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HIST 270  
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COMEN 305

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## **Historical Methods and Interpretations<sup>1</sup>**

(I reserve the right to revise and change this syllabus if and when appropriate during the course of the semester)

This course is an invitation to the ways and habits of historical work, to the history of historical writing, and to the main schools of thought in history. It is not a topical course but an introduction to the nuts and bolts of historical work, your first serious look into the toolbox that we historians use in our business. Your hands will get dirty, your cloths dusty, and mind confused. But at the end you will know why it is so.

### ***Objectives***

The objectives of this course are of two main types: historiographical and methodological.

In historiography we will:

1. think through how historical interpretations vary and change across time and place.
2. probe why history matters.
3. identify the main schools of historiographical thought.

In historical methodology we will:

1. explore what historians actually are doing when they are writing and researching history.
2. identify the main groups of historical data, primary sources (handwritten archival records, printed texts, and oral interviews)
3. locate and use the most important tools of historical research, secondary sources (books and journals) by using both libraries and electronic sources.
4. learn to use the writing conventions of history. This course is writing intensive. You will engage in three main types of writing:
  - a. Historiographical essay. This paper must be written in formal, academic prose, with complete footnotes and a bibliography. We will discuss all these matters at length in class and since the paper will be written in stages, you will have several opportunities for feedback and improvement.
  - b. Methodical exercises. On five occasions you will be completing homework assignments which include at least two pages of writing. Also these assignments have to be written in formal, academic prose.
  - c. Journal entries. You will be writing weekly journal to reflect on the historiographical texts and their relationship to your historiographical essay—where applicable. Although they are mainly for your own reflection and do not need to be formal and polished, they should seriously engage and reflect on the assigned texts. I will collect the journals every week to check that you are keeping up with your readings.
5. learn to deliver an effective oral presentation.

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<sup>1</sup>Much of the materials and most of the ideas of this syllabus come from the syllabus of Dr. Sandy Bardsley who gratefully gave me access to her work over the past three semesters.

### **Required Texts**

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

You will also find useful *The Bedford Handbook* from your Writing 100 class at Moravian College. If you no longer possess The Bedford Handbook, you may buy or borrow a copy. A copy is on reserve at Reeves.

### **Work Group**

Much of the class work will take place in work groups. Those of you who have taken classes with me know how they work. Each group have four members. You have free choice of your group. The tasks within a group, such as secretary, speaker, rotate.

### **Attendance Policy**

One absence is allowed. After the first one, each subsequent absence lowers your overall grade for the course by a third of a letter grade unless you have a documented illness or a written explanation from your athletic coach.

### **Workload**

This is a demanding and intensive seminar. It has been designed with the expectation that you prepare for each session at least two (2) hours. Additional work is needed for your historiographical essay so that the total **minimum weekly workload including class hours** for this class is **fourteen (14) hours**. For a good paper more work is needed.

### **Evaluation**

Historiographical Journal	20%	Oral presentation	10%
Historiographical Abstracts	15%	Methods Exercises (5)	10%
Historiographical Essay	35%	History Work	10%

### **Historiographical Journal (20%)**

I want you to make sense of the readings before you come to class. Some of the assigned texts will be difficult. Please consult a dictionary and use the glossary in the back of Berger, Feldner, Passmore.

Each journal entry is due at the beginning of our historiography class. Each must be at least 1½ pages and no more than 2½ pages (typed and double-spaced). In terms of format and style, journal entries may be less formal. They will be graded for content, thoroughness, and willingness to engage with ideas, rather than for stylistic concerns such as spelling or punctuation. Please write your entry under the following headings:

1. Author and Title
2. Summary by focusing on the main argument (no more than 2 pages double-spaced).
3. Connections and Evaluation (no less than ½ page double-spaced). In this section, you should evaluate and discuss what you think about the ideas being discussed in the article. Go beyond, "I liked this" or "this wasn't clear to me" - instead, specify what you liked (or disliked) and why, what parts weren't clear, etc. If applicable, relate the ideas being discussed to your own historiographical essay. Ask yourself questions like, "How would Leopold von Ranke approach my topic, if he were to write about it?" or "what might a Marxist historian think about my topic?" Make connections and

contrasts with previous material that you have read for this course and for others. As the semester progresses, this section should become longer and more thoughtful.

Each entry will be graded on a scale 0–20 (entries that do not meet the 1 ½ page minimum or exceed the 2½ page maximum will be penalized, along with entries that are lame or do not reflect careful reading). Late entries will be penalized 5 points 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 15 out of 20; if you turn it in the following day it can receive no more than 10 point out of 20, etc.

### ***Abstracts for Historiographical Essay (15%)***

You will write an historiographical essay. To make this a more manageable project for you I ask you to submit at least 12 abstracts of ½ page single spaced each. Start early your planning and ordering of books and articles that we don't have in Reeves. The abstracts are due on October 17.

