

## MST3231H: Clio's workshop: history and historiographical methods

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... *History thus becomes an enterprise not primarily or exclusively about more or less teleological authoritative narratives of the past becoming the present, but a mode for thinking through or thinking with the integral variety of human cultural practices, generously, non-coercively, and, yes, in a utopian cast, if by utopian we mean, attainable, knowable, possible.*

- Adapted (replacing 'music' with 'history') from Edward Said, *Musical Elaborations*, p. 105.

*To illustrate all this, Saussure used as his famous example the 8.25 Geneva-to-Paris Express, which, as he pointed out, retained the same name and was considered the same train every day, even though its coaches, combination, crew and passengers were different every morning, most of the coaches did not go to Paris, and it usually left at 10.30.*

- Malcom Bradbury, *Mensonge*, p. 10.

No discipline in the social sciences or the humanities is more contested or explosive than history. History is invoked to justify revolutions and counterrevolutions, to explain cultural differences, to manufacture national identities, to excuse imperialism, war, and repression, to justify political cultures and economic systems, and so on. History is rarely, if ever, 'innocent': all historians select their themes and their sources in accordance with conscious or unconscious agendas which, more often than not, are dictated by contemporary preoccupations. It is therefore incumbent on the historian to reflect on the methodologies she uses, and to render explicit the underlying assumptions that inform his or her research; to engage, in short, in (to adapt Pierre Bourdieu's happy expression) 'reflexive history.'

This course has three objectives: (1) to help historians at CMS think reflexively about historical methodology by reading and discussing some key texts on the practice of history *in general*; (2) to introduce students to key texts and theories including those from cognate disciplines; and (3) to see how various methodologies work *in practice* by examining medievalist scholarship influenced by some of the theoretical approaches discussed in the course. Students should, by the end of the course, be equipped with a strong sense of various historical methods and theories that have been influential in the discipline and a familiarity with major works of scholarship in medieval history (and the history of other periods) approaching the subject from a range of perspectives.

### Assessment

It would be unreasonable to expect really incisive and original work with primary sources or historiographic essays providing truly original interventions on the nature of history and historical methods within the scope of a one-term course. The purpose of this course is, rather, to provide students with as thorough an overview of as many perspectives on the practice of history as possible. The class is thus structured more as a reading and discussion group and assessment is based on summaries and presentations of readings, as well as participation, rather than on a final historiographic essay or research paper.

#### 60% Book / article reports

Four critical summaries (*c.*4–6pp. single-spaced / *c.*2000–3000 words each) of a book or a selection of articles chosen over the course of four sessions to be circulated 24 hours in advance of the class. These should include the following elements as applicable: structure of the work reviewed; geographical and temporal scope; sources used; and a detailed, critical summary of the arguments presented. In the case of books, full references to at least three reviews should also be included. Students must also be prepared to discuss and answer questions on the works reviewed.

## 40% Participation

Active and engaged discussion in every session, based on a careful reading of the required text(s) and of the critical summaries by other students circulated beforehand.

### **Class schedule and readings**

#### *1: Introduction and course overview*

As suggested background reading, you may wish to go over the very brief overviews of historical writing from the nineteenth century onwards in Ernst Breisach, *Historiography: ancient, medieval, and modern*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (2007), and/or Daniel Woolf, *A concise history of history: global historiography from antiquity to the present* (2019). As an entertaining and highly readable means of reflecting on the interactions between concepts of fact and truth, gendered authority, institutional representations, and the public commitments of historical scholarship, I also strongly recommend Ariel Sabar, *Veritas: a Harvard professor, a con man, and the Gospel of Jesus's Wife* (2020).

#### *2: Doing history*

##### ONE of (a) and any ONE from (b) or (c)

(a)

Richard J. Evans, *In defence of history* (1997 or later edn), to be read in conjunction with the ensuing debates.

Ludmilla Jordanova, *History in practice*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (2018).

(b)

Marc Bloch, *The historian's craft* (1949; trans. Peter Putnam, 1953).

E. H. Carr, *What is history?* (1962).

R. G. Collingwood, *The idea of history*, rev. edn (1993).

G. H. Elton, *The practice of history*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (2002).

John Tosh (ed.), *Historians on history*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (2017).

(c)

Greg Anderson, *The realness of things past* (2018).

Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacob, *Telling the truth about history* (1995).

Donald Bloxham, *Why history? A history* (2020).

- *History and morality* (2020).

Richard J. Evans, *In defence of history* (1997 or later edn).

James L. Gaddis, *The landscape of history* (2004).

Martha Howell and Walter Prevenier, *From reliable sources: an introduction to historical methods* (2001).

Ludmilla Jordanova, *History in practice*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (2018).

Peter Novick, *That noble dream: the 'objectivity question' and the American historical profession* (1988).

Ulinka Rublack (ed.), *A concise companion to history* (2012).

John Tosh, *Why history matters*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (2019).

- *The pursuit of history: aims, methods, and new directions in the study of history*, 6<sup>th</sup> edn (2015).

#### *3. The Annales school*

##### All of (a) and any ONE of (b)

(a)

Peter Burke, *The French historical revolution: the Annales School, 1929–2014*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (2015).

Fernand Braudel, 'History and the Social Sciences: The Longue Durée', *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 32 (2009), 171–203.

