

## HH3001 Historiography: Theory and Methods

Semester 1, AY 2017/18; Academic Units: 3

Venue: LHS-TR+42

Time: Thursdays, 09:30-12:30

Course Instructor: Assistant Professor ZHOU Taomo

Office: HSS 5-22 (Please email me to make an appointment)

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### I. Course Description:

Do historians uncover the truth, organize the facts and formulate possible causal explanations or just tell stories that sell? Can history be written “as it actually happened”? Or are all human histories always provisional and conditional? How is a reconstruction of the past possible given that historians cannot rethink the thoughts of the dead or relive their lives? Are historians unfairly imposing the questions of the present to the past? Is the writing of history ultimately a power game that ensures the dominance of those who possess it? In a world in which an ever-growing chorus of voices is heard, what are the criteria by which a historical work can be held as valid? With the coming of the digital age in humanities and social sciences, will history ultimately perish as a discipline and profession?

In this course, we will discuss the aforementioned questions by examining history’s relationship to science, postmodernism, colonialism, nation building, gender, identity politics and globalization. Building on the basic skills acquired in HH 1001: What is History, this course offers a more advanced introduction to the theories and methodologies underpinning our craft. The first part of the course (weeks 1-6) offers a chronological overview of the evolution of Western historiography in the twentieth century. These sessions show the history profession’s early embrace of positivism and scientific models and later encounters with postmodernity and multiculturalism. The second part of the course (Weeks 8-13) offers a thematic survey of the field at present, bringing in questions on texts and contexts, narratives and subjectivity.

### II. Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course students will have:

- A broad overview of developments in historiography during the twentieth century
- A clear grasp of key terms and concepts in historical analysis
- A familiarity with some of the classic works of historiography
- Acquired crucial skills in reading and deciphering historiography
- Acquired the ability to formulate historical questions and to think historically
- Acquired the confidence to synthesize and engage in various theoretical debates

### III. Course Components

The format of this course is designed to encourage participation at every meeting. Except for the introduction in the first week (August 17), a take-home mid-term exam in Week 7 (September 28), and the conclusion in the last week (November 16), we will spend our three-hour seminars according to the following schedule:

9:30-10:20am Lecture

**Important:** The first 10-15 minutes of each seminar will usually be devoted to going over important administrative matters. These could also include discussing the requirements of class

assessment components & instructions for handing in assignments and formatting. *It is highly encouraged that students are present during this crucial time of the seminar.* Often times, the impromptu nature of the questions during this time means that the issues are not included in any other material or repeated elsewhere. As always, it is the students' responsibility to ensure that they are abreast of all information given during lecture and tutorial slots.

10:20-10:30 am Break

10:30am-11:30 am Book Reviews

Each student will pick a book ahead of time from the “Book Review & Presentation Options” section of each week except weeks 1, 7 and 13. If you are interested in books outside of the listed selection, please consult the instructor beforehand.

The **book critic** has two responsibilities: 1) submit an 800-word **scholarly review of the book** of your choice through Turnitin 5pm (17:00) on Wednesday during the week he or she has signed up for; 2) in class the next day, delivery your findings in a **15-minute presentation. PowerPoint slides** are compulsory. Please refer to a separate handout for instructions & the grading system.

11:30-11:40 am Break

11:40am-12:30 pm Debate

Each student will bring to class a “**Position Paper**” summarizing his or her position on the week's debate topic. This paper consists of an opening sentence plus twenty-five words or less. In the opening sentence, each student takes an unequivocal position in the affirmative or the negative. In position papers for Week 2, for example, every student should open by saying either, “Yes, history is closer to science than to art.” or “No, history is closer to art than to science.” Hard copies of position papers need to be handed in at the end of every class.

To launch the debate each week, three or four students will act as **Debate Moderators**. The **Debate Moderators** have two responsibilities:

The first is to prepare a **Debate Moderator Sheet** and upload it to the “Discussions” section of NTULearn by 5pm (17:00) on Wednesday during the week he or she has signed up for. Hardcopies of the Debate Moderator Sheet should be distributed in class. This sheet should contain quotations from the week's assigned readings and questions formulated in response to these readings. The questions may or may not be related to the debate topic on the reading list but should set up issues that may be discussed on the basis of the week's readings. Both questions and quotations should be chosen for the purpose of stimulating discussion and should be short enough to fit on one page in standard size type.

The Debate Moderators' second responsibility is to open discussion in class by making a brief (5 minutes) **oral statement** in which the moderator identifies the topics that should be taken up in that session. Ordinarily, the moderator's statement will be based on the assigned readings, the students' presentations, and his or her own list of questions and quotations.

