HTST 690

Historiography and Theory of History

Course Description

The goal of this course is to expose students to a range of historical methodologies and epistemologies and to promote reflection on how historians' theoretical perspectives and methodological choices influence their formulation of research questions, their evaluation of evidence, and the construction of their arguments. Although some of the reading will be philosophical/theoretical, our discussions will include practical questions. How do our theories about history affect our research questions, our arguments, and how we teach? How have specific theoretical interventions influenced the politics and standards of practice within the historical profession? How have different approaches to history affected the production of historical knowledge across the globe? What are the practical implications of ideological divisions in the field? In other words, do different types of historians simply reach different conclusions or do they also ask different questions, use different types of evidence, and/or teach history differently? In adopting new approaches are we simply revising old conclusions or are we also expanding the scope of historical research?

Students are encouraged to try to relate our discussions to their own research projects, though I will also expect you to move outside of your comfort zone. Even if you find a particular historical approach or theory misguided, disturbing, or irrelevant to your own research project, I expect you to try to understand it on its own terms. Seminars will be run as scholarly workshops in which each person's perspective is heard and respected. We are not seeking ultimate truths.

There will be a particular focus on digital history and the practical skills that you will have to develop to conduct historical research in the digital age. Several assignments will require you to become familiar with a specific piece of software.

Course Policies

- Unless otherwise noted below, all assignments must be uploaded to D2L by 9 pm on the date the assignment is due.
- You must bring readings to class (either in print or digital form).
- For each essay, you must upload your sources to a shared folder on Zotero. More information will be provided in class.

Days and Times:
Mondays, 3:30–6:15 pm

Course Delivery:
In person, with one online, asynchronous session as noted below.

Purchase at bookstore:

Required:

- Anthony Grafton, *The Footnote: A Curious History*
- William H. Sewell, *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation*
- Hannu Salmi, *What is Digital History*
- Daniel Woolf, *A Concise History of History: Global Historiography from Antiquity to the Present*

Required, open-source, software:

- Zotero
- Tropy

Due Dates & Weighting

throughout term
Participation: 15%

October 3
Video Presentation (15 mins): 10%

October 12
Digital Tools Essay: 10%

individually scheduled
Paper 1 (4-5 pages): 15%

individually scheduled
Paper 2 (6 pages): 20%

December 16
Paper 3 (7-8 pages): 30%

Learning Outcomes

1. Be able to identify major historiographical terms and themes.
2. Be able to connect historiographical methods and techniques to specific times and places.
3. Develop scholarly writing techniques through an improved understanding of how historians craft their arguments.
4. Demonstrate improved critical thinking and analytical skills.
5. Become familiar with digital history, its tools, and its growing importance for historical research.
6. Become aware of new challenges and opportunities in the public presentation of historical knowledge.

Details on Methods of Assessment*

Assessment Method	Due Date	Weight	Description	Learning Outcome
Participation	throughout the term	15%	The success of any seminar rests on the active participation of all participants. Your grade for this component of the class will depend on the following factors: - The frequency of your contributions in class is less important than their quality. However, if you do not speak, you cannot do well. Please come talk to me early if you have any concerns about your ability to participate. - You must be able to demonstrate good understanding of the assigned readings. You must bring **marked-up** copies of the readings to class, and you must **refer to specific page numbers** when you raise a point about a reading. This will entail either printing the readings out or using digital means of highlighting, bookmarking and/or adding marginal notes. - Aim for critical analysis that goes beyond summary. Be prepared to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each argument. Although you can of course rely on past knowledge, I will look for an effort to expand your historical horizons. Please also read the **Inclusiveness, Accommodation, Privacy, and Conduct** section below.	1, 2, 4 and 5
Video Presentation: Digital Tools	October 3 (by class time) (pick your topic by September 26)	10%	This **15-minute, recorded** presentation will be an analysis of a digital research tool that might be useful for your thesis research or that you find particularly intriguing for future projects. Your goal will be to provide the class with a brief summary of how the tool works and what you might learn from using it that would be difficult to uncover in any other way. You may also choose a tool that would allow you to *present* your findings to a more public audience. We will discuss possibilities in class, but you a useful list of tools is available [here](#).) Each student will also be expected to **post at least two comments or questions about each of the other presentations** on a D2L discussion board. You must pick your digital tool by **September 26.** Please also see the note about Zotero citations below.	5, 6
Digital Tools Essay	October 12 (by 9 pm)	10%	Following up from your oral presentation, provide a 5-page analysis of the methodological advantages (and perhaps disadvantages) of deploying the digital tool you have chosen. Focus on how the tool changes the presentation or empirical research of history. Might it allow you to make your argument more interdisciplinary or more public? What are the advantages and disadvantages of this? Does the tool create opportunities to uncover information that was not previously accessible? Might it also flatten the argument by making it less culturally nuanced and more statistical? How might these dangers be avoided? Your analysis must **refer to at least one of the required readings and one historiographical text that you have found yourself**. These comments must go *beyond* simple praise. More instructions will be available in class. See the note about Zotero below.	3, 4, 5 and 6

