lecture, describe a typical lecture by your favorite lecturer or speaker. This speaker might be a professor at Moravian College or elsewhere, or it might be someone whom you have seen deliver speeches on television.
Wed Feb 1 Assignments:	Historiography: Ranke and the Rankeans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Warren, "The Rankean Tradition in British Historiography, 1840 to 1950," in Berger, Feldner & Passmore, pp. 23-41. • Presentation Possibilities: Thomas Carlyle; William Stubbs; Herbert Butterfield; Lewis Namier. • Journal Entry 2 due.
Fri Feb 3 Assignments:	Methods: Locating & evaluating secondary sources (1) – Databases <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rampolla, pp. 6-8, 11-13. • Library Assignment handout distributed in class.

<p>Wed Feb 8 Assignments:</p>	<p>Historiography: Marxist historians</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geoff Eley, “Marxist Historiography,” in Berger, Feldner & Passmore, pp. 63-82. • Presentation Possibilities: Christopher Hill; Eric Hobsbawm; Dorothy Thompson; E. P. Thompson; Howard Zinn; Paul Buhle; G. E. M. de Ste. Croix; Marcus Rediker. • Journal Entry 3 due.
<p>Fri Feb 10 Assignments:</p>	<p>Methods: Locating & evaluating secondary sources (2) – Printed sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library Assignment handout on printed sources distributed in class. • Library Assignment 1 due
<p>Wed Feb 15 Assignments:</p>	<p>Historiography: Annaliste historians</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matthias Middell, “The Annales,” in Berger, Feldner & Passmore, pp. 104-117. • Presentation Possibilities: Marc Bloch; Lucien Febvre; Fernand Braudel; Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie. • Journal Entry 4 due.
<p>Fri Feb 17 Assignments:</p>	<p>Methods: Oral history (Guest Lecture by Dr. Suzanne Marshall)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No reading! • Homework exercise 2 due: please turn in an initial bibliography on your paper topic, containing at least 12 articles and 12 books. Follow the bibliography format laid out in Rampolla (pp. 102-114). At this point, you should have ordered on interlibrary loan any articles or books that Reeves does not hold. • Library Assignment 2 due.
<p>Wed Feb 22 Assignments:</p>	<p>Historiography: Historians & the social sciences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christopher Lloyd, “History and the Social Sciences,” in Berger, Feldner & Passmore, pp. 83-103. • Presentation Possibilities: Clifford Geertz; Robert Brenner; Natalie Zemon Davis; Peter Gay; Charles Tilly; Keith Hopkins; Gilberto Freyre. • Journal Entry 5 due.
<p>Fri Feb 24</p>	<p>Research Day – No Class (I will be out of town)</p>
<p>Wed March 1</p>	<p>Historiography: Social & economic historians</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading: Thomas Welskopp, “Social History,” in Berger, Feldner & Passmore, pp. 203-222. • Presentation Possibilities: Christopher Dyer; David Montgomery; Joyce Appleby; David Brody; Walter Licht; George Lipsitz; Michael Barry Katz; Staughton Lynd; Herbert Gutman; John Womack. • Journal Entry 6 due.
<p>Fri March 3 Assignments:</p>	<p>Methods: Locating & evaluating published primary sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rampolla, pp. 5-6, 8-11. • Homework exercise 3 due: see handout on oral history assignment distributed on Friday February 17
<p>Mon March 6 – Fri March 10</p>	<p>Spring Break – No Classes</p>

