“For History, as you know, is a very ticklish business. Its principal purpose being the discovery of truth, the historian necessarily writes down hearsay evidence, unless he was himself an eyewitness to the events. If it is hearsay, you know how little one can trust the reports of others and how everyone present thinks so as to make his own party look good. If the historian was an eyewitness, we need only remember how, when a town is taken, each of the inhabitants speaks differently of the events of the siege, for it is impossible to be present on all sides at once during the attack. In addition, if you write of your own time, you have to flatter your Prince, to whom you owe more loyalty, or whom you fear.”

(Etienne Pasquier (1529-1615) Recherches de France).

“What then is truth? A movable host of metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred, and embellished, and which, after long usage, seems to a people to be fixed, canonical, and binding. Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions: they are metaphors that have become worn out and have been drained of sensuous force, coins which have lost their embossing and are now considered as metal and no longer as coins.”

(F. W. Nietzsche, “On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense”)

“History is history only insofar as it has not attained absolute discourse or absolute singularity, insofar as its meaning remains confused, mixed…. History is essentially equivocal, in the sense that it is virtually événementielle, concerned with events, and virtually structural. History is truly the realm of the inexact. This is not an empty discovery; it justifies the historian. It justifies him in relation to the difficulties that confront him. The historical method can only be an inexact method.” (Paul Ricoeur, Histoire de la philosophie et historicité, 1961).

“In delivering to his Cambridge audience in the early 1960s the series of sparkling and urbane lectures to which he gave the title “What is History?”, E.H. Carr did a valuable service in driving home in memorable language that history is not disembodied knowledge existing on library shelves, entirely detached from human activities. Carr’s advice that one should know the historian before going on to read the history was wise enough, though he made no attempt to analyze how different kinds of history are produced. He usually managed to end each lecture with the sort of phrase that sticks. History, he said at the end of the first lecture, ‘is an unending dialogue between past and present’. [A. Marwick in The New Nature of History (2001)]

“[T]he historian may content himself with an observation, which seems to be justified by experience, that man has much more to fear from the passions of his fellow-creatures, than from the convulsions of the elements” (Edward Gibbon, Decline & Fall, II, xxvi).
Course Materials:


Library Reserve and Electronic Reserve as assigned.

Seminar Objectives:
The seminar aims to prepare students to recognize styles of historical arguments, to evaluate the relative weight of different kinds of evidences or sources from the past, to detect whether accounts of the past are driven by narrative, by preconditions, or by theories, and, most of all, to discover the rich variety (among Western historians) of writing histories from Greek antiquity to the present. The seminar also addresses the problems of objectivity in history as raised by thinkers such as Nietzsche and lesser more recent critics. It seeks to help establish the divide in history between, on the one hand, theories and philosophies of history [written capital case “History”] and, on the other hand, the practice and uses of history [written lower case “history”]. In the seminar, we continually ask how history works as a means to understand past and present human realities as well as what is the role of the future in the historical questions which we ask.

In terms of advanced learning, this course will make it possible for a graduate student to pursue his or her interest in a particular way of doing history, a particular historian, or a particular school of history. The readings both in contemporary issues and in the long record of the writing of history are aimed to enable the student to situate and critique the writing of history by others and to enlarge her/his own understanding of the problems of knowing, criticizing, teaching, and writing history. On completing this seminar, one should be generally conversant on the topics and issues that are current in graduate history education in the USA. Because in our society a majority of people, among whom are students who take required history courses, have discovered or learned their history in films or on television, the seminar will begin with questions about history and films as considered by Rosenstone. Your first assignment will be a class presentations about a film/television production of a historical topic (Week 2) and an 800 word paper on your topic after the seminar discussion (Week 3). Then the seminar moves into a chronological review of historiography and theories of history from antiquity to the present. It reviews some major issues in contemporary historiography. Finally, students will present a term paper on an historian or topic in history.
FORMAT AND WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:

Most of the seminar meeting time will be spent discussing the assigned readings. Therefore, the vital components of the course are preparation and participation. It should go without saying that attendance at all meetings is necessary for doing well in the course.