Position Paper 1	Individually scheduled. Due at the start of class, one of the weeks between Week 2 & 5	15%	Write a position paper on one of the readings we have read before the Thanksgiving break. Your paper will be due before class, and you should be prepared to briefly summarize your argument when I call on you in class. (This is not a formal presentation. Just be ready to summarize what you've said in your position paper for the students who haven't read it.) For useful descriptions of how to write a position paper, see the "Useful Writing Links" section of my website. Please also see the note about Zotero below.	1, 2, 3, 4
Position Paper 2	Same as above, but for Week 7 and later.	20%	Instructions are the same as above, but this paper must focus on a reading from Week 7 on.	1,2, 3, 4
Position Paper 3	December 16 (by 9 pm)*	30%	In this paper, you will describe and defend the methodology that you plan to use for your thesis research. You will be graded on your ability to place your methodology within the spectrum of approaches common in your area of research. Along with any works of history that you'd like to mention to explain how your thesis will contribute to the creation of historical knowledge, you must reference at least **three readings** (either picked from the syllabus or self-sourced) that explicitly address historiographical or methodological challenges. Think of this as an extended version of the theory/method section of a standard research grant. (Note that this essay should not recycle things you've already said in the Digital Tools Essay, though you can of course mention these if they are critical to your methodology or if you have new thoughts about them.) More instructions will be available in class. See the note about Zotero below.	1, 2, 3, 4

*TWO IMPORTANT NOTES:

1) For each assignment (except for your participation grade), you must upload your citations to the shared Zotero folder. Instructions about how to do this will be delivered in class. You will need to use footnotes, but the Zotero folder will replace a bibliography.

2) If you wish, you may reverse the due dates for Position Papers 2 and 3. Just let me know in advance.

Grading Policies

You will be graded according to the percentage-to-letter-grade conversion scheme that has been adopted for use in all graduate courses in the Department of History. Final grades are reported to the registrar as letter grades and are calculated as a weighted score according to the percentages in the "Departmental Grading Scheme" below and the weighting in the table above.

Note that I frequently give split grades (an A/A-, for instance). When you receive a split grade, I am telling you that you are just barely squeaking into the higher of the two letter grades, and you will receive a numerical value that is at the bottom of the range of the higher grade. So if you receive an A, it will be calculated in D2L as 87%, but if you receive an A/A-, the value entered into the gradebook will be 85%. Both are As, but one is a little lower. Only full letter grades (so the higher of the two if you receive a split grade from me) will be reported on your transcript.

Extension Policy:

If you require an extension, please ask for it at least 5 days before the assignment is due. Late assignments that have not previously been given an extension will be docked half a letter grade.

Learning Technologies Requirements:

There is a D2L site for this course that contains relevant class resources and materials. We will also be exploring the use of various forms of software for the purposes of conducting historical research. (I will only ask you to use software that is open-source, free, or available through campus services.) You will require a computer and reliable access to the internet. If you would like to use my online office hours, you will also require a microphone compatible with your computer.