**It is extremely important for the book critics and debate moderators to honor their commitments. As a general rule, cancellations are not accepted.** If urgent circumstances prevent a student from fulfilling his or her duty, one should inform the instructor as early as possible. The student must find someone to replace his or her role for that week.

**Grades will be based on:**

- a. Active Participation (10%). Weekly response papers as well as engagement in primary source analyses and secondary source discussions will be evaluated throughout the semester. *If you expect to miss more than 20% of seminars, you must come see the instructor to explain your absence and how you will make up for the lost time.*
- b. Performance as Book Critic (15%). Each student should serve once in the semester as the book critic. Written reviews, PowerPoint slides and oral deliveries will be evaluated.
- c. Performance as Debate Moderator (15%). Each student should serve once in the semester as debate moderator, on a topic different from his or her presentation. **Debate Moderator Sheets and oral presentations** will be evaluated.
- d. Take-home mid-term exam (20%). The questions will be posted on NTULearn by 9:30 am on Wednesday (September 28) and the answers should be submitted to Turnitin by 12:30 pm on the same day.
- e. Final Research Paper (40%). Each student is expected to hand in one piece of written work of 3,000 words. The research paper can represent an introductory chapter to a student's final year project (FYP) or one of the chapters for their thesis. This should be submitted to Turnitin by 5pm (17:00) on Monday, November 27, 2017. A hard copy should be submitted to my mailbox (HSS-05-22) before the office closes at 5pm on the same day. Please refer to a separate handout for instructions & the grading system.

## VI. Reference Books

Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt and Margaret Jacob, *Telling the Truth about History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1994).

## V. Course Schedule:

### Week 1 (August 17): Introduction

#### Required Readings:

- Peter Claus and John Marriott. "Proof and the Problem of Objectivity." Chap. 1 in *History: An Introduction to Theory, Method, and Practice*, 1-23.
- Georg Iggers. "Introduction." In *Historiography in the Twentieth Century*, 1997, 1-19.

#### Further Reading:

- E.H. Carr, *What is History?* (London: Palgrave, 2001).

### Week 2 (August 24): History as Linear I: Scientific History and the Idea of Modernity

Debate Topic: History is closer to science than to art.

#### Required Reading:

- Fernand Braudel, *Afterthoughts on Material Civilization and Capitalism*, translated by Patricia M. Ranum (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977).

#### Further Reading:

- Traian Stoianovitch, *French Historical Method: The Annales Paradigm* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1976).
- Georg Iggers, "France: The Annales," Chap. 5 in *Historiography in the Twentieth Century*, 51-64.

#### Book Review & Presentation Options:

- Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft* (New York: Vintage Books, 1953). Reserved at the Library Outpost

- R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1956). HSSL, WGWL D13. C711 1956 1961
- William H. Sewell, *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005). E-book

### **Week 3 (August 31): History as Linear II: Marxist Historiography vs. Modernization Theory**

Debate Topic: In order to convey objective truth about the past, historians should stand above the tumult of present-day political and social concerns.

#### Required Readings:

- E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1963).
- Appleby, Hunt and Jacob, *Telling the Truth about History*, Chapter 2, pp. 52-90.

#### Further Reading:

- Geoff Eley. "Marxist Historiography." Chap. 4 in *Writing History: Theory and Practice*, 63-79.
- Philipp Schofield. "History and Marxism." Chap. 12 in *Making History*, 180-191.

#### Book Review & Presentation Options:

- Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1968). E-book.
- Karl Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," in Terrel Carver ed., *Marx Later Political Writings* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 31-127.
- Theda Skocpol, *State and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

### **Week 4 (September 7): Linear History in Crisis: Postmodernism and the Linguistic Turn**

Debate Topic: There can be no stable, knowable past because change is constant and contesting visions of "reality" have failed to create a consensus.

#### Required Readings:

- Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books, 1995.
- Appleby, Hunt and Jacob, *Telling the Truth about History*, Chapter 6, pp. 198-237.

#### Further Reading:

- Caroline Hoeffler. "The Linguistic Turn, Postmodernism, and New Cultural History." Chap. 8 in *The Essential Historiography Reader*, 209-247.
- Peter Burke. "From Representation to Construction." Chap. 5 in *What Is Cultural History?* Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2008, 77-101.
- "The Challenge of Poststructuralism/Postmodernism." Chap. 12 in *The Houses of History*, 297-325.
- Paul Rabinow, ed. *The Foucault Reader*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1984.

#### Book Review & Presentation Options:

- Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975). HSSL WGWL D13.W584

- Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). HSSL HM585.I62
- Lydia H. Liu, *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture and Translated Modernity—China, 1900-1937* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995). To scan

### **Week 5 (September 14): Postcolonialism**

Debate Topic: Historians have the moral responsibility to address the wrongs committed by the white against the people of color.

#### Required Reading:

- Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 2003 [1978]).

