

## **History 270: Historical Methods and Interpretations.<sup>1</sup>**

**Spring 2009, Moravian College**

TR 2:20-3:30 Comenius 304

Dr. Francis Ryan

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Office Comenius 301. Office Hours: Thursday 1-2, Weds 10-noon, and by appointment.

This class gives an introduction to the formal aspects of historical study. It is designed to provide background into how historians work and to give students an understanding of the interpretive and practical skills needed in our craft.

The class is divided into two main focus areas: 1) historiography (the various interpretive schools of historical thought from the earliest forms of historical consciousness to present controversies) and 2) methodology (the proper standards of good historical scholarship and inquiry.)

The class has two required texts, both available in the campus bookstore:

Mark T. Gilderhus, *History and Historians: A Historiographical Introduction*.

Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing History*.

In addition to these books, a selection of related readings will be provided for the students in class or on reserve in Reeves Library.

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%

(Separate handouts will detail these assignments and expectations.)

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<sup>1</sup> My thanks to my colleagues in the Moravian College History Department who generously shared their class plans, readings and assignments from their previous History 270 courses which have been integrated into this semester's class.

Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Mr. Joe Kempfer, Assistant Director of Learning Services for Disability Support, 1307 Main Street (ex. 1510). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Office of Learning Services.

Please be familiar with Moravian College's grading standards. It is within the instructor's purview to apply qualitative judgment in determining grades for an assignment or for the course.

### **Class meeting schedule:**

**Jan 20:** Introduction.

**Jan 22:** What is History?

John Tosh, "The Pursuit of History," p. 1-25, Rampolla, 1-5, 25-29.

Journal entry 1 due.

**Jan 27:** Historiography: How History was viewed prior to the nineteenth century.

Reading, Gilderhus, Chapter 2-3.

**Jan 29:** Finding a Topic, Effective Oral presentations.

Hamden-Sydney College Speaking Center Online.

**Homework exercise one:** Please write a 1-page (typed, single spaced) paper on the best lecture or oral presentation you can remember. This speaker might be a professor at Moravian College or elsewhere, or it might be someone whom you have seen or heard deliver speeches on television or radio. Think especially about what made this lecture/speech effective.

**Feb 3:** Methods: Library Session 1: Locating and evaluating published primary sources.

Reading: Rampolla, 6-7, 9-13

**Feb 5:** Historiography: Philosophy of History Continued.

Reading: Gilderhus, Chapter 4, Speculative Approaches: Hegel, Kant, Marx.

Presentations: E.P. Thompson, Raphael Samuel, David Montgomery, David Brody, Howard Zinn, Walter Licht, Dorothy Thomson, Sally Alexander, Alf Ludtke, Paul Buhle.

**Feb 10:** Historiography: Conceptualizing Historical Frameworks.

Reading, Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History," *National Interest* (Summer 1990): 2-18.

**Homework 2 due.**

**Feb 12:** Visit to Moravian Church Archives.

Reading, Mary Jo Pugh, *Providing Reference Services for Archives and Manuscripts*

**Feb 17:** Methods: Library Session 2: Locating and Evaluating Secondary Sources (databases).

**Feb 19:** Historiography: Writing Historiographical Essays,  
Reading, Rampolla, 36-38 and sample essays.

Possible Presentations: William Appleman Williams, Thomas Sugrue, Elizabeth Cohen, Eric Foner, David McCullough, Sean Wilentz, Bernard Bailyn.

**Feb 24:** Writing Consultations. **Homework 3 due.**

**Feb 26:** Historiography: The Objectivity Question.

Reading, Gilderhus, Chapter 5, Analytical Approaches.

Matthias Middel, "The Annales," in Stefan Berger, Heiko Feldner and Kevin Passmore (eds.) *Writing History: Theory and Practice* (London: Arnold, 2003): 104-117.

Presentations: Marc Bloch, Lucien Febvre, Ferdinand Braudel, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie.

**March 3-March 5: Spring Break.**

**March 10:** Methods: Library Session 3: Using the World Wide Web.

Reading, Gilderhus, Writing and Research, Chapter 6; Rampolla, 16-17.

**March 12:** Historiography: Gender History.

Reading: To be Announced.

Possible Presentations: Joan Scott, Gerda Lerner, Alice Kessler Harris, Linda Gordon, George Chauncey, Dorothy Sue Cobble, Kathy Peiss, Ruth Milkman, Nancy Cott.

**March 17:** 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: 1045-1077.

**March 19:** Methods: Mechanics of Writing.

Possible Presentations: Manning Marable, George Lipsitz, Darlene Clark Hine, Mary Frances Berry, Robin G.D. Kelley, Joe William Trotter, Jr. Eric Arnesen, John Hope Franklin, W.E.B. DuBois, Barbara Savage, Glenda Gilmore.

*Film: Raining Stones* (Ken Loach, Director, 1994). Arrangements for this film's screening will be discussed in class.

**March 24:** Professional Ethics, Reading: Rampolla, 88-137.

**March 26:** Historiography: Global History.

Reading: Philip Pomper, "World History and its Critics," *History and Theory* May 1995:1-7;

William McNeill, "The Changing Shape of World History," *History and Theory* May 1995: 8-26.

*La Pietra Report*, Organization of American Historians (2000)

**Homework 4 Due.**

**March 31:** The New Cultural History.

Reading: Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt and Margaret Jacob, "Postmodernism and the Crisis of Modernity," *Telling the Truth About History*.

Possible Presentations: William Sewell, Michel Foucault, Edward Said, Lynn Hunt.

**April 2:** Citations and Footnotes.

Reading: Rampolla, Chapter 7.

**April 7:** Peer Review Day.

**April 9:** No class.

**April 14:** Professional Issues: What to do with a History Degree?

Peter Sterns, "Why Study History?" Available online at

<http://www.historians.org/pubs/Free/WhyStudyHistory.htm>

**April 16:** Recent Issues in the Historical Profession.

Reading: Gilderhus, Professional History in Recent Times, Chapter 7; William Palmer, "On or About 1950 or 1955 History Departments Changed: A Step in the Creation of the Modern History Department," *The Journal of the Historical Society* 7:3 September 2007, 385-406.

**April 21:** Historiography: Where to now? Reading: Gilderhaus, "Postscript: Culture Wars and Postmodernism."

**April 23:** Class Presentations.

**April 28:** Class Presentations.

**April 30:** Final class overview.

**Homework Exercise 5** due April 30 : please do a search on Monster.com or

[www.mcall.com/classified/jobs](http://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 okay for the purposes of this exercise.)