Inclusiveness, Accommodation, Privacy, and Conduct

I am committed to creating an inclusive learning environment for all registered students. If you have conditions or circumstances that require a formal accommodation, be sure to register with Student Accessibility Services as soon as possible. This service helps students with all disabilities, whether temporary, permanent, visible or invisible. If you face circumstances that require an informal accommodation or adjustment, such as the need to occasionally bring a child to class or the preference to be referred to by a different name or pronoun than the Registrar uses, please contact me by email or during office hours. To protect the privacy of others, students may not record in any format any activity that occurs within the classroom or online. As outlined in the University Calendar, permission to sound-record lectures will only be given to students registered with Student Accessibility Services.

I expect students to respect others and to contribute to productive classroom discussion. Differences of opinion are unavoidable aspects of scholarly debate. But I will not tolerate personal attacks, veiled insinuations, foul or discriminatory language, or claims to moral and/or scholarly superiority. Listening respectfully to and showing tolerance toward opposing viewpoints is part of the process of emerging from your university education as an active, engaged citizen.

Schedule

Readings with an asterisk are available for purchase in the bookstore. All other readings are available on D2L or (if you see a hyperlink) as an ebook in the library. Use the Leganto reading list, which is available under the "My Tools" menu.

Date	Topic and Reading	Important Dates (Individual due dates TBA)
September 5	**Week 1: Labour Day. No Class.** *Woolf, *A Concise History of History,* Introduction & Chs. 1–3.	
September 12	**Week 2: Introduction: What is History? What is Historiography?** Carl Becker, "What is Historiography?" *The American Historical Review* 44, no. 1 (October 1938): 20-28. R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History.* Rev. ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1994 [1946]), "Introduction" and "Epilegomena," 1-13 and 205-334. E. H. Carr, "Preface to the Second Edition," and "The Historian and His Facts," in *What Is History?* 2nd ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964 [1961]), 2-30.	Start thinking about the topics for your assignments, particularly the Video Presentation.
September 19	**Week 3: Post-Colonialism & Decoloniality** Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "Introduction: Seek Ye Epistemic Freedom First," in *Epistemic Freedom in Africa: Deprovincialization and Decolonization* (London and New York: Routledge, 2018), 1–41. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), Introduction (1-28), and 321-328. * Frantz Fanon, "Concerning Violence," in On Violence: A Reader, ed. Bruce B. Lawrence and Aisha Karim (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2007), 78–100. Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Introduction," in *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 1-23.	

September 26	**Week 4: Digital History** **Guests:** Elizabeth-Anne Johnson (Electronic Records Archivist) and Lelland Reed (Associate Librarian) from UCalgary Archives and Special Collections *Hannu Salmi, *What Is Digital History?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2021). Ian Milligan, *The Transformation of Historical Research in the Digital Age*, Elements in Historical Theory and Practice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022). As much as you can so that we can compare with Salmi. Jessica Marie Johnson, "Markup Bodies: Black [Life] Studies and Slavery [Death] Studies at the Digital Crossroads," *Social Text* 36, no. 4 (137) (December 1, 2018): 57–79.	Choose your topic for the Video Presentation by class time.
October 3	**Week 5: Video Presentations: Asynchronous Online Class** Your video presentations should be available for me and the other students to view by class time. Technical details TBA.	Upload your video presentations to D2L by class time.
October 10	**Week 6: Thanksgiving. No class.**	Oct. 12: Digital Tools Essay due.
October 17	**Week 7: History & the Cultural Turn** *William H. Sewell, *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2005), Ch. 1-6. Robert Darnton, "Workers' Revolt: The Great Cat Massacre and the Rue Saint Séverin," in *The Great Cat Massacre: And Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Vintage, 1985), 75–104.	
October 24	**Week 8: The Professionalization of History** **Guest:** Daniel Woolf. *Woolf, *A Concise History of History*, Chs. 4–6. Canadian Historical Association, *Statement on Research Ethics*. American Historical Association, *Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct.*	
October 31	**Week 9: Narrating Events and Experience** Hayden V. White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1975), Introduction. *Sewell, *Logics of History*, Chs. 7 and 8. Alon Confino, "Narrative Form and Historical Sensation: On Saul Friedländer's *The Years of Extermination*," *History & Theory* 48, no. 3 (2009): 199–219. Saul Friedlander, Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1939-1945: The Years of Extermination (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), excerpts.	
November 7	**TERM BREAK. No class.**	
November 14	**Week 10: Trauma, Testimony, and Public History** **Guests:** Christine Leppard (Manager, Exhibits & Experience) and Shannon Murray (Manager, Indigenous Engagement) from the Calgary Stampede. Alon Confino, "Introduction," in *Foundational Pasts: The Holocaust as Historical Understanding* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 1-18. Pier M. Larson, "Reconsidering Trauma, Identity, and the African Diaspora: Enslavement and Historical Memory in Nineteenth-Century Highland Madagascar," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 56, no. 2 (1999): 335-62. Cody Groat and Kim Anderson, "Holding Place: Resistance, Reframing, and Relationality in the Representation of Indigenous History," *The Canadian Historical Review* 102, no. 3 (2021): 465–84.	

