

HIST 270
Spring 2014
T/R 10:20-11:30am
Comenius Hall 309

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Office hours: by appointment

HISTORICAL METHODS AND INTERPRETATIONS



One of the questions this course will answer is “If the past does not change, why do historians write so many books about a single topic?” Answering this question reveals some of the difference between professional history and journalistic or antiquarian history. Historians not only hold different assumptions about the forces that drive historical change but each generation of historians approaches the past with different concerns and questions. Consequently, two historians using the same sources may come to quite different conclusions about the past. This course will focus on historiography (the history of history) and how the writing of history has changed over time and how historians actually work (the nuts and bolts of history). You will find this class challenging and sometimes confusing, but by the end of the semester you will be familiar with how professional historians work and the major “schools” of historical thought. I hope also that you will be on your way to developing your own philosophy about the nature of history and historical change.¹

OBJECTIVES

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

1. appreciate the ways interpretations of history change across time and place.
2. articulate your own view of why history matters and historians ought to be doing.
3. identify and explain the main ‘schools’ of historiographical thought.

¹ I wish to thank my colleagues in the History Department, particularly Jamie Paxton, Sandy Bardsley and Heikki Lempa, who have generously shared their ideas and assignments.

4. locate and use the chief tools of historical research (books, journal articles, electronic resources, and oral history).
5. design and deliver effective oral presentations.
6. write effectively using the conventions of history.

READINGS

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

Mark T. Gilderhus, *History and Historians: A Historiographical Introduction* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2010).

Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing History* (Boston: Bedford-St. Martin's, 2010).

A coursepack of readings available on Blackboard

I also expect that you have retained the *Bedford Handbook* from your Writing 100 class. If not, you will want to borrow or purchase a copy.

EVALUATION AND ASSIGNMENTS

20% Reading Responses (10@2%)

- Throughout the semester, you will be typing 1.5-2 page critical responses to some historiographic readings and related articles. You need to do so only on the dates established in the schedule and the due reading will be the subject of your response.
- The responses are designed to ensure that you have read carefully and thought about the assigned reading before coming to class, but also to encourage you to reflect critically on the readings and, where possible, to relate the readings to your own historiographical essay. If there is more than one reading due for that day, you will only write one response making reference to all readings and making connections among them.
- Each response will be graded out of 2. Responses that do not meet the 1.5 page limit will be penalized, as will responses that are vague or do not reflect a careful reading. Late responses will lose five points per day beginning on the day they are due.

10% Participation

- Attendance is not enough; you need to be proactive expressing your ideas and doubts and interacting with other classmates. Participation is essential to generate a rich and stimulating discussion and to maintain students involved and motivated.
- In order to facilitate participation you have to make all the readings before class and take notes about them to be prepared to ask questions, discuss, and reflect about the assigned material. Be ready to define the main arguments and ideas addressed in each document, give your opinion about the content and style of each text, and establish connections with what we have read so far and your previous knowledge and experience.

- Asking questions is also an essential element of the learning process, so do not feel ashamed about having doubts. One of the main goals of college education is to develop a critical mind and be able to see the world from various perspectives, so please do ask questions and express your dissent.
- If you aim to get an A or A- you need to do all the readings. This is a very intense course, so please organize your study time so you can finish readings before the due date.

Historiographical Paper

- The final paper should be 8-10 pages double-spaced and be based on at least five books or articles in any area of Latin American or US-Latin American history (with my approval). I will provide a list of possible topics, however, you are free to work on any topic of your interest. If you are unfamiliar with the history of Latin America or the relationship between the US and Latin America, I will be happy help you select a topic for you. Please set an appointment with me to discuss your ideas.
- This paper must be written in formal, carefully proofread, academic prose, with complete footnotes and bibliography. You will be writing this paper in stages throughout the semester, so your will receive lots of feedback and will make significant revisions.
- Your paper 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 your 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.

5% Research Topic

Provide one double-space page explaining what topic you are planning to research on, why it is interesting to you, which are the perspectives that historians have explored based on the secondary sources that you have identified. Include in a separate paper at least five books or articles.

10% Abstracts for Historiographical Paper

- To make writing your historiographical essay more manageable, you will first write ten abstracts related to your research, each one page and double spaced. Start planning early as you will need to get books and articles through interlibrary loan. Late assignments will be penalized.

5% Updated Bibliography using the Chicago Style

7% Draft of your final paper

Length: at least seven pages including introduction, conclusions and bibliography. On the due date you should submit your paper to me and to your team member/s. A week later we will hold a workshop to provide detailed feedback.

15% Final paper

5% Presentations

A 10-minute presentation will take place the weeks of the semester.

