

**HST 300**  
**The Historical Imagination**  
**Fully online course**  
**Fall 2019**

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**Office hours Friday 11:30 - 1**

**COURSE OVERVIEW**

This class serves as an introduction to the history major, examining the production and uses of historical scholarship. In this course, we will look at the process of finding and using various kinds of historical sources, different approaches to constructing historical narratives, the study of historiography, and the uses of history. **This is a reading and writing intensive course.** Successful completion of this course will prepare students for the rigors of upper-level history coursework and for success in history research seminars.

**HOW TO REACH ME**

You can email me at [lrobson@pdx.edu](mailto:lrobson@pdx.edu) and I will do my best to respond within 24-48 hours on weekdays. I am also happy to arrange to talk over the phone.

I hold office hours on Fridays from 11:30 - 1:00; you do not need an appointment, just drop by. If you'd like to talk in person and can't make it during office hours, email me and we can set up a different meeting time.

**COURSE MATERIALS**

Eric Hobsbawm, *On History*

Wendy Pojmann, Barbara Reeves-Ellington, and Karen Ward Mahar, *Doing History: An Introduction to the Historian's Craft*

Additional readings will be available on D2L; the readings for the two long papers will be available on reserve at Millar Library. Please note that if you are unable to physically access the PSU library you will need to find these texts on your own; be sure to leave yourself plenty of time to do so.

## GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments for this course consist of weekly discussion posts and replies to your colleagues; eight short response papers (750 words, about three pages each); and two longer papers (1300-1500 words, about five to six pages each). Both long papers are required, but I will count only seven of the eight short response papers towards your final grade (that is, I will drop your lowest short paper score).

Each week we will read a set of historiographical pieces discussing a particular methodology, accompanied by a matched primary and secondary source that serves as a concrete example of each method. In general, the discussion posts and replies will focus on historiography, and the short response papers will analyze the primary/secondary source readings. The two long papers are an opportunity to step back and think about historical analysis in a broader and more comparative context.

Our weeks will be organized as follows:

<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Monday</b>
Read and think about course materials for the week	First discussion post due - 75-100 words due by 12 noon	2 discussion reply posts due - 25-50 words each due by 5 pm	Paper due by 5 p.m. - either a short essay or the longer papers at weeks 5 and 10.

### Grading:

Discussion posts and replies: 15%

Short essays: 40%

Long essay #1 (week 5): 20%

Long essay #2 (week 10): 25%

### Guide to discussion posts and replies:

This component of the course is intended to expand and enhance your learning experience through an active, ongoing, and intellectually stimulating conversation. Just as in face-to-face discussions, the onus is on you as students and colleagues to help create a vibrant intellectual atmosphere.

Discussion posts should be between 75-100 words and should address the questions posed in the syllabus **with reference to the readings**. These are not forums for personal opinions; they are a way of thinking through the issues raised in the texts. Posts that do not reference the reading material for that week will not receive ANY credit. All discussion posts should be

formally written – no fragments, abbreviations, emoticons, or other casual, non-academic modes of expression.

You are required to post replies to two of your colleagues' postings the following day. These may be very short (25-50 words) but should engage substantively with a specific point raised in the original post. Remember that profitable discussion requires that you consistently demonstrate a respectful attitude towards your colleagues, especially when discussing controversial topics.

#### Guide to short papers:

The weekly short papers should be between 650-700 words, not including the header (about 2-3 double-spaced pages); do not go over the prescribed word count. They should be double-spaced and in 12-point font.

In the header, include your name, word count, and full bibliography-style citations for the secondary source(s) under discussion. (Since the primary sources we are reading are mainly short excerpts, you do not need to cite them in the header here.) For example, for week 2 your header would read as follows:

Jane Doe

672 words

Hall, Jonathan. "International Relations." In *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare, vol. 1: Greece, the Hellenistic World and the Rise of Rome*, ed. Philip A. G Sabin et al, 85-107. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

This is a formal writing assignment so papers should be well organized and proofed before they are submitted. Direct quotations should always be cited, and paraphrased information should also be attributed to a source. Historians normally use Chicago style citations; for guidance and examples, see the style guide at

[http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html).

These essays should clearly state an *argument* (the main analytical point you are trying to make) supported by *evidence* (the content in the readings that has led you to your conclusions). Note that saying something is important, or significant, or had a major impact, is not by itself an argument. You need to make a substantive analytical point in these essays that seriously and thoughtfully answers the questions posed on the syllabus for that week.

#### Guide to long papers

The two long papers should be between 1300-1500 words (roughly 5-6 double-spaced pages) and will take the place of a midterm and final in this course. These papers are due in weeks 5 and 10.