November 21	**Week 11: Documenting Historical Arguments** *Anthony Grafton, *The Footnote: A Curious History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999). *The Chicago Manual of Style* (17th ed.), available as an ebook at our library.	
November 28	**Week 12: Non-Historians Doing History: What Can We Learn?** Stephen Jay Gould, "Measuring Bodies: Two Case Studies on the Apishness of Undesirables," in *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1981), 113–45. Kim TallBear, "Racial Science, Blood, and DNA," in *Native American DNA: Tribal Belonging and the False Promise of Genetic Science* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 31–66. Thomas Piketty, *A Brief History of Equality*, trans. Steven Rendall (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2022). At least up to p. 94.	
December 5	**Week 13: Who Makes the Past Present?** Reinhart Koselleck, "On the Disposability of History," in *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 1985), 192-212. Walter Benjamin, "On the Concept of History," and "Paralipomena to 'On the Concept of History,'" in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, ed. Michael W. Jennings et al., vol. 4, 1938–1940 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 389–411. (Originally written in 1940.) One self-found scholarly reading on history in public discourse today.	
		Dec. 16: Paper 3 due.

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION APPEARS ON ALL DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY COURSE OUTLINES

Departmental Grading System

The following percentage-to-letter grade conversion scheme is used in all History graduate level courses. See the university grading system in the calendar: https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/f-1-2.html.

Percentage	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	Description
90-100	A+	4.00	Outstanding performance
85-89	A	4.00	Excellent performance
80-84	A-	3.70	Very good performance
77-79	B+	3.30	Good performance
73-76	B	3.00	Satisfactory performance
70-72	B-	2.70	Minimum pass
67-69	C+	2.30	All grades of "C+" or lower are indicative of failure at the graduate level and cannot be counted toward Faculty of Graduate Studies course requirements. Individual programs may require a higher passing grade.
63-66	C	2.00	
60-62	C-	1.70	
56-59	D+	1.30	
50-55	D	1.00	
0-49	F	0	
	CR		Completed Requirements. Carries no weight in calculating the grade point average. This will be noted in the calendar description as "Not Included in GPA" where applicable.

Please Note: Students are expected to reach the grade range to receive that letter grade (ie. to receive an A- a student will have earned an 80 or 3.7 in the course). Assume that there will be no rounding up unless a faculty member announces otherwise.

Writing

All written assignments are assessed partly on writing skills. Writing skills include surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) and general clarity and organization. Research papers must be properly documented according to the format described in *The History Student's Handbook*.

Academic Misconduct

Academic Misconduct refers to student behavior which compromises proper assessment of a student's academic activities and includes: cheating; fabrication; falsification; plagiarism; unauthorized assistance; failure to comply with an instructor's expectations regarding conduct required of students completing academic assessments in their courses; and failure to comply with exam regulations applied by the Registrar.