16% Assignments (4@4%)

- These short assignments must be completed and turned in at the beginning of class as indicated in the syllabus. Like the paper, these assignments must be written in formal academic prose and proofread carefully

7% Presentation on an historian

- In each class we will analyze a particular school of thought or methodology to study the past. Students will present the work of a particular historian whose work has been identified within that historiographical trend. Therefore, to plan your presentation you need to address these two aspects:
 - Provide a brief academic biography. (2 minutes)
 - Give an assessment of their approach to history. In order to do so, read at least one chapter or article written by that historian and offer five clear examples of his/her writing that could identify him as a Marxist, Annaliste, social historian and so forth.
 - This presentation should last no more than 10 minutes

Referencing to the material you use in preparing for your paper is essential, so please include footnotes in your work using the Chicago Style.

<http://moravian.libguides.com/content.php?pid=59393&sid=436067>

The accumulated points will be converted to letter grades using the following scale:

100-93% = A, 92-90% = A-, 89-87% = B+, 86-83% = B, 82-80% = B-, 79-77% = C+, 76-73% = C, 72-70% = C-, 69-67% = D+, 66-63% = D, 62-60% = D- Anything less than 60% is an F.

Five points will be deducted from each paper's grade if it is submitted after the deadline and this deduction will be repeated for each consecutive late day after the assigned due date.

Grades and class performance will not be discussed via email, however, I would be happy to address this. Please send me an email to set an appointment.

Extra-Credits

- Throughout the semester you will be offered the opportunity to earn extra credits towards your final grade by attending the History Club meetings taking place on Tuesdays at 11:45am in the History Commons. Usually the History Club gets together every other week and organizes short talks in which students and professors share their current research projects. You need to submit a one-page reflection addressing the main idea or

thesis of the presenter, how is he/she approaching the topic, and your personal opinion about it. In addition you should pose at least one question to our speaker.

- There is no limit in the number of extra-credit reflections that you can submit, but you have to do so no later than a week after the event takes place.

About style and sources:

- Please use Times New Roman font size 12, one-inch margins, and double-space in between lines in all your assignments. The student's name, course number, and submission date should be typed in the upper left corner of the first page with single space in between lines. After this header, one blank line should appear before the assignment title, which should be followed by one blank line before beginning the assignment.
- Contractions (don't, can't, he's) should not be used in academic writing. I will deduct two points per each contraction you use.
- You should not use any secondary sources apart from your textbooks in writing your assignments (an exception would be oral presentations). Do not use Wikipedia, as it is not a reliable source of information. Most assignments are based on the analysis of primary source documents that you will find in the Blackboard site of this course.
- Citations must be provided in all papers including footnotes following the Chicago Style. See <http://moravian.libguides.com/content.php?pid=59393&sid=436067> or <http://dlib.hamilton.edu/sp/subjects/guide.php?subject=CitingSources#misc>
- You should take advantage of the Writing Center, which is a free resource for improving your writing. At the Writing Center, trained Moravian students can help you figure out assignments and improve your writing. They can help at any stage of the writing process, whether you have not started the assignment and need help picking a topic, or you are near the end and want to check that everything is in order. And it is not just for help with Writing 100 or English papers—any type of writing can be taken there, including science reports and cover letters. The tutors will first work with you to make sure that all the bigger issues are covered, such as proper citation, fulfilling the assignment, and structure of the paper. Then, they can also help you with spelling, grammar, and mechanics. You can sign up for a half-hour or an hour-long appointment. After your appointment, the tutor you work with will send me a progress report, letting me know that you were there. The Writing Center is on the second floor of Zinzendorf Hall and the extension is 1592. Their hours vary each semester, but they are generally open Monday-Thursday afternoons and evenings, and Sunday evening. Watch your email for an announcement about when the Writing Center opens, generally the third week of the term, which will also include the hours.
- Back up all your work (in your computer and an external drive) in order to avoid losing your files.

About attendance and classroom etiquette:

- The attendance policy for this course is strict. Only TWO unexcused absences are allowed in the semester. To justify an absence you must provide a doctor's note or a written explanation from an athletics coach. If a student plans to arrive more than five minutes late to class, he or she might consider making other arrangements or inform me

in advance and arrive in a non-disruptive manner. Illness on an exam date will be excused only with a doctor's note.

