

HISTORY 500
Problems of Historical Inquiry

Fall 2024
Classroom: RR 456
Fridays: 930-1155am

Instructor: Prof. Fleischman
Office Hours: Wednesdays, 12-2pm
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This course introduces graduate students and advanced undergraduates to fundamental questions of historical analysis, methodology, and approaches. While not a complete survey of the history profession, it will familiarize students with several influential texts and historiographical debates that have shaped the modern practice of history.

REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

REQUIRED TEXTS

William Sewell, *Logics of History*
Lynn Hunt, *Family Romance and the French Revolution*
Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams*
Gabriel Winant, *The Next Shift*
CLR James, *Black Jacobins*
Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms*
Melinda Cooper, *Family Values*
Bathsheba Demuth, *Floating Coast*
Michelle Murphy, *The Economization of Life*
Kirsten Weld, *Paper Cadavers*
Stuart Schrader, *Badges Without Borders*
Carl Shorske, *Fin de Siecle Vienna*
Elizabeth Hennessy, *On the Backs of Tortoises*

The Kelly Family History Book Fund: In 2022, the History Department received an endowed fund to purchase class text books for undergraduate students (only) enrolled in a history course. If you need help acquiring your books, you may apply for funds through this link <https://forms.gle/c2WArDa5g696oKeU6>.

Preference will be given to history majors but any student may apply.

PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE: Complete all assigned readings, regularly attend class and participate in discussion. Since there is no textbook for this course, your learning depends upon your participation. **No student with three absences from class will pass the course.** *Only in rare circumstances—illness, family emergency—may you miss class, and then I will need some sort of documentation.* If you plan on missing a class, please notify me in any case. These policies take effect with the first meeting.

PRESENTATIONS AND GOOGLE DOCS: This class is intended to help you hone your skills to think, critique, and argue about historical ideas. And since I'd like our conversations to reflect what interests you in the readings, one student will lead us in discussion every week. Everyone will go twice.

Your responsibilities as discussion leader are as follows:

1. Create a GoogleDoc for the week's readings and change the settings so that anyone with the link can edit it.
2. Send that link to the rest of the class. The link must be sent 72 hours in advance of class meeting.
3. By 10am on Wednesday, ***everyone in the class***—not just the presenters—***must enter a thoughtful, developed question on the reading (about 400 words)***. This is a part of your overall grade and may not be skipped.
4. Discussion leaders will organize the responses in a way that makes most sense for them, write about a page worth of questions to organize our discussion, and then give a short five minute presentation on the reading's argument, sources, interventions, methods, and approaches. They will then print the questions and circulate them at the beginning of class. The GoogleDoc will also be available for reference during class—Students are encouraged to edit and write on the doc as we go.

REACTION PAPERS: write two reaction papers (6-8 pages each) on the books around which you lead discussion.

FINAL RESEARCH PAPER: Write a research paper (6,000 words/20 pages) on any topic of your choosing. It must go under one round of revision.

GRADING DISTRIBUTION

Participation (including discussion questions)	20%
Leading Discussion	15%
Reaction Paper One	15%
Reaction Paper Two	15%
Research Paper	35%

COMPUTERS in class are allowed, although I have a personal preference for note-taking by hand. Get yourself a sweet new paper notebook, a decent pen, and enjoy the retro experience.

PAPERS: All papers must be emailed to me and **formatted in Word** (.doc or docx) and **saved with your last name first, e.g. "Fleischman Marx Paper.docx."**

You are expected to master the citation style that is common among historians, known as the Chicago Manual of Style, and is detailed in the volume by Kate Turabian. The guide is available in the library and online at <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>

Late papers lose 1/3 of a grade per day. E.g., a B paper submitted the morning after it was due, will receive a B-. **Papers more than 72 hours late will receive an F.**

EMAIL: I am available via email for questions or concerns about the class. There are types of questions, however, that I don't generally answer. If you write an email telling me you are going to miss class, I will take note, but won't write back. If you write with a question about an assignment or reading, and the answer is on the syllabus or assignment sheet, I will not write back. Otherwise I do my best to keep up with your questions, although occasionally an email slips through the cracks. If you don't hear back within a few days, try me again or come up to me after class.

