



History 270: Historical Methods and Interpretations

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Moravian College
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**Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 9:00-11:00am;
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 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, 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, 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.

¹ This course is very much a joint effort by members of the History Department at Moravian College. Colleagues have suggested readings, topics, and historians to study. I am particularly grateful to Drs. Paxton and Lempa who have shared syllabi from previous semesters.

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.

You will need to draw on each of these skills in 300-level history courses. Please note that you must receive a grade of C or higher in this class order to take 300-level courses in the history department.

Readings

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

1. Mark T. Gilderhus, *History and Historians: A Historiographical Introduction* (7th edition, 2010). [Hereafter “Gilderhus”]
2. Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History* (7th edition, 2012). [Hereafter “Rampolla”]
3. A coursepack of photocopied readings. [Hereafter “CP”]. We will talk in class about how to get hold of this.

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 the coursepack. 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.

Policy on the Format of Written Work

Please submit hard copies (i.e., printed, paper copies) of homework assignments and journal entries. Unless otherwise specified in class, I do not accept electronic copies in place of hard copies. If you wish to submit written work early or late and I am not in my office, please pin it to my noticeboard or slide it under the door then send me an email to let me know it is there. I will respond to let you know that I have received it.

Evaluation

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| Readings Journal Entries | 30% (3% each) |
| Abstracts for Historiographical Essay | 10% |
| Historiographical Essay | 20% |
| Homework Assignments | 20% (4% each) |
| Presentation on an Historian | 10% |
| Participation | 10% |

****please note that you must receive a grade of C or higher in this course in order to enroll in 300-level history courses****

Readings Journal Entries (30%)

Please see the separate handout on what these entail. Each entry will be graded out of 3 (entries that do not meet the 1.5 page minimum will be penalized, along with entries that are vague or do not reflect careful reading). Late entries will be penalized 1 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 2 out of 3; if you turn it in the following day it can receive no more than 1 point out of 3, etc. The first class for which journal entries are due is on Tuesday September 4.

Abstracts for Historiographical Essay (10%)

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 Thursday October 18.

Historiographical Essay (20%)

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 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 some of the homework assignments will also relate in part to your historiographical essay. Drafts are due on Tuesday November 6 and Thursday November 15, and the final paper is due on Thursday November 29. Your paper must be very well written and carefully proofread. Late assignments will be penalized 10% per day, beginning at the time when they are due (e.g., if you send a draft or final paper 3 minutes late, you will lose 10%; if you send 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.

Presentation on an Historian (10%)

In one of the historiography classes, you will make a 10-minute presentation explaining the philosophies and contributions of an individual historian. Further details about this presentation will be given on a separate handout.

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 who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Elaine Mara, assistant director of learning services for academic and disability support at 1307 Main Street, or call 610-861-1510. Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center.

Before you study the history, study the historian.

E. H. Carr, *What is History?* (1961).

If I could offer any advice to potential history majors it would be to take History 270 (Historical Methods and Interpretations) seriously as it is the foundation for all of your future classes in the discipline. In the class, you learn about what it means to be a historian and how to write history papers. Your Rampolla book will and should become your writing bible. I still use mine every time I write a paper. Even if you do not intend to pursue history as your major or minor, this class is practical for most majors in the humanities because of how interdisciplinary courses are. Finally, because the class is so important, make sure you work closely with the professor- she is there to teach and help you!

Ruby Johnson, 2001 Graduate of Moravian College's history department & now a graduate student at Villanova University.

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.

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| Tues Aug 28 | Introduction: What is History? What do Historians do? |
| Thurs Aug 30 Assignments: | Methods: Strategies for Success in History Classes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rampolla, 1-5, 22-26. • Gilderhus, 1-11. • John Tosh, <i>The Pursuit of History</i>, 1-25; CP 1-13. • This syllabus, pp. 1-5 (it's important that you know what you are getting into!). |
| Tues Sept 4 Assignments: | Historiography: Pre-Nineteenth Century Historians <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gilderhus, 12-41. • Journal Entry 1 due. |
| Thurs Sept 6 Assignments: | Methods: Finding a Topic; Effective Oral Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rampolla, 37-39 (section 3d-2 on historiographic essays). • Jules R. Benjamin, <i>A Student's Guide to History</i>, "How to Research a History Topic," 77-83; CP 14-17. • Hampden-Sydney College Speaking Center Online: http://www.hsc.edu/Academics/Speaking-Center/For-Students.html. Links on <u>speaking anxiety</u>, <u>ethical speaking</u>, and <u>preparation and delivery</u> (under this last link, follow links on <u>narrowing your topic</u>, <u>researching your topic</u>, <u>organizing your presentation</u>, and <u>rehearsing and delivering your presentation</u>). Available also in CP 18-29. • 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. This speaker might be a professor at Moravian College or elsewhere, or it might be someone whom you have seen deliver speeches on television. Try not to summarize the content of the lecture. Instead, focus most of your attention on what made your chosen lecture/speech effective (giving examples as appropriate). |
| Tues Sept 11 Assignments: | Historiography: Classical Historicism and Leopold Von Ranke <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gilderhus, 41-46. • Georg G. Iggers, "Classical Historicism as a Model for Historical Scholarship," in <i>Historiography in the Twentieth Century</i>, 23-30; CP 30-34. • Presentation Possibilities: Henry Adams, Thomas Carlyle; William Stubbs; Herbert Butterfield; Lewis Namier; Friedrich Meinecke. • Journal Entry 2 due. |
| Thurs Sept 13 Assignments: | Methods: Locating and Evaluating Secondary Sources (1) – Databases (meet in the library) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rampolla, pp. 6-19. |
| Tues Sept 18 Assignments: | Historiography: Marxist Historians <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gilderhus, 53-58. • John Tosh, <i>The Pursuit of History</i>, 216-43; CP 35-48. • 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. |