- I will deduct two points per each additional unjustified absence. If you miss more than five classes your chances of passing the class will decrease as you might lag behind deadlines and will miss explanations and announcements. You are responsible for getting in touch with me to make any queries about important information provided in class if you were unable to attend.
- As a courtesy to the class, please be on time. Lateness will affect your participation grade.
- If you need to go to the restroom, please do so before or after the class. Restrain from leaving the classroom unless it is extremely necessary.
- You should not carry on conversations in class, even if they happen to be related to the topic. Even if such conversations are relatively quiet and do not seem to disturb anyone nearby, they can be distracting and rude to the professor. So if you have something to say or ask, please share it with the rest of the class.
- Please turn off your cell phones during class. No texting will be tolerated.
- Contact me at least four days before the due date if you have queries about a specific assignment.
- Deadlines are not negotiable.

Students with disabilities

- Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact the Academic & Disability Support Office, which is committed to assisting students in the achievement of academic success. Individual appointments and group workshops are available for students who would like to improve their academic performance. Information and programs on time management, study strategies and other academic and learning skills are available. Students can work with the staff to find a tutor or other resources to enhance academic success. In addition, the Academic Disability Support Office coordinates services and support for students with documented learning disabilities and/or ADHD. Students requesting accommodations should contact the Administrative Assistant at 610.861.1510. Students interested in making an appointment with a staff member for academic help or a peer tutor, should contact our office at ext. 1510.
- Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic & Disability Support Office.

Blackboard site and email communication

- Everyone is responsible for visiting the Blackboard site of this course where you will find:
 - The course syllabus
 - The readings packet
 - Power point presentations
 - Referencing and writing advice
 - Class documents
 - Important announcements and information

- I will send you relevant information and contact you when necessary only through your Moravian email account, so please have a look at it on a daily basis. I also expect you to contact me through your college email rather than your personal email. Please become familiar with Moravian email as this will be the main way to get in touch with your professors.
- Email Etiquette: Whenever you are addressing an email to someone other than a good friend, you need to follow basic email etiquette. Your emails should have a proper greeting (Hello Professor X or Dr. Y, etc.); "Hi there" or just "Hi" is not acceptable. Your message should follow the rules of standard written English (capitalization, spelling, and grammar), and a closing (“Thank you for your help,” or “Thank you for your time”). It is always polite to thank the person for reading the email and trying to assist you. Also, be sure to sign the email with your own first and last name. The subject line of your email should be clear and formal. Messages that do not follow this format will not be addressed.
- If you need to discuss something with me please set an appointment. I will be in college everyday but Fridays.

Academic honesty

- Moravian College does not tolerate plagiarism, cheating, or helping others to cheat.
- Plagiarism is defined as misrepresenting the work of others (whether published or not) as your own. It may be inadvertent or intentional.
- Any facts, statistics, quotations, or paraphrasing of any information that is not common knowledge, should simply be cited.
- For a more detailed explanation on plagiarism please see the “Academic Honesty at Moravian College” link under Academic Life at the Student Handbook website.
- If you have questions about how to reference others’ works you should look at the referencing advice and explore the suggested websites in the Blackboard site of this course. Also look at <http://moravian.libguides.com/content.php?pid=59393&sid=436064>
- Students suspected of plagiarism or cheating will automatically receive an “F” in the course and will be reported to the appropriate school authorities.

Please do not hesitate to speak directly with me if you have any questions about any of the assignments and/or requirements for the class.

SCHEDULE

1/14 Course overview

1/16 What is History? What do historians do?

Write a reaction to the course syllabus. Include at least two comments, which can be in the form of doubts or suggestions. Let me know if you find typos or errors.

Due: Reading Response 1

- Rampolla, pp. 1-5, 20-27.
- Gilderhus, *History and Historians*, 1-12.
- John Tosh, "The Uses of History," 1-25.

1/21 Historiography to the Nineteenth Century: Ranke

Due: Assignment 1. Write a 1.5-2 page single spaced paper on the best lecture of oral presentation you can remember. The speaker might be a professor at Moravian College or elsewhere, or it might be someone whom you have seen or heard on television or radio. Think especially what made this lecture/speech effective.

- Gilderhus, *History and Historians*, 13-49.

1/23 Latin American Historiography

- Miller, "The historiography of nationalism and national identity in Latin America" in *Nations and Nationalism* 12 (2), 2006, 201–221.

1/28 The Themes of History

Due: Response 2

- John Tosh, "The Themes of Mainstream History," pp 114-144.

1/30 Join the class taught by one of our Africanist candidates. Classroom TBA

Due: Topic for historiographical essay 1 page. Send it via email.

2/4 Library Session: Locating Secondary Sources Using Databases

2/6 Historiography: Modern Approaches to History: Marxists

Due: Bibliography draft and Response 3

- Gilderhus, *History and Historians*, 50-69.
- Geoff Eley, "Marxist Historiography," in Berger, Feldner and Passmore, 63-82.
- **Presentations:** Eric Hobsbawn, E.P. Thompson, Caio Prado Junior, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, Enrique Semo.