Seminar members are asked to critique papers or assignments in writing or in oral seminar reports and to write a final seminar paper. Papers should be kept in a portfolio that each student and the instructor will review at the end of the seminar. In seminar meetings, I may give you additional readings and reference materials, which I shall place on e-reserve or the course web-page. The syllabus sets out the assignments for each class of the semester. As noted above, the major production for the seminar is your seminar paper which should be about twenty carefully researched pages. Specific guidelines and directions for the term paper will be forthcoming.

Calendar of Oral and Written Presentations.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>31/1</td>
<td>Oral presentation of historical film (with scenes if desired)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>7/2</td>
<td>800 word paper on topic of presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>4—9</td>
<td>14/2—28/3</td>
<td>3 questions each week</td>
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<td>1 20 minute oral presentation</td>
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<td>1 five page paper</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>10/3</td>
<td>1 page thoughts on term paper (may be e-mailed to me)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>28/3</td>
<td>Census of A.H.R.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>31/3</td>
<td>Progress Report on Term Paper (may be e-mailed to me)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10—11</td>
<td>4 &amp; 11/4</td>
<td>15 minute oral summary of 19th or 20th century historical issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>14/11</td>
<td>Term paper: draft, outline, bibliography, work to date?</td>
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<tr>
<td>12—15</td>
<td></td>
<td>Conferences, writing, and research</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>16/5</td>
<td>Finished paper to commentator and to instructor</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>18/5</td>
<td>Seminar: Commentators on papers and discussion</td>
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WEEKLY TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS:

**Week 1** (24 Jan.): Introduction to the Seminar:

(1) What do we mean by time, the past, memory, chronology, history?
(2) The ghost of Leopold Von Ranke’s *wie es eigentlich gewesen* (how it actually [essentially?] was).
(3) Some questions about, History, history, and historians.
(4) The vocabularies of historical study.
(5) Looking at history starts from questions about the Past, the Present, and the Future.

**Week 2** (31 Jan.): The Challenge of Film to our Idea of History

Assignments:  
(1) Bring Benjamin’s *Student Guide* to Seminar (read pp. 1-18)  
(2) Read Rosenstone, pp. 1-166.  
(3) In the chapter selected in the seminar meeting, prepare 3 (three) questions or observation for class discussion. [If you send these to me via E-mail by Monday at 12:00 noon, I shall post the questions on course’s page in the portal.
(4) **For Feb. 7. Film title for review.** On a film selected in consultation with me, write three pages (800 words) on the narrative and general approach of a historical based film or documentary. Terms from Rosenstone should be used generously in your description. For example, discuss the genre; note explicit or implicit approaches and categories; write about how the film “creates its world,” as described on pages 55-60; deal with montage, invention, compression, facticity or filmic truth, alteration, etc. This paper is primarily a viewer response summary and straight-forward narrative based on your first viewing of your film and your historical knowledge. Attention should be given to recounting what was on screen and how it was done. Make only what critical responses and critiques of the work as history based on what you know of the topic or can clearly detect as filmic embellishments. Rosenstone offers a good model for a basic summary of a film in his opening discussions for each of the films in section II or in comparisons of *Mississippi Burning* and *Glory*.

In writing (1) Try to consult at least three reviews of the film, (2) see if you can find filmic treatments of the historical subject (and/or time period), (3) see if there is/are books and/or articles on the historical topic of the film, (4) check on the availability of an article from a recent historical encyclopedia. If you can draw from an actual source, then bring the example to class. You may use a short scene from the film. Keep notes on the ways and places that you located sources to share with the seminar. Useful aid: Internet Movie DataBase: [http://us.imdb.com/](http://us.imdb.com/)

**Week 3 (7 Feb.) Discussion of Films and Beginning of Survey of Historiography**

**Assignments:** (1) Discuss and turn in papers on film with historical base

(2) Read Kelley, *Faces*, pp. 1x-18, and *Versions*, “Introduction”.

