HIST 4903 ‘Historiography’ – Fall 2018
Slot 73 – Wednesdays at 7 p.m., BAC 401

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Office hours: Tuesdays, 11:30 to 12:30 and 2:00 to 5:00
Wednesdays, 4:30 to 6:30
Thursdays, 9:00 to 10:00 and 11:30 to 1

Acknowledgement

Acadia University is located in the ancestral territory of Mi’kma’ki, and this course is being offered on unceded Mi’kmaw land.

Course description

This seminar course will examine historiography which, briefly defined, is the methodology and practice of doing history. In that sense, this course will be different from the other courses you have taken for your major, which have focused on history; this one will focus on how history has been undertaken in the past and is undertaken today.

Readings

There is one required text for this course:


Other readings will be posted on ACORN, available in the library, or distributed by the professor. Students are expected to have read the assigned readings before the relevant class and to participate in the seminar.

Evaluation

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<tr>
<th>Evaluation Item</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Four presentations and write-ups</td>
<td>Throughout the term</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Historical film review</td>
<td>December 5</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay or take-home exam</td>
<td>December 6</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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<td>15%</td>
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Presentations

1. **Presentations through the term (5% and 3x15%)** – Each student will make four presentations on historians, schools of history and/or specific books. The 5- to 10-minute presentations may be illustrated and – except for the first presentations on September 12th – must be followed by a 750-word write-up by Friday at midnight, two days after the presentation. A sign-up sheet will be circulated.

2. **Historical film review (5%)** – On the last night of class, each student will give a 7- to 10-minute presentation on a historical film, discussing the director’s historiographical approach, the techniques used to create a historical mood, and (if you like) any glaring anachronisms that appear in the film. No write-up is required.

Essay or Take-Home Exam (30%)

The essay option for this course is a practical application of one historiographical approach to your thesis topic (actual or proposed). This approach must be different from the one you are taking in your formal thesis, but it should be plausible enough to make a convincing paper. For example, if your thesis looks at child labour laws and Cape Breton coal mines in the early 20th Century from a Marxist perspective, you might choose to write your essay from the perspective of gender, political or social history. The essay will be an introduction to your alternate thesis and should include a summary of the narrative, a broad description of the primary sources you plan to use, and – most important – a discussion of the relevant historiography. The first two elements may change considerably from your real thesis, depending on which approach you choose. I would also like you to “create” one or two sources – primary and secondary – taking care to keep within the bounds of plausibility. The essay should be between 15 and 25 pages long (roughly the length of your thesis chapter).

The take-home exam option is aimed at those who are not writing a thesis this year and are not settled on a topic for a future thesis, or even the idea of writing one. The exam is based on applying theoretical approaches to historical writing. Whether you choose the alternate thesis introduction or the take-home exam, it is due in the ACORN folder by midnight on December 6th.

Deadlines and Academic Integrity

Assignment due dates are indicated in the syllabus. The penalty for late submissions is 5% per day, every day.

Copying someone’s ideas or words without acknowledging their source constitutes academic dishonesty and can result in severe penalties, including failure of the course. Severe penalties will also be incurred in cases where work is purchased, “shared,” or submitted to more than one instructor. To learn more about plagiarism, please take the “You Quote It, You Note It” tutorial on the library website. You may also consult pp. 50-51 of the Acadia Calendar for more details, or ask me if you have any questions.

Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with documentation for accommodations who anticipates needing supports or accommodations, please contact Accessible Learning Services at 902-585-1823, disability.access@acadiau.ca. Accessible Learning Services is located in Rhodes Hall.
Class Schedule

September 5: Introduction

September 12: What is a historiographical debate? And presentations on old historians (worth 5%)
  • Taylor, ‘War Origins Again,’ Past & Present 30 (Apr. 1965) 110-13
  • Fritz Fischer’ on Wikipedia

September 19: Marx 1
  • Alexander Marshall, “Lenin’s Imperialism Nearly 100 Years on: An Outdated Paradigm?” Critique 42.3 (July 2014): 317-33

September 26: The Annales

October 3: Marx 2

October 10: Social History
  • Eley, “Optimism,” 13-60.
October 17: Failed paths

October 24: Postmodernism

October 31: Gender and Sexuality

November 7: Cultural History
- Eley, “Disappointment, Reflectiveness, and Defiance,” 61-203

November 14: Study day – no classes

November 21: Environmental History

November 29: Indigenous History

December 6: Movie night!