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| <p>Thurs Sept 20</p> <p>Assignments:</p> | <p>Methods: Locating and Evaluating Secondary Sources (2) – Printed sources (meet in the library)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is one of only about 3 occasions all semester when nothing is due! It would be wise, though, to complete as much as possible of the databases exercise so that you can ask questions in class about anything you cannot find. • You might also look ahead to Homework Exercise 3 (due Thurs Oct 4) and set up an appointment to interview a faculty member. |
| <p>Tues Sept 25</p> <p>Assignments:</p> | <p>Historiography: Annaliste Historians</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gilderhus, 94-95. • Michael Roberts, “The <i>Annales</i> School and Historical Writing,” in Peter Lambert and Phillipp Schofield (eds.), <i>Making History</i>, 78-92; CP 49-56. • Presentation Possibilities: Marc Bloch; Lucien Febvre; Fernand Braudel; Jacques Le Goff, Georges Duby, Philippe Ariès. • Journal Entry 4 due. |
| <p>Thurs Sept 27</p> <p>Assignments:</p> | <p>Methods: Writing Historiographical Essays</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historiographical essays by former students; CP 57-90. • Please note that the abstracts you need to write for your historiographical essay will require you to use books and articles procured via interlibrary loan. I strongly suggest that you order them <i>now!</i> • Homework Exercise 2 (Library Databases & Printed Sources) is due at the beginning of class. |
| <p>Tues Oct 2</p> <p>Assignments:</p> | <p>Historiography: Historians and the Social Sciences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gilderhus, 97-100. • Peter Lambert and Phillipp Schofield, “Interdisciplinarity,” in <i>Making History</i>, 121-4; CP 91-93. • Presentation possibilities: Clifford Geertz; Robert Brenner; Natalie Zemon Davis; Peter Gay; Charles Tilly; Keith Hopkins; Gilberto Freyre. • Journal Entry 5 due |
| <p>Thurs Oct 4</p> <p>Assignments:</p> | <p>Methods: Note-taking and Thesis Construction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richard Marius & Melvin E. Page, <i>A Short Guide to Writing About History</i>, 115-24; CP 94-99. • Rampolla, 93-96, 98-105. • Homework Exercise 3 due: Interview one of the members of Moravian College’s history department to find out how they regard themselves as historians. Use this information to write a 2-page paper in which you explain how they regard themselves as historians. As with any paper, this should be shaped around a clear <i>thesis</i> with supporting arguments that tie back to it. Please remember that faculty are very busy and probably will not have time to do interviews on the spot! You need to set up an appointment several days in advance and to be considerate about faculty members’ time. Prior to interviewing faculty, find out what they have written and what presentations they have given. This information will help you ask appropriate questions. Some examples of questions you might ask include: What methods do you use in your work? What kinds of sources do you deal with, and where are they located? What are the particular challenges of these sources? Do you identify with any particular “school” of history (e.g., Marxist historians, Annales school, etc)? Do you feel that historians can and should be objective? Which historians have influenced you the most? As a courtesy, please provide the faculty member you interviewed with a hard copy of your paper. |
| <p>Tues Oct 9</p> | <p>Midterm Break: No Class</p> |