Like the short papers, these should clearly state an argument and follow it up with evidence drawn from the readings. They should be formally written, well organized, and include proper Chicago-style footnotes. You do not need to include a bibliography, but your footnotes should be complete and correct. Consult the Chicago style guide if you need examples of how to do this.

### **ACADEMIC CODE OF CONDUCT**

Plagiarism, cheating or other dishonest approaches to your work in this course will not be tolerated. Evidence of any sort of academic dishonesty will result in a grade of zero for the assignment in question. If you are not sure what constitutes plagiarism or academic dishonesty, please consult PSU's Code of Conduct (<http://www.pdx.edu/dos/conductcode>) or come to my office hours to discuss it with me.

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### **CLASS SCHEDULE**

#### **Week 1: introduction to the discipline, and each other!**

##### Readings

Historiography:

- E. H. Carr, "What Is History?" (D2L)
- Hobsbawm, *On History*
  - o "Outside and Inside History"
  - o "The Sense of the Past"
- *Doing History*, chapter 1

1<sup>st</sup> DISCUSSION (post due Wed 10/2 by 12 noon; no replies necessary this week, but please be sure to read through all the introductions) Introduce yourself to your colleagues and to me: name, major, particular intellectual interests, reasons for studying history. What fields are most intriguing to you? Do you speak any other languages? What are you hoping to do?

1<sup>st</sup> SHORT RESPONSE PAPER (due Mon 10/7 by 5 pm): What do historians mean when they talk about primary and secondary sources? What are some examples of each type of source? What is "historiography" and what is its purpose?

#### **Week 2: diplomatic and political history**

## Readings

Historiography:

- *Doing History*, chapter 2

Primary source:

- Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War* (D2L)

Secondary source:

- Jonathan Hall, "International Relations," in *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare, vol. 1: Greece, the Hellenistic World and the Rise of Rome*, ed. Philip A. G Sabin et al (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 85-107 (D2L)

2<sup>nd</sup> DISCUSSION: (post due Wed 10/9 by 12 noon, responses due Thurs 10/10 by 5 pm): What kinds of questions do political historians focus on? What kind of primary sources do they use?

2<sup>nd</sup> SHORT RESPONSE PAPER (due Mon 10/14 by 5 pm): What kinds of institutions appear in Hall's piece? How does he make use of sources like Thucydides? Who are his main actors? Who is visible and who is invisible in this kind of analysis?

## **Week 3: economic history**

### Readings

Historiography:

- Hobsbawm, *On History*
  - o "What Do Historians Owe to Karl Marx?"
  - o "Marx and History"
- *Doing History*, chapter 3

Primary source:

- Karl Marx, excerpts from various works (D2L)

Secondary source:

- J.A. Hobson, "The 'New Imperialism'"; Rosa Luxemburg, "Capitalism Depends on the Non-Capitalist World"; and V.I. Lenin, "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism, in *European Imperialism 1830-1930*, ed. Alice L. Conkin and Ian Christopher Fletcher (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999) (D2L)

3<sup>rd</sup> DISCUSSION (post due Wed 10/16 by 12 noon, responses due Thurs 10/17 by 5 pm): Why is Marx so important to economic historians? What are the basic assumptions of economic history?

3<sup>rd</sup> SHORT RESPONSE PAPER (due Mon 10/21 by 5 pm): How do Hobson, Lenin, Gandhi, and Luxemburg understand modern empire in economic terms? What are the differences among their economic explanations of European imperial expansion?

## **Week 4: social history**

### Readings

Historiography:

- Hobsbawm, *On History*
  - o "From Social History to the History of Society"
  - o "On History from Below"
- Johnson, "Looking Back at Social History" (D2L)
- *Doing History*, chapter 4

Primary source:

- W.C. Cooke-Taylor, *Notes of a Tour in the Manufacturing Districts of Lancashire* (D2L)

Secondary source:

- E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1964) (D2L)

4<sup>th</sup> DISCUSSION QUESTION (post due Wed 10/23 by 12 noon, responses due Thurs 10/24 by 5 pm): How is social history different from political and economic history, and when and why did it arise as a field?

4<sup>th</sup> SHORT RESPONSE PAPER (due Mon 10/28 by 5 pm): What makes Thompson's book social history? How is his approach different from either political or economic history approaches? What sources is he using, and who are his main actors?

## **Week 5: Comparing methods, first long response paper**

1<sup>st</sup> LONG RESPONSE PAPER (due Mon 11/4 by 5 PM): Listed below are three books that all deal in some way with the First World War. Identify which schools of historical methodology each of them represents (political, economic, social). How do you know? Who are the main actors in each? What kinds of historical questions do they ask and answer? What kinds of sources do they use? How do they differ from each other?