**Questions for discussion of Kelley’s “Introductions”**

a. What does Kelley present as the recurring issue in the Western tradition of historical inquiry?

b. What does Kelley mean when he writes that the study of history give us looks at worlds “incommensurable” with ours but at the same time “accommodated to a single intellectual community”?

For the next six weeks we read Donald Kelley’s *Versions* and *Faces of History*. Seminar members will be asked to report in seminar on an historian and/or a historical period, his (or at least mostly “his” since there are a couple of women in the readers) period of time, and his method of approach. Reports should be no longer than twenty minutes and should rise questions for additional discussion. In the week after the presentation, a written report of about five pages with additional resources on the topic should be handed in. Conferences with me as well as some additional research are advised for this paper.

**Week 4 (14 Feb.): The Greeks and the Beginning of History**


Three Questions for discussion.

**Week 5 (21 Feb.) Roman Historians & Christian Histories**

*Versions*, pp. 69- 117; *Faces*, Cs. 3 & 4, pp. 48-74.

Synopses and presentations on Historians

Three Questions for discussion
Week 6 (28 Feb.) Christian & Some Medieval Historians,
Versions, pp. 117-217; Faces, Cs. 4 & 5, pp. 75–129.
Synopses and presentations on Historians
Three Questions for discussion

Week 7 (7 March), ) Historians. Renaissance and Reformation
1. Versions, pp. 218-369; Faces, Cs. 6-7, pp. 130-187.
2. Synopses and presentations on Historians
3. Three Questions for discussion
4. One page suggestion for historiography term paper topic with short explanation for your choice.

SPRING BREAK—13—17 MARCH

Week 8 (21 March.) Science & Enlightenment
1. Versions, pp. 370-478; Faces, Cs. 8 & 9, pp.
2. Synopses and presentations on Historians
3. Three Questions for discussion

Week 9 (28 March) The Idea of Progress and Modern Historiography
1. Versions, pp. 478-504; Faces, Cs. 10 & Epilogue, pp. 250-274.
2. Assignments from e-reserve or class portal (Peter Novick, “Introduction” and “Objectivity Enthroned” from That Noble Dream: The ‘Objectivity Question’ and the American Historical Profession, 1-60.
3. Three Questions for discussion
4. Discussion and Census recent issues of the American Historical Review & History & Theory to be assigned and discussed in class.
5. Hand in short progress report on readings for term paper: three bibliographical items at least two being in periodicals or reviews by end of week.

Week 10 (4 April): The New “Historiography” of the Nineteenth Century
1. Truth About History, pp. 1—125.
2. Three Questions for discussion
3. E-reserve: Leopold von Ranke, Georg W.F. Hegel, Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche [Read all and Select one for in seminar summary]

Week 11 (11 April) Rise of Modern Historicism / of Postmodernism
3. E-reserve—Thomas Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (selections). Also, see http://www.emory.edu/EDUCATION/mfp/kuhn.html.
4. David A. Hollinger’s “T.S. Kuhn’s Theory of Science and Its Implications for History” from his In the American Province: Studies in the History and Historiography of Ideas (suggested)
5. Scheduled Conferences on drafts of papers
6. Three Questions for discussion
7. Working drafts/outlines of term paper
**Week 12** (18 April) Current Problems of Historical Studies

1. Peter Burke, *What is Cultural History?*
3. Scheduled Conferences on drafts of papers.

**Week 13** (25 April) The Future of History

1. Peter Burke, *What is Cultural History?*
3. Scheduled Conferences on drafts of papers.

**Week 14** (2 May) Review and Research Paper writing.

**Week 15** (9 May) No Seminar Meeting--Conferences

**Week 16**: (18 May) FINAL SEMINAR MEETING:

DISCUSSION OF PAPERS

1. Papers due to me and commentator on 16 May

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Hs 690: Graduate Seminar on Historiography