ACADEMIC HONESTY: Intellectual integrity is the University's most fundamental commitment. Plagiarism of any kind will be penalized to the fullest possible extent. There is no mitigating circumstance, ever, for plagiarism.

Whenever you draw upon somebody else's words *or ideas* to make a point, give them credit in a footnote. The most common causes of plagiarism are not deliberate dishonesty. Often it is careless note-taking. Make sure that in your notes you distinguish clearly your thoughts on the reading and the words you have copied from a secondary source. Waiting too long to do the research and the stress and confusion that may result from that rush to finish may produce mistakes that in public represent the most serious violation of academic values. You are, therefore, strongly encouraged to start assignments well in advance of the deadline.

Disability Services:

The University offers a number of accommodations for students in need of disability services, including special testing locations, extra time, and help with note taking. For a full list of services, please visit

<https://www.rochester.edu/college/disability/faculty/accommodations-defined.html>

and feel free to contact me with additional questions or requests.

COURSE SCHEDULE

August 30

Introduction, Presentations, Assignments

September 6

William Sewell, *Logics of History*, Ch. 1-2, 4-6, 7-10

Additional Reading: Scott Sandage, "How to Read a Book: The X-Ray Method for Achieving a Sustainable 'Book-Life Balance,'"

<https://commonplace.online/article/how-to-read-a-book/>

September 13

Elizabeth Hennessy, *On the Back of Tortoises*

Historiographical Interview: A Conversation with Elizabeth Hennessy on EdgeEffects (stream conversation on any podcast app or here <https://edgeeffects.net/elizabeth-hennessy/>)

September 20

Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms*

Historiographical Essay: Carlo Ginzburg, John Tedeschi, and Anne C. Tedeschi, "Microhistory: Two or Three Things That I Know about It," *Critical Inquiry* 20, no. 1 (1993): 10–35.

September 27

Kirsten Weld, *Paper Cadavers*

Historiographical Essay: Elizabeth Yale, "The History of the Archives: The State of the Discipline," in *Book History* vol. 18 (2015) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43956377>

October 4

Lynn Hunt, *Family Romance and the French Revolution*

Historiographical Essay: Madelyn Gutwirth, "Sacred Father; Profane Sons: Lynn Hunt's French Revolution," *French Historical Studies* 19, no. 2 (1995): 261–76,

October 11

CLR James, *Black Jacobins*

Historiographical Essay: Ross Wolf, "CLR James, critical theory, and the dialectic," The Charnel House Blog, <https://thecharnelhouse.org/2017/11/24/clr-james-critical-theory-and-the-dialectic/>

October 18

Bathsheba Demuth, *Floating Coast*

Historiographical Essay: "Time to Eat Dogs" Podcast, Interview with Demuth: <https://lithub.com/on-the-connection-between-whaling-and-imperialism-in-the-bering-strait/>

October 25

Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams*

Historiographical Essay: Peter James Hudson, "The Racist Dawn of Capitalism," *Boston Review*, March 14, 2016 <https://www.bostonreview.net/articles/peter-james-hudson-slavery-capitalism/>

November 1

Michelle Murphy, *The Economization of Life*

November 8

Stuart Schrader, *Badges Without Borders*

Historiographical Essay: H-Diplo Roundtable: https://issforum.org/uncategorized/h-diplo-issf-roundtable-14-8-schrader-badges-without-borders#_Toc121742927

November 15

Gabriel Winant, *The Next Shift*

Historiography: Interview with Julie Greene, editor *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History* <https://lawcha.org/2024/04/17/julie-greene-interview-labor/>

**First Draft of Research Paper Due, Friday, November 15th
via email @1159pm**

November 22

Melinda Cooper, *Family Values*

Historiographical Essay: James Chappell, “Modern Family,” *Dissent Magazine*, Summer 2017, <https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/family-values-melinda-cooper-review/>

November 29

No Class – Thanksgiving

December 6

Carl Shorske, *Fin de Siecle Vienna*

Historiographical Essay: Alex Ross, “The Schorske Century,” *The New Yorker* <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/the-schorske-century>