

History 270A: Historical Methods and Interpretations
Fall 2008, Moravian College
Mon-Wed 10:10-11:20
PPHAC 103

Please note that I reserve the right to revise this syllabus at anytime as needed during the course of this semester.

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This course prompts history and historical-studies students to develop an understanding of the nature of historical research and writing by introducing them to the philosophies and methods of academic history. Students should become acquainted with the concepts of historiography, or the study of how historians interpret the past. Students should also become aware of how the research and writing of history has changed over time. In this process, students are encouraged to view the discipline of history as committed either to explaining the past solely in its own terms or to exploring continuity and change between past and present. Both are done by applying a particular interpretive framework to related primary evidence. By tracing changes in European and American historical thought and interpretive frameworks, the major historiographic schools will be reviewed.

Additionally, students should be aware that *this is a writing intensive course*, with several small assignments and a significant final project that are designed to further their research, interpretive and writing skills.

Course Objectives: This class is divided into two categories: 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 historical thought.

In the methods section 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 secondary sources.

- 4) Learn to use the writing conventions of history.
- 5) Learn to deliver an effective oral presentation.

Required Texts:

Georg G. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge*.

Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History* (5th Edition)

Please note that through the semester, supplemental readings will be given out in class. Further details will be provided in class.

You should also refer to *The Bedford Handbook* from your Writing 100 class at Moravian College.

Grading and Evaluation:

Journals: 24%

Research Paper: 30%

Final: 10%

Oral Presentation: 6%

Homework Assignments: 20%

Participation: 10%

(Details for evaluation will be provided in a separate handout.)

Aug 25: Introductions

Aug 27: What is History?

Reading: John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, pp. 1-25, (handout); Rampolla, pp. 1-5, 25-29

Journal Entry #1 due at beginning of class.

Sept 1: Labor Day. No Classes.

Sept 3: Historiography: How History was viewed prior to the nineteenth century.

Gilderhus, "The Beginnings of Historical Consciousness" and "Historical Consciousness in the Modern Age." (handout)

Journal Entry # 2 due.

Sept 8: Methods: Finding a Topic, Effective Oral presentations.

Reading: Richard Marius & Melvin E. Page, *A Short Guide to Writing About History*, pp. 85-91. (Handout)

Hamden-Sydney College Speaking Center Online, <http://people.hsc.edu/faculty-staff/cdeal/mainsections/student.html>. Links on speaking anxiety, ethical speaking, and

preparation and delivery of your presentation (under this last link, follow links on organizing and outlining your presentation and rehearsing and delivering your presentation.

Sept 10: Historiography: Ranke and the Rankeans

Reading: Iggers, Chapters 1-2

Journal Entry # 3 due

Sept 15: Writing Consultation and Preparation

Sept 17: Historiography: German and American Traditions

Reading: Iggers, Chapters 3-4.

Journal Entry # 4 due

Sept 22: Historiography: Social and Economic Historians

Reading: Iggers, Chapter 7.

Journal Entry #5 due.

Sept 24: Methods: Primary Sources and Archives

Reading: Mary Jo. Pugh, *Providing Reference Services for Archives and Manuscripts*. (Handout)

For today's class, we will meet at the Moravian College Archives with archivist Dr. Paul Peucker. Details will be given in class.

Sept 29: Methods: Locating and evaluating published primary sources

Reading: Rampolla, 6-7, 9-13

Oct 1: Historiography: The *Annales* School

Reading: Iggers, Chapter 5

Journal Entry #6 due.

Oct 6: Fall Break No Class

Oct 8: Methods: Locating and evaluating secondary sources (databases)

Readings: Rampolla, p. 6-9, 14-16

Oct 13: Writing Consultations

Oct 15: Historiography: Writing historiographical essays

Reading: Rampolla, p. 36-38 and sample historiographical essays

Oct 20: Methods: Using the World Wide Web

Reading: Rampolla, 16-17

Oct 22: Historiography: Microhistory and the “History of Everyday Life.”

Reading: Iggers, Chapter 9

Journal Entry #7 due.

Oct 27: Methods: Note Taking

Reading: Richard Marius and Melvin E. Page, *A Short Guide to Writing About History*, 115-24, Rampolla, 84-86.

Oct 29: Historiography: Historians of Race/Ethnicity

Reading: Robin G.D. Kelly, “But a Local Phase of a World Problem: Black History’s Global Vision,” *Journal of American History* 86 (3) 1999: pp 1045-1077.

Journal Entry #8

Nov 3: Methods: Mechanics of Writing

Reading: Rampolla, 43-68

Nov 5: Historiography: Historians of Gender

Reading: Joan Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category in Historical Analysis.”

Journal Entry # 9 due.

Nov 10: Methods: Professional Ethics

Reading: Rampolla, 88-137

American Historical Association, “Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct” Available on line at <http://www.historians.org/pubs/free/professionalstandards.cfm> Please pay particular attention to sections 1, 2 and 4.

Nov 12: Historiography: Global History

Reading: David Christian, “The Case for Big History,” *Journal of World History* 2:1 (1991): 223-238.

Journal Entry #10 due.

Nov 17: Writing Workshops: Peer Review. Be sure to bring one copy for me and two for others in your peer review group.

Nov 19: Historiography: The New Cultural History

Reading: To Be Announced

Journal Entry #11 due.

Nov 24: Methods: Citations and Footnoting

Reading: Rampolla, Chapter 7.

Nov 26 Thanksgiving Break. No Class

Dec 1: Methods: Oral History

Reading: Please go to <http://alpha.dickinson.edu/oha> for the Oral History Association's ethics and professional standards statement. Go to Resources and click on "Evaluation Guidelines." Focus especially on "principles and Standards of the Oral History Association" and "Evaluation Guidelines."

Dec 3: Historiography: Where to now?

Reading: Iggers, Concluding Remarks and Epilogue.

Journal Entry #12 due.

Final Paper due at the beginning of class.

Dec 8: Professional Issues: What can you do with a history degree?

Reading: Peter Stearns, "Why Study History?" Available online at <http://www.historians.org/pubs/Free/WhyStudyHistory.htm>

Dec 10: Conclusion and Review