Seminar Paper

Spring 2006

Your seminar paper should be about twenty carefully researched and meticulously corrected pages. Here, I give you some of my thoughts on the paper to serve as a guide to selecting a topic and not as a formula for writing it. Your seminar paper's point of departure should be the writings, research techniques, critics, promoters, and influences of a major book, of an historian or group of historians, or a period. This book can be about a classic writer, such as Thucydides, Bede, Walter Raleigh, Voltaire, Marx, or Burckhardt, but should focus on a modern study of the writer and his/her place in historical writing. On the one hand, you might focus on problems of a certain kind of approach to history, such as political, romantic, or scientific history. On the other hand, you might consider comparing and/or contrasting historians of different periods and methods: their interpretations and the differences among time periods on what passed for history. I have been collecting works on many topics in historiography and the possibilities for paper topics will become clear (and be pointed out) as we progress through the seminar.
Primarily, I ask that in your research on a work or writer you select a topic with which you are engaged and that you consider perspectives, methods of approach, types of evidence, narrative techniques, guiding theories, theses, and influences. Different topics will present different questions, and I shall work closely with you in framing them, whether it is the question of the quality of history, the place of the book/author in historiography, the context in which the book was written, or its reception among historians and general public. Another way to think about the paper is a way of analyzing an historian’s understanding of an event. ("Event" is broadly understood to be a person, period, process, institution, idea, or any other thing happening in time and having an impact on the way people construct their lives and make sense of their world.)

The paper should reflect interpretation, theories, vocabulary, and issues of this seminar. It is important that you critique the book’s method of approach and its place in historiography. The process of writing the paper is important, and the final grade for the paper will be determined in part on your outlines, drafts, research, and conversations with me that result in the final seminar paper.

Preparation for writing:

First decide on your book. Next, locate three (3) book reviews that substantially discuss your topic and make use of it. Also, find two other good general reference for your paper. Use periodicals and scholarly journals. Encyclopedias are of help as are specialized dictionaries such as those dealing with ideas and philosophy, technology, painting, music, and history. These sources should prepare you for comparing the book with other works on the topic, and you should locate at least three (3) books or articles that are on the topic of your book. The objective is to see where your work is situated in the historical literature on your particular topic. The reference section of the library is rich in ways to get at materials, and you should bring questions to me.

Mechanics and Style:

Follow the guidelines in Jules R. Benjamin’s A Student’s Guide to History and write in lucid and grammatically correct sentences. Remember that your writing is a formal piece of prose and colloquialisms are not appropriate. Be sure of spelling and use quotation marks and end notes when citing from sources. Have an opening paragraph that identifies your book in its time, place, and general context. This paragraph is usually the last thing one should write when doing a research paper. Then, give a more detailed account or analysis of the work (i.e., what made it important, what groups or ideas were most influenced or touched by it, what role it played in future events, why and how it is viewed today.). Seek to judge objectively according to evidence and the interpretations of historians. However, some empathetic understanding of the topic is also important in writing history, so keep some view as to whether your book gets at the issues of the period being written about and the questions that the present asks of that period. Your concluding paragraphs are the best place to offer more personal critiques of the issues and scholarship.

Format: All papers must be typed, double-spaced, with at least one inch -margins. The paper should be about 20 standard size pages. Include a cover page with title and a bibliography listing all sources and reviews, including materials obtained on the internet. Extensions are discouraged. Each seminar member will present a ten minute review and critique of another seminar member’s paper.
General sources to Historical and Historiographical Literature:


History and Theory


[Robert A. Rosenstone, “History in Images/History in Words: Reflections on the Possibility of Really Putting History onto Film,” 1173
David Herlihy, “Am I a Camera? Other Reflections on Films and History, 1186
Hayden White, “Historiography and Historiophoty,” 1193


Perspectives: American Historical Association Newsletter, passim.