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| <p>Thurs Oct 11 Assignments:</p> | <p>Historiography: Microhistory and Case Studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Georg G. Iggers, “From Macro- to Microhistory: The History of Everyday Life,” in <i>Historiography in the Twentieth Century</i>, 101-117; CP 100-108. • Presentation Possibilities: Carlo Ginzburg; Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie; Natalie Zemon Davis; Rudi Koshar; Steven Ozment; Thomas Sugrue. • Journal Entry 6 due. |
| <p>Tues Oct 16</p> | <p>Visit to Moravian Church Archives</p> |
| <p>Thurs Oct 18 Assignments:</p> | <p>Methods: Using the World Wide Web</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We’ll meet today in a computer lab (I’ll tell you which one the week before!) • Rampolla, 19-21. • Abstracts for historiographical essay due at the beginning of class. |
| <p>Tues Oct 23 Assignments:</p> | <p>Historiography: Historians of Race and Ethnicity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milla Rosenberg, “Race, Ethnicity, and History,” in Stefan Berger, Heiko Feldner, and Kevin Passmore (eds.), <i>Writing History</i>, 313-27; CP 109-117. • 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>Thurs Oct 25 Assignments:</p> | <p>Historiography: Historians of Gender</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gilderhus, 101-2. • Michael Roberts, “Women’s History and Gender History,” in Peter Lambert and Phillipp Schofield (eds.), <i>Making History</i>, 192-203; 118-123. • Judith M. Bennett, “Feminist History and Women’s History,” in her <i>History Matters</i>, 6-29; CP 124-135. • 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 8 due. |
| <p>Tues Oct 30 & Thurs Nov 1 Assignments:</p> | <p>Individual Meetings with me to Discuss Historiographical Essays</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please bring two copies of your essay outline, as well as an agenda in which you note any questions. Meeting times will be scheduled in previous classes. Our class will not meet as a group on these days. |
| <p>Tues Nov 6 Assignments:</p> | <p>Methods: Mechanics of Writing and Citations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rampolla, 49-76, 106-149 (skim pp. 114-149 so that you are familiar with its overall contents and know where to find citation models). • 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 136-142. Please pay particularly close attention to sections 1, 2, & 4. You may skim the other sections. • Please note that your complete historiographical essay draft is due via email to me and to your writing group members by 5pm tonight. |
| <p>Thurs Nov 8 Assignments:</p> | <p>Methods: Writing Workshop I: Thesis, Organization, Use of Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sandy Bardsley, “Useful Feedback & Constructive Criticism,” CP 143-144. • Homework 4a is due at the beginning of class. This consists of your constructive comments to your group members on the full drafts of their historiographical essays. |

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| Tues Nov 13 | Visit to Career Services |
| Thurs Nov 15 Assignments: | Methods: Professional Ethics and Opportunities <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 145-148. • American Historical Association, "Careers for History Majors." Available online at http://www.historians.org/pubs/Free/careers/Index.htm or in CP 149-150. • Please note that your revised historiographical essay drafts are due via email to me and to your group members by Saturday Nov 17 at 5pm. |
| Tues Nov 20 Assignments: | Methods: Writing Workshop II: Writing, Spelling, Grammar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework 4b is due at the beginning of class. This consists of your constructive comments to your group members on the full drafts of their historiographical essays (see reading for more details). |
| Thurs Nov 22 | Thanksgiving Break: No Class |
| Tues Nov 27 Assignments: | Historiography: Global Historians <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gilderhus, 104-106. • Bruce Mazlish, "Comparing World History to Global History," <i>Journal of Interdisciplinary History</i> 28 (1998), 385-395; CP 151-161. • J.M. Blaut, "The Tunnel of Time," in his <i>Colonizer's Model of the World</i>, 3-8; CP 162-167. • Presentation possibilities: William H. McNeill; J.R. McNeill; Patrick Manning; Christopher Alan Bayly; Daniel Rodgers; Odd Arne Westad; Judy Wu. • Journal Entry 9 due. |
| Thurs Nov 29 Assignments: | Historiography: New Cultural Historians <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>, 1-23; CP 168-179. • Presentation Possibilities: Lynn Hunt; Robert Darnton; Alf Lüdtke; Caroline Walker Bynum; Joanne Meyerowitz; William Leach; T. Jackson Lears; Roland Marchand. • Journal Entry 10 due. • Final version of historiographical essay due by email by 9pm! |
| Sat Dec 1 | Undergraduate Conference in Medieval and Early Modern Studies You must attend a 55-minute session of this conference or of one of the seminar "miniconferences" in order to complete the last assignment for the semester. Seminar miniconferences are usually held in the last two weeks of the semester. Details of times and paper topics will be distributed nearer the time. |
| Tues Dec 4 Assignments: | Methods: How Historians Communicate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework Exercise 5 due at the beginning of class: please summarize, in one substantial paragraph each, any three of the papers you heard at the conference or miniconference you attended. You may include material that comes up in the question and answer period. Then please write a further (substantial and extra thoughtful!) paragraph in which you reflect on the advantages and disadvantages of conference presentations as a means of presenting research. |
| Thurs Dec 6 | Conclusion and Review |