#### Further Readings:

- Robert C Young. *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction*. Oxford, UK; Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001.
- Peter Childs and R.J. Patrick Williams. *An Introduction to Post-Colonial Theory*. London; New York: Prentice Hall; Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1997.

#### Book Review & Presentation Options:

- Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 2008).
- Inga Clendinnen, *Ambivalent Conquests: Maya and Spaniard in Yucatan, 1517-1570* (Cambridge University Press, 2003).
- Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-politics, Modernity* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002).

### **Week 6 (September 21): History Makes a Nation**

Debate Topic: The formation of a coherent national history is essential to state building.

#### Required Readings:

- Appleby, Hunt and Jacob, *Telling the Truth about History*, chapter 3 & 4, pp. 91-159.
- Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997).

#### Book Review & Presentation Options:

- James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (Yale University Press, 2009).
- Benedict R'O. G. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London; New York: Verso, 2003).
- Manu Goswami, *Producing India: From Colonial Economy to National Space* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004).

### **Week 7 (September 28): No Meeting: Take Home Mid-term exam**

#### **Recess Week**

### **Week 8 (October 12): Gender and Sexuality**

Debate Topic: History should be continually rewritten to undo the perpetuation of sexual stereotypes.

#### Required Reading:

- Joan W. Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).

Further Reading:

- Peter Claus and John Marriott. "Feminism, Gender and Women's History." Chap. 10 in *History: An Introduction to Theory, Method and Practice*, 196-214.
- Joan W. Scott. "Women's History." Chap. 3 in *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, 43-70 (see websites included)

Book Review & Presentation Options:

- Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990).
- Barbara Watson Andaya, *The Flaming Womb: Repositioning Women in Early Modern Southeast Asia* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2006).
- Dorothy Ko, *A Revisionist History of Footbinding* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

**Week 9 (October 19): History without Heroes: The Everyday Life of Ordinary People**

Debate Topic: Detailed studies on the lived experience of ordinary people obscure rather than crystalize our understandings of the past.

Required Reading:

- Emmanuel LeRoy Ladurie, *Montaillou: Cathars and Catholics in a French Village*, translated by Barbara Bray (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980 [1978]).

Further Reading:

- Giovanni Levi. "On Microhistory." Chap. 5 in *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, 97-119.
- Peter Burke. "The Moment of Historical Anthropology." Chap. 3 in *What is Cultural History*, 31-50.

Book Review & Presentation Options:

- Orlando Figes, *Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia* (London: Penguin Books, 2007).
- Suzy Kim, *Everyday Life in the North Korean Revolution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013).
- Svetlana Alexievich, translated by Keith Gessen, *Voices from Chernobyl: The Oral History of a Nuclear Disaster* (London: Picador, 2006).

**Week 10 (October 26): Memoirs and Autobiographies**

Debate topic: "I" am an unreliable narrator of my own story.

Required Readings:

- Ben Yagoda, *Memoir: A History* (Riverhead Books, 2010).

Book Review & Presentation Options:

- J.D. Vance, *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of A Family and Culture in Crisis* (Harper Press, 2016).
- Blaine Harden, *Escape from Camp 14: One Man's Remarkable Odyssey from North Korea to Freedom in the West* (Viking, 2012).

- Hisham Matar, *The Return: Fathers, Sons, and the Land in Between* (Random House, 2016).
- Jun Chang, *Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China* (Harper Collins, 1991).

### **Week 11 (November 2): History and Literature**

Debate topic: When one writes history, one is always on the verge of imagining.

#### Required Readings:

- Simon Schana, *Dead Certainties (Unwarranted Speculations)* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992).

#### Book Review & Presentation Options:

- Jonathan Spence, *Self-Portrait of Kang-Hsi* (Vintage Books, 1988).
- Natalie Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987).
- Amitav Ghosh, *Dancing in Cambodia and Other Essays* (Viking, 2002).

### **Week 12 (November 9): Global History**

Debate topic: Compared to the past, nowadays historical and geographic divisions are less relevant.

#### Required Readings:

- **C.A. Bayly.** *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914: Global Connections and Comparisons.* Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004.

#### Further Reading:

- Peter Claus and John Marriott. "Global Histories." Chap. 12 in *History: An Introduction to Theory, Method and Practice*, 233-253.
- Jürgen Osterhammel. "World History." Chap. 5 in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing*, 93-112.
- G. Iggers and Edward Q. Wang. *A Global History of Modern Historiography.* Harlow, UK: Pearson Education, 2008.

#### Book Review & Presentation Options:

- John E. Wills, *1688: A Global History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001).
- Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (Vintage Books, 2015).
- Daniel Yergin: *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money & Power* (New York: Free Press, 1991).

### **Week 13 (November 16): Conclusion: Overview of the Course**