<p>Wed March 15 Assignments:</p>	<p>Historiography: Historians of race/ethnicity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading: Milla Rosenberg, "Race, Ethnicity, and History," in Berger, Feldner & Passmore, pp. 282-298. • Presentation Possibilities: Martin Bernal; Edward Said; Vincent Harding; David Roediger; Joe William Trotter; Tera Hunter; Darlene Clark Hine; Robin D.G. Kelley; Eric Arnesen; Ronald Takaki; C. Vann Woodward; Manning Marable; Eugene Genovese; Winthrop Jordan; George Frederickson. • Journal Entry 7 due.
<p>Fri March 17 Assignments:</p>	<p>Methods: Archives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abstracts are due at the beginning of class.
<p>Wed March 22 Assignments:</p>	<p>Historiography: Writing historiographical essays</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rampolla, pp. 32-3. • Sample historiographical essay to be distributed in previous class. • Journal Entry 8 due.
<p>Fri March 24 Assignments:</p>	<p>Methods: Using the World Wide Web</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rampolla, pp. 13-14. • Homework 4 exercise due: (1) list at least 6 <i>types</i> of primary source (i.e., categories of primary source rather than specific sources) that historians have used to find out about your topic; (2) from one of the books or articles in your bibliography, identify <i>one specific published primary source</i> used by the author. Find this source, copy & highlight the relevant passages, and assess (in 2 pages or more) how well the author has used it. What else could he/she have included from this source? Has he/she represented it accurately? Please attach your list and the copied & highlighted pages to your assessment.
<p>Wed March 29 Assignments:</p>	<p>Historiography: Gender historians</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laura Lee Downs, "From Women's History to Gender History," in Berger, Feldner & Passmore, pp. 261-281. • Presentation Possibilities: Joan Kelly; Gerda Lerner; Sheila Rowbotham; Linda Gordon; Jeffrey Weeks; Dorothy Sue Cobble; Alice Kessler Harris; Kathy Peiss; George Chauncey; Carroll Smith-Rosenberg; Mary Beth Norton; Kathryn Burns; Joan Scott. • Journal Entry 9 due.
<p>Fri March 31 Assignments:</p>	<p>Methods: Note-taking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richard Marius & Melvin E. Page, <i>A Short Guide to Writing About History</i>, pp. 115-24. CP 46-51. • Rampolla, pp. 48-50.
<p>Wed April 5 Assignments:</p>	<p>Historiography: Political historians</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jon Lawrence, "Political History," in Berger, Feldner & Passmore, pp. 183-202. • Presentation Possibilities: William Appleman Williams; Thomas Sugrue; Lizabeth Cohen; Eric Foner; Robert Dallek; David McCullough; Sean Wilentz; Bernard Bailyn. • Journal Entry 10 due.
<p>Fri April 7 Assignments:</p>	<p>Methods: Mechanics of writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rampolla, pp. 50-81.

<p>Wed April 12 Assignments:</p>	<p>Historiography: Intellectual historians</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beverley Southgate, “Intellectual History/History of Ideas,” in Berger, Feldner & Passmore, pp. 243-260. • Presentation Possibilities: Jacob Burckhardt; Leslie Stephen; Carlo Ginzburg; Bruce Kuklick; Jackson Lears. • Journal Entry 11 due.
<p>Fri April 14</p>	<p>Easter Break – No Class</p>
<p>Wed April 19 Assignments:</p>	<p>Methods: Citations; Professional ethics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rampolla, pp. 81-85. • American Historical Association, “Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct” (revised, 2005). Available online at http://www.historians.org/pubs/free/professionalstandards.cfm or in CP 52-60. Please pay particularly close attention to sections 1, 2, & 4. You may skim the other sections.
<p>Fri April 21 Assignments:</p>	<p>Historiography: New cultural historians</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter Burke, “Overture: The New History, its Past and its Future,” in Peter Burke (ed.), <i>New Perspectives on Historical Writing</i>, pp. 1-23; CP 61-72. • Journal Entry 12 due. • FINAL PAPER DUE!
<p>Wed April 26 Assignments:</p>	<p>Professional Issues: What can you do with a history degree? Presentation by Christine Rander (of Moravian’s Career Center)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter Stearns, “Why Study History?” Available online at http://www.historians.org/pubs/Free/WhyStudyHistory.htm or in CP 73-77.
<p>Fri April 28</p>	<p>Conclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework exercise 5 due at the beginning of class: please do a search on Monster.com or www.mcall.com/classified/jobs/ or Moravian’s career center site for jobs you might apply for as a history graduate (either in this immediate region or in another region where you’d like to work). Print out the description and details of a job that interests you. Then write a letter of application (1-2 pages) in which you explain how your history degree has given you skills appropriate to this job. (If you don’t have the required years of experience, that’s OK for the purposes of this exercise.) If you are hoping to get into a career that does not advertise in either of these sources (e.g., teaching), find an old advertisement from another source or see me.