### ***Historiographical Essay (35%)***

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 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%).

### ***Oral Presentation (10%)***

Starting September 12, each session on historiography will have two short oral presentations on an important historian. Let me know your choice and the day you want to give your presentation. The general guidelines of the presentation are as following: you have 8 minutes time to present an historian you have chosen from those listed on the syllabus under the historiography classes. Tell who this historian was, when, where. What were his/her most important works and their topics. What were his/her take or approach to history, emphasis.

### ***Methods Exercises (10%)***

These exercises hone your skills in using the tools of historical research and writing. It includes three homework exercises and two library assignments.

### ***History Work (10%)***

Each student is required to actively engage in a practical history project. Acceptable projects could be active participation in the History Club, Phi Alpha Theta or a local history organization such as Historic Bethlehem Partnership, Moravian Archives. Before engaging in the project, meet with me to make sure your project is acceptable. Write a report of at least 800 words that details the project, your personal contribution to the project, and an assessment of how your project enriched or challenged our customary understanding of history.

**SCHEDULE**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Theme</b>
Tue Aug 29	<b>Introduction: What is history?</b>
Thu Aug 31	<b>Basic Notions: Source, Text, Context, Historical Questions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rampolla, pp. 1-21.</li> </ul>
Tue Sept 5	<b>Historiography: History Before 19<sup>th</sup> Century.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mark T. Gilderhus, <i>History and Historians: A historiographical introduction</i>, pp. 12-41; CP 14-28.</li> <li>• Journal Entry 1 due.</li> </ul>
Thu Sept 7	<b>Methods: Finding a Topic; Effective Oral Presentation.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Richard Marius &amp; Melvin E. Page, <i>A Short Guide to Writing About History</i>, pp. 85-91; CP 29-32.</li> <li>• Hampden-Sydney College Speaking Center Online: <a href="http://people.hsc.edu/faculty-staff/cdeal/mainsections/student.html">http://people.hsc.edu/faculty-staff/cdeal/mainsections/student.html</a></li> <li>• Available also in CP 33-45.</li> </ul>
Tue Sept 12	<b>Historiography: Ranke and Rankeans.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• John Warren, "The Rankean Tradition in British Historiography, 1840 to 1950," in Berger, Feldner and Passmore, pp. 23-41.</li> <li>• Presentation Possibilities: Thomas Carlyle; William Stubbs; Herbert Butterfield; Lewis Namier.</li> <li>• Journal Entry 2 due.</li> </ul>
Thu Sept 14	<b>Historiography: Marxist Historians.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geoff Eley, "Marxist Historiography," in Berger, Feldner and Passmore, pp. 63-82.</li> <li>• Presentation Possibilities: Christopher Hill; Eric Hobsbawm; Dorothy Thompson; E. P. Thompson; Howard Zinn; Paul Buhle; G. E. M. de Ste. Croix; Marcus Rediker.</li> <li>• Journal Entry 3 due.</li> </ul>
Tue Sept 19	<b>Methods: Locating Secondary Sources (1): Databases, Indexes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rampolla, pp. 1-21.</li> <li>• Library. Assignment handout distributed in class.</li> </ul>
Thu Sept 21	<b>Historiography: Annaliste Historians.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matthias Middell, "The Annales," in Berger, Feldner and Passmore, pp. 104-117.</li> <li>• Presentation Possibilities: Marc Bloch; Lucien Febvre; Fernand Braudel; Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie.</li> <li>• Journal Entry 4 due.</li> </ul>
Tue Sept 26	<b>Methods: Locating Secondary Sources (2): Printed Sources, Journals, Interlibrary Loan.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Library. Assignment handout on printed sources distributed in class.</li> <li>• Methods Exercise 1 due: Library assignment.</li> </ul>

Thu Sept 28	<p><b>Methods: Locating Primary Sources.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rampolla, pp. 5-6, 8-11.</li> <li>• Methods exercise 2 due: homework.</li> </ul>
Tue Oct 3	<p><b>Methods: Archives. Moravian Archives. Dr. Paul Peucker</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Methods exercise 3 due: 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 all the books and articles that Reeves does not hold on interlibrary loan.</li> <li>• Methods exercise 4 due: Library assignment.</li> </ul>
Thu Oct 5	<p><b>Historiography: Historians and Social Sciences.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Christopher Lloyd, "History and the Social Sciences," in Berger, Feldner and Passmore, pp. 83-103.</li> <li>• Presentation Possibilities: Clifford Geertz; Robert Brenner; Natalie Zemon Davis; Peter Gay; Charles Tilly; Keith Hopkins; Gilberto Freyre.</li> <li>• Journal Entry 5 due.</li> </ul>
Tue Oct 10	Fall Recess
Thu Oct 12	<p><b>Historiography: Social and Economic Historians.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thomas Welskopp, "Social History," in Berger, Feldner and Passmore, pp. 203-222.</li> <li>• Presentation Possibilities: Christopher Dyer; David Montgomery; Joyce Appleby; David Brody; Walter Licht; George Lipsitz; Michael Barry Katz; Staughton Lynd; Herbert Gutman; John Womack.</li> <li>• Journal Entry 6 due.</li> </ul>
Tue Oct 17	<p><b>Methods: Oral History</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text: TBA</li> <li>• Abstracts due.</li> </ul>
Thu Oct 19	<p><b>Historiography: Historians of Race and Ethnicity.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milla Rosenberg, "Race, Ethnicity, and History," in Berger, Feldner and Passmore, pp. 282-298.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Journal Entry 7 due.</li> </ul>