*Hint:* be sure to look at their footnotes!!

List of works (all available on library reserve):

Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (New York: Vintage, 1989) (focus on chapter 5)

Eugene Rogan, *The Fall of the Ottomans: The Great War in the Middle East* (New York: Basic Books, 2015)

Leila Fawaz, *A Land of Aching Hearts: The Middle East in the Great War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2014)

## **Week 6: gender history**

### Readings

Historiography:

- Joan Scott, "Gender as a Useful Category of Analysis" (D2L)
- Hobsbawm, *On History*
  - o "Identity History Is Not Enough"
- *Doing History*, chapter 5

Primary source:

- Qasim Amin, *The Liberation of Women* (D2L)

Secondary source:

- Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992) (D2L)

5<sup>th</sup> DISCUSSION (post due Wed 11/6 by 12 noon, responses due Thurs 11/7 by 5 pm): What does it mean to use gender as an analytical category? Is this a useful exercise?

5<sup>th</sup> SHORT RESPONSE PAPER (due Mon 11/11 by 5 pm): Who are Ahmed's main actors here? How is she using Amin's work? Is this a work about the actual lives of women? If not, what makes it a gender history?

## **Week 7: cultural history and the question of narrative**

### Readings

Historiography:

- Hobsbawm, *On History*
  - o "On the Revival of Narrative"
- *Doing History*, chapter 6
- Foucault interview (D2L)

Primary source:

- John Williams, *The Redeemed Captive* (D2L)

Secondary source:

- John Demos, *The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from Early America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995) (D2L)

6<sup>th</sup> DISCUSSION (post due Wed 11/13 by 12 noon, responses due Thurs 11/14 by 5 pm): What is cultural history? Why is it so concerned with questions of narrative and storytelling?

6<sup>th</sup> SHORT RESPONSE PAPER (due Mon 11/18 by 5 pm): What are the unusual aspects of Demos' stylistic approach? What sources is he using? Why is he choosing to include fictional aspects and imaginative devices in his writing? Do you find this a convincing approach?

### **Week 8: Orientalism and postcolonial thought**

#### Readings

Historiography:

- Wilson, *History in Crisis* (D2L)

Primary source:

- Gustave Flaubert, *Flaubert in Egypt* (D2L)

Secondary sources:

- Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978) (D2L)
- Irwin, *Dangerous Knowledge: Orientalism and its Discontents* (Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 2006) (D2L)

7<sup>th</sup> DISCUSSION (post due Wed 11/20 by 12 noon, responses due Thurs 11/21 by 5 pm): What is distinctive about postcolonial theory? What are the questions it investigates? What are its main assumptions?

7<sup>th</sup> SHORT RESPONSE PAPER (due Mon 11/25 by 5 pm): What is Said's main argument in *Orientalism*? How is he making use of Foucault's ideas? What problems does Irwin have with his analysis?

### **Week 9: environmental history**

#### Readings

Historiography:

- Donald Worster, "Transformations of the Earth" (D2L)

Primary source:

- Theodore Roosevelt, "Guard the Public Lands" (D2L)

Secondary source:

- William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness," in *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, ed. William Cronon (New York: W. W. Norton, 1995), 69-90 (D2L)

8<sup>th</sup> DISCUSSION QUESTION (post due Wed 11/27 by 12 noon, NO RESPONSES DUE THIS WEEK) What is environmental history? What kinds of sources do environmental historians use?

8<sup>th</sup> SHORT RESPONSE PAPER (due Mon 12/2 by 5 pm): What are the implications of Cronon's argument? Who is he critiquing in this piece?

## **Week 10: The role of historians and the political present, second long response paper**

LONG RESPONSE PAPER (due Mon 12/9 by 5 PM): Choose three sources from the list below and examine how they make use of historical analysis to understand the present. What kinds of lessons do these authors think can be drawn from historical analysis? What kinds of historical analyses do they see as problematic?

List of works (all available on library reserve):

Leila Ahmed, *A Quiet Revolution: The Veil's Resurgence from the Middle East to America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011)

Timothy Garton Ash, *Facts Are Subversive: Political Writing from the Decade Without a Name* (London: Atlantic, 2009)

William Cronon, *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (New York: Norton, 1996)

Tony Judt, *Reappraisals: Reflections on the Forgotten Twentieth Century* (New York: Penguin, 2008)

Rashid Khalidi, *Resurrecting Empire: Western Footprints and America's Perilous Path in the Middle East* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004)

Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008)

Naomi Oreskes, *Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2010)

Timothy Snyder, *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century* (New York: Tim Duggan Books, 2017)