

## 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 springs from the human fascination with self-discovery, from the persistent concern about the nature of existence and people's engagement with it. Men and women have learned to externalize this curiosity—even to distance themselves from its impertinent subjectivity—by directing their questions to concepts and abstractions like the growth of democracy or the ascendancy of modernity, but the renewable source of energy behind these inquiries comes from an intense craving for information about what it is to be human.

Appleby, Hunt, and Jacob, *Telling the Truth about History*, pp. 306-307.

History 5104, Fall 2007, Wednesday 2-5 pm

Professor Tom Ewing

Office hours: Wednesday 10-12, Thursday 12-2, 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. Working collectively as well as individually, students will develop interpretive strategies, evaluate historical literature, and write, critique, and rewrite analytical papers. This course explores history's future, including changes in society, education, and technology which create new opportunities as well as new obligations for historians.

### Course Objectives:

- To identify, recognize, and develop skills of historical analysis
- To build a theoretical vocabulary relevant for historiographical discussions
- To work collaboratively with classmates to strengthen analytical capacities
- To write critically engaged interpretive papers addressing historical questions
- To acquire expertise necessary for successful completion of the MA program

### ASSIGNED BOOKS:

Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacob, *Telling the Truth about History* (WW Norton, 1995)

John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History* (Longman, 2006, 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> edition)

John Lewis Gaddis, *The Landscape of History. How Historians Map the Past* (Oxford UP, 2002)

Keith Jenkins, *Refiguring History: New Thoughts on an Old Discipline* (Routledge, 2002)

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Assignment		Proportion of grade
Response papers, Discussion facilitation, Peer reviews, and Class participation		20%
	<b>Due date</b>	
Papers (3 @ 4-6 pages each)	September 10, October 1, November 5	60%
Presentation and paper (10 pages)	December 5	20%

Response papers (approximately 500 words) are due by 9 am on the day of class. Please send them as email messages or attachments to the class list through Blackboard. Students will lead discussion at least twice during the semester. On the Monday prior to the class being led, discussion leaders must provide two additional readings (approximately 25-50 pages) relevant to the assigned reading. These readings should relate to the

issues, sources, and authors covered in the assigned reading. These readings should be made available in electronic format to the instructor, who will post them on Blackboard and link them to the online syllabus each week. Discussion leaders should also provide the instructor with a list of question and an outline of topics by Wednesday morning, which will be copied and distributed in 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. 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 make a short presentation that addresses this question during class sessions in November.

During October, second year students will present their thesis proposals during the Historical Methods course. Students enrolled in Historical Methods are required to read these proposals, participate in the discussion, and write a one page response to be returned to the second year students.

In addition to the assigned topics, this course will address a number of strategies, policies, and approaches relevant to studying history at the graduate level, including, but not limited to, the following: Research in libraries and archives, Ethical Issues; Conference presentations and participation; Public history; Writing and Editing strategies; Professional development; Instructional technology; Seeking funding for historical research; Teaching history; Politics and history; Foreign language competency; Applying for further graduate study; Seeking Employment; and Thesis processes.

#### SCHEDULE OF CLASSES:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic and Assignment</b>	<b>Reading</b>
August 22	Introduction: Why Study History?	
August 29	The Study of History	Gaddis, <i>Landscape of History</i>
September 5	Historical Thinking <b>Paper due September 10</b>	Tosh, <i>Pursuit of History</i> , Ch. 1-2
September 12	Source Analysis	Tosh, <i>Pursuit of History</i> , Ch. 3-4
September 19	Truth in History	Appleby, Hunt, and Jacob, <i>Telling the Truth</i>
September 26	Historical Interpretation <b>Paper due October 1</b>	Tosh, <i>Pursuit of History</i> , Ch. 5-6
October 3	Society / History	Tosh, <i>Pursuit of History</i> , Ch. 7-8
October 10	Counting History	Tosh, <i>Pursuit of History</i> , Ch. 9
October 17	Theory in History	Jenkins, <i>Refiguring History</i> Tosh, <i>Pursuit of History</i> , Ch. 10
October 24	Oral History	Tosh, <i>Pursuit of History</i> , Ch. 11
October 31	History in the Classroom <b>Paper due November 5</b>	Sam Wineburg, "Reading Abraham Lincoln," <i>CS</i> (1998); "On the Reading of Historical Texts," <i>AERJ</i> (1991); "Historical Thinking," <i>PDK</i> (1999)
November 7	Presentations	Readings TBA
November 14	Presentations	Readings TBA
November 28	Digital History	<i>Digital History Reader</i> <i>History Matters / World History Matters</i>
December 5	History's Futures <b>Paper due December 5</b>	Readings TBA