For more information, please see the University of Calgary Student Academic Misconduct Policy documents, and visit the Academic Integrity Website.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs when students submit or present the ideas and/or writing of others as if they were their own or when they submit their own work to two different classes. Please see *The History Student's Handbook* for more details, but to summarize, plagiarism may take several forms:

- Failing to cite sources properly
- Submitting borrowed, purchased, and/or ghostwritten papers

- Submitting one's own work for more than one course without the permission of the instructor(s) involved
- Extensive paraphrasing of one or a few sources, even when referenced properly, unless the essay is a critical analysis of those works

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence, and written work that appears to contain plagiarized passages will not be graded. All such work will be reported to the Faculty of Art's associate deans of students who will apply the penalties specified in the university calendar.

Academic Accommodation

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations according to the Student Accommodations policy. Students needing an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities. Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than Disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor.

SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit Student Accessibility Services.

Research Ethics

Students are advised that any research with human participants – including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation – must have the approval of the Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board or the Conjoint Health Research Ethics Board. In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subjects research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required. Some courses will include assignments that involve conducting research with human participants; in these cases, the instructor will have applied for and received ethics approval for the course assignment. The instructor will discuss the ethical requirements for the assignment with the students.

Instructor Intellectual Property

Course materials created by instructors (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

Copyright Legislation

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright and requirements of the Copyright Act to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorised sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

Copyright of Educational Materials

The University of Calgary has opted out of the Access Copyright Interim Tariff proposed by the Copyright Board. Therefore, instructors in all University of Calgary courses will strictly adhere to Copyright Act regulations and the educational exceptions permitted by the Act for both print and digital course material. No copyrighted material may be placed on course D2L or web sites without the prior permission of the copyright holders. In some cases, this may mean that instructors will require you to purchase a print course pack from the University of Calgary bookstore or consult books on reserve at the library. Please see the University of Calgary copyright page.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy

Student information will be collected in accordance with usual classroom practice. Students' assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty and teaching assistants. Private information related to the individual student is treated with the utmost regard.

MEDIA RECORDING IN LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Media Recording for Study Purposes (Students)

Students who wish to audio record lectures for personal study purposes need to follow the guidelines outlined in Section E.6 of the University Calendar. Unless the audio recording of lectures is part of a student accessibility requirement, permission must be sought by the course instructor to audio record lectures.

Media recording for lesson capture

The instructor may use media recordings to capture the delivery of a lecture. These recordings are intended to be used for lecture capture only and will not be used for any other purpose. Recordings will be posted on D2L for student use and will normally be deleted at the end of term. Students are responsible for turning off their camera and/or microphone if they do not wish to be recorded.

Media recording for assessment of student learning

The instructor may use media recordings as part of the assessment of students. This may include but is not limited to classroom discussions, presentations, clinical practice, or skills testing that occur during the course. These recordings will be used for student assessment purposes only and will not be shared or used for any other purpose. The recording will be destroyed as specified by retention rule 2000.01 "Examinations and Student Assignments."

Media recording for self-assessment of teaching practices

The instructor may use media recordings as a tool for self-assessment of their teaching practices. Although the recording device will be fixed on the instructor, it is possible that student participation in the course may be inadvertently captured. The recording will be destroyed as specified by retention rule 98.0011 "Draft Documents & Working Materials."

Sexual Violence Policy

The University recognizes that all members of the University Community should be able to learn, work, teach and live in an environment where they are free from harassment, discrimination, and violence. The University of Calgary's sexual violence policy guides us in how we respond to incidents of sexual violence, including supports available to those who have experienced or witnessed sexual violence, or those who are alleged to have committed sexual violence. It provides clear response procedures and timelines, defines complex concepts, and addresses incidents that occur off-campus in certain circumstances. Please see the sexual and gender-based violence policy.

Other Useful Information

Please see the Registrar's Course Outline Student Support and Resources page for information on:

- Wellness and Mental Health
- Student Success
- Student Ombuds Office
- Student Union (SU) Information
- Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Information
- Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points
- Safewalk
- Campus Security 220-5333

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