Tue Oct 24	<p><b>Methods: Using the World Wide Web.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rampolla, pp. 13-14.</li> <li>• Methods exercise 5 due: (1) list at least 6 types 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 one specific published primary source used by the author. Find this source, copy and 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 and highlighted pages to your assessment.</li> </ul>
Thu Oct 26	<p><b>Historiography: Gender Historians.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laura Lee Downs, "From Women's History to Gender History," in Berger, Feldner and Passmore, pp. 261-281.</li> <li>• 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 Bums; Joan Scott.</li> <li>• Journal Entry 8 due.</li> </ul>
Tue Oct 31	<p><b>Methods: Note-Taking.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Richard Marius and Melvin E. Page, <i>A Short Guide to Writing About History</i>, pp. 115-24. CP 46-51.</li> <li>• Rampolla, pp. 48-50.</li> </ul>
Thu Nov 2	<p><b>Historiography: Political Historians.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jon Lawrence, "Political History," in Berger, Feldner and Passmore, pp. 183-202.</li> <li>• Presentation Possibilities: William Appleman Williams; Thomas Sugrue; Lizabeth Cohen; Eric Foner; Robert Dallek; David McCullough; Sean Wilentz; Bernard Bailyn.</li> <li>• Journal Entry 9 due.</li> </ul>
Tue Nov 7	<p><b>Methods: Writing.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rampolla, pp. 50-81.</li> </ul>
Thu Nov 9	<p><b>Historiography: Intellectual Historians.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beverley Southgate, "Intellectual History/History of Ideas," in Berger, Feldner and Passmore, pp. 243-260.</li> <li>• Presentation Possibilities: Jacob Burckhardt; Leslie Stephen; Carlo Ginzburg; Bruce Kuklick; Jackson Lears.</li> <li>• Journal Entry 10 due.</li> </ul>
Tue Nov 14	<p><b>Methods: Writing: Story, Structure, Explaining.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text: TBA</li> <li>• Journal Entry 11 due.</li> </ul>

Thu Nov 16	<p><b>Historiography: New Cultural Historians.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Journal Entry 12 due.</li> </ul>
Tue Nov 21	<p><b>Methods: Citations, Footnoting, Professional Ethics.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rampolla, pp. 81-85.</li> <li>• American Historical Association, "Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct" (revised, 2005). Available online at <a href="http://www.historians.org/pubs/free/professionalstandards.cfm">http://www.historians.org/pubs/free/professionalstandards.cfm</a> or in CP 52-60. Please pay particularly close attention to sections 1, 2, and 4.</li> </ul>
Thu Nov 23	Thanksgiving Break
Tue Nov 28	<p><b>Historiography: Historical Anthropology and History of Emotions.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No text.</li> <li>• Final Paper Due</li> </ul>
Thu Nov 30	<p><b>Professional Issues: Uses of History, Historian as Citizen.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peter Stearns, "Why Study History?" Available online at <a href="http://www.historians.org/pubs/Free/WhyStudyHistory.htm">http://www.historians.org/pubs/Free/WhyStudyHistory.htm</a> or in CP 73-77.</li> <li>• History Work Essay due.</li> </ul>
Tue Dec 5	<p><b>Professional Issues: Graduate Education.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retrieving the Master's Degree from the Dustbin of History. A Report to the Members of the American Historical Association. Prepared by Philip M. Katz for the AHA's Committee on Committee on the Master's Degree in History. <a href="http://www.historians.org/projects/cmd/2005/Report/index.cfm">http://www.historians.org/projects/cmd/2005/Report/index.cfm</a></li> <li>• Careers for Students of History by Constance Schulz, Page Putnam Miller, Aaron Marrs, and Kevin Allen. <a href="http://www.historians.org/pubs/careers/index.htm">http://www.historians.org/pubs/careers/index.htm</a></li> </ul>
Thu Dec 7	<p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Methods exercise 6 due: Write an application to a graduate school or foundation.</li> <li>• See handout for further instruction.</li> </ul>
Dec 11-15	<b>Final Exam</b>