2/11 Methods: Anatomy of an Article: Reading and Evaluating Secondary Sources

Due: Assignment 2 Library scavenger hunt

- Rampolla, 6-19.
- Robert F. Berkhofer, "Demystifying Historical Authority" at <http://www.virginia.edu/woodson/courses/hius402-aas406/berkhofer.html>

2/13 Historiography: Annaliste Historians

Due: Bibliography. You should have all books and article ordered from ILL.

Due: Response 4

- Gilderhus, *History and Historians*, 86-110.
- Matthias Middell, “The Annals” in Berger, Feldner, and Passmore, *Writing History: Theory and Practice*, 104-117.
- **Presentations:** Marc Bloch, Lucien Febvre, Ferdinand Braudel, Edmundo O’Gorman, Eduardo Galeano.

2/18 Historiography: Historians and the Social Sciences

- Gilderhus, *History and Historians*, 70-85.
- Christopher Lloyd, “History and the Social Sciences,” in Berger, Fledner & Passmore, 83-103.
- **Presentations:** Clifford Geertz, Francisco Bulnes, Manuel Gamio, Gilberto Freyre, Luis González y González.

2/20 Historiography: Social and Economic Historians

Due: Response 5

- Thomas Welskopp, “Social History,” in Berger, Feldner, and Passmore, *Writing History: Theory and Practice*, 203-222.
- Presentations: Tulio Halperin Donghi, Enrique Florescano, Fernando Pico, Justo Sierra, John Womack.

2/25 Historiography: Historians of Race/Ethnicity

Due: Response 6

- Milla Rosenberg, “Race, Ethnicity, and History,” in Berger, Feldner & Passmore, 282-298.
- **Presentations:** Edward Said, Nancy Leys Stepan, Magnus Mörner, Peter Wade, Thomas E. Skidmore.

2/27 Methods: Writing Historiographical Essays

- Rampolla, 32-34.
- Anthony Brundage, *Going to the Sources*, 53-67.
- Sample historiographical essays distributed in class

3/1-9 Spring Recess

3/11 Historiography: Historians of Gender

Due: Abstracts

- Laura Lee Downs, “From women’s History to gender History,” in Berger, Feldner & Passmore, 261-281.
- **Presentations:** Joan Scott, Víctor Macías-González, Jocelyn Olcott, Mary Kay Vaughn, Susan Besse.

3/13 Poststructuralism and Postmodernism

Due: Response 7

- Passmore, *Poststructuralism and History*, pp. 118-140.
- Rampolla, 39-49

3/18 Preserving and Researching the Past

Due: Draft of historiographical paper.

- Rampolla, 6-14.

3/20 Historiography: Political History

Due: Response 8

- Jon Lawrence, "Political History," in Berger, Feldner & Passmore, 183-202.
- **Presentations:** Alan Knight, Friederich Katz, Enrique Krauze, Lorenzo Meyer, James Dunkerley.

3/25 Historiography: Intellectual Historians

Due: Response 9

- Beverly Southgate, "Intellectual History/History of Ideas," in Berger, Feldner & Passmore, 243-260.
- Presentation: Benedict Anderson, Enrique Florescano, Angel Rama, Charles Hale,

3/27 Workshop

Return draft papers with comments

3/27 Individual meetings

4/1 Individual meetings

4/3 Historiography: New Cultural Historians

Due: Response 10

- Peter Burke, "Overture: The New History, its Past and its Future," in Peter Burke, ed., *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, 1-23.
- Presentations: Eric Zolov, Anne Rubenstein, Rick Lopez, Jeffrey Pilcher, Rebekah Pite.

4/8 Methods: Citations; Professional Ethics

Due: Assignment 3. Locate and familiarize yourself with the publications of any Moravian history faculty member. Then interview him or her and write a 2 page critical assessment that places the individual within an historiographical tradition. Please, request an interview several days in advance.

- American Historical Association, "Statement of Standards of Professional Conduct." Available online at <http://historians.org/pubs/free/professionalstandards.cfm>
- Rampolla, 86-101.

4/10 Historiography: Where to Now?

- Gilderhus, *History and Historians*, 117-132.

4/15 Professional Issues: What can you do with a history degree?

Due: Assignment 4. Search Monster.com or www.mcall.com/classified/jobs or Moravian's Career center site for jobs you might apply for as a history graduate. 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 the skills appropriate to the job.

- Peter Stearns, "Why Study History," available at <http://www.historians.org/pubs/free/WhyStudyHistory.htm>

4/17 Final Paper and Presentations

4/22-24 Presentations