

## HISTORICAL METHODS

Just as a balance between oppression and liberation constructs identity for a person, so the same may be true of a social system. Here you can hardly do without **history** as a discipline, because it's the means by which a culture sees beyond the limits of its own senses. It's the basis, across time, space, and scale, for a wider view. A collective historical consciousness, therefore, may be as much a prerequisite for a healthy well-rounded society as is the proper ecological balance for a healthy forest and a healthy planet.

Gaddis, *Landscape of History*, pp. 148-149

History 5104, Fall 2009, Monday 5-8 pm, Major Williams 427

Professor Tom Ewing

Office hours: Tuesday 10-11, Thursday 12-1, and by appointment

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This course is intended to introduce students to the study of history at the graduate level. Examining the study of history as a process of interpretation, students will explore the variety of ways in which an understanding of the past contributes to the development of critical thinking. The course also looks at the question of how historians study history. Working collectively as well as individually, students will read broadly in historical literature, develop investigative strategies, evaluate scholarship, and write, rewrite, and critique analytical and interpretive papers. Finally, this course explores the future of history, including the ways in which changes in theoretical approaches, cognitive sciences, social structures, and technological applications have created new opportunities as well as new obligations for historians.

### ASSIGNED BOOKS:

John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History* Longman, 4th edition, 1405823518

John Lewis Gaddis, *The Landscape of History* Oxford UP, 0195171578

Michel Foucault, *The Foucault Reader* Pantheon Books, 978-0394713403

Natalie Zemon Davis, *Trickster Travels* Hill & Wang, 978-0809094356

Eric Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America* Oxford UP, 978-0195174854

Joan W. Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* Columbia UP, 0231118570

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

#### Assignment

Response papers, leading discussions, peer reviews, and class participation

#### Proportion of grade

25%

#### Due date

Papers (3 @ 4-6 pages each)

September 11, October 9, October 30

50%

Presentation and final paper (10 pages)

December 10

25%

Additional readings will be announced at least a week prior to their assigned day, and will be available through Scholar or the library. Response papers (approximately 500 words) are due by 2 pm on the day of class. Please send them as email messages or attachments to the class list through Scholar. Students will lead discussion at least twice during the semester. Discussion leaders should also provide the instructor and the class with an outline of topics and a list of questions by 2 pm on the day of the class.

Paper assignments will be distributed ahead of time in class, usually ten days before the paper is due.

Papers will cover the assigned readings. Additional readings may be addressed, but are not required.

Students will be expected to complete peer reviews of the short papers.

The final paper will be a 10 page reflection on the question: **Why study history?** The final paper may include elements of the first three papers as well as response papers. Each student will select a reading for the class and make a short presentation that addresses this question during class sessions in November.

During October, second year students in the History MA program will present their thesis proposals. Students enrolled in Historical Methods are required to read these proposals, participate in discussions, and write a one page response to be distributed to the second year students.

**SCHEDULE OF CLASSES:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic and Assignment</b>	<b>Reading</b>
August 24	Introduction: Why Study History?	
August 31	Great Thoughts about History	AHA Presidential Addresses, from <i>American Historical Review</i> or <a href="http://www.historians.org/">www.historians.org/</a> : Hart (1909), Becker (1932), McIlwain (1936), Read (1949), Franklin (1979), Curtin (1984), Tilly (1994), Appleby (1997), Foner (2001), Spiegel (2009)
September 7	The Study of History	Gaddis, <i>Landscape of History</i>
	<b>Paper due September 11</b>	
September 14	Historical Thinking	Tosh, <i>Pursuit of History</i> , Ch. 1-6
September 21	Lives and Boundaries	Davis, <i>Trickster Travels</i>
September 28	Ideas in Context	Foner, <i>Tom Paine</i>
October 5	Rethinking Biographies	AHR forum: Historians and Biography (2009)
	<b>Paper due October 9</b>	
October 12	Society / History	Tosh, <i>Pursuit of History</i> , Ch. 7-11
October 19	Power / Knowledge	<i>Foucault Reader</i>
October 26	Gender / History	Scott, <i>Gender</i>
	<b>Paper due October 30</b>	
November 2	History in the Classroom	Sam Wineburg, "Crazy for History," "Famous Americans" and "Historical Thinking"
November 9	Presentations	Readings assigned by students
November 16	Presentations	Readings assigned by students
November 30	Professional History	AHA, <i>Education of Historians</i> (selections) Other readings TBA
December 7	History's Futures	Readings TBA
	<b>Final Paper due December 10</b>	