Immanuel Wallerstein. 'Braudel on the Longue Durée: Problems of Conceptual Translation', *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 32 (2009), 155–70.

(b)

Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of childhood* (1960; trans. R. Baldwick, 1962).

Marc Bloch, *French rural history: an essay on its basic characteristics* (1931; trans. Janet Sondheimer, 1966).

Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean world in the age of Philip II* (1966; trans. by Siân Reynolds, 1995).

Jacque le Goff, *Time, work and culture in the middle ages* (1977; trans. by Arthur Goldhammer, 1980).

Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *The peasants of the Languedoc* (1966; trans. John Day, 1974).

Daniel Roche, *A history of everyday things: the birth of consumption in France, 1600–1800* (1997; trans. by Brian Pearce, 2000).

#### 4. *Marxism*

##### All of (a) and any ONE of (b)

(a)

Karl Marx, 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte [1851–2]', in *Marx: later political writings*, ed. and trans. Terrell Carver (1999), 31–127.

Matthew Perry, *Marxism and history* (2002).

(b)

Jairus Banaji, *Agrarian change in late antiquity*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (2007).

John Haldon, *The state and the tributary mode of production* (1994).

R. H. Hilton, *Bond men made free: medieval peasant movements and the English Rising of 1381* (1973).

- *Class conflict and the crisis of feudalism: essays in medieval social history*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (1992).

S. H. Rigby, *Marxism and history: a critical introduction* (1998).

E. P. Thompson, *The making of the English working class*, rev. edn (1968), chapters 6–10 and 16, along with the two articles listed below.

- 'Time, work-discipline, and industrial capitalism', *Past and Present* 38 (1967), 56–97.

- 'The moral economy of the English crowd in the eighteenth century', *Past and Present* 50 (1971), 76–136.

Chris Wickham, *Framing the early middle ages* (2005), chapters 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 11, 12.

Chris Wickham (ed.), *Marxist history-writing for the twenty-first century* (2007).

#### 5. *Economics*

##### ONE of (a) and ONE of (b)

(a)

Francesco Boldizzoni, *The poverty of Clio: resurrecting economic history* (2011).

John Hatcher and Mark Bailey, *Modelling the middle ages: the history and theory of England's economic development* (2001).

(b)

Jairus Banaji, *Agrarian change in late antiquity*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (2007).

Bas van Bavel, *The Invisible Hand? How market economies have emerged and declined since AD500* (2016).

S. R. Epstein, *An island for itself: economic development and social change in late medieval Sicily*.

- *Freedom and growth* (2000).

Richard Goldthwaite, *The economy of Renaissance Florence* (2009).

Jane Humphries, *Childhood and child labour in the British Industrial Revolution* (2010).

Sheilagh Ogilvie, *Institutions and European trade: merchant guilds, 1000–1800* (2011).

- *The European guilds: an economic analysis* (2019).

Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: Europe, China, and the making of the modern world economy* (2000).

E. P. Thompson, *The making of the English working class*, rev. edn (1968), chapters 6–10 and 16, along with the two articles listed below.

- 'Time, work-discipline, and industrial capitalism', *Past and Present* 38 (1967), 56–97.
- 'The moral economy of the English crowd in the eighteenth century', *Past and Present* 50 (1971), 76–136.

Jan de Vries, *The price of bread: regulating the market in the Dutch Republic* (2019).

Jane Whittle, *The development of agrarian capitalism: land and labour in Norfolk, 1440–1580* (2000).

Chris Wickham, *Framing the early middle ages* (2005), chapters 5, 7–12.

## 6. Nations, identity, tradition, memory

### All of (a), and ONE each from (b) and (c)

(a)

Rees Davies, 'The medieval state: the tyranny of a concept?', *Journal of Historical Sociology* 16 (2003), 280–300.

Eric Hobsbawm, 'The social function of the past: some questions', *Past and Present* 55 (1972), 3–17.

(b)

Aleida Assmann, *Cultural memory and western civilization: functions, media, archives* (1999; trans. 2011).

Jan Assmann, *Cultural memory and early civilization: writing, remembrance, and political imagination* (1992; trans. 2011).

Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origins and spread of nationalism*, rev. edn (2006).

Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds), *The invention of tradition* (1983).

Anthony D. Smith, *The ethnic origins of nations* (1986).

- *Myths and memories of the nation* (1999).

(c)

Gerd Althoff, Johannes Fried, Patrick J. Geary (eds), *Medieval concepts of the past: ritual, memory, historiography* (2002), chapters 1, 2, 5, 7, 8, 11.

Thomas Butler (ed.), *Memory: history, culture, and the mind* (1989).

James Fentress and Chris Wickham, *Social memory* (1992).

Patrick J. Geary, *The myth of nations: the medieval origins of Europe* (2003).

Andrew Gillett (ed.), *On barbarian identity: critical approaches to ethnicity in the early middle ages* (2002).

Marianne Hirsch, *Family frames: photography, narrative, and postmemory* (1997).

Pierre Nora, *Realms of memory*, 3 vols (1996–8).

Walter Pohl and Gerda Heydemann (eds), *Post-Roman transitions: Christian and barbarian identities in the early medieval West* (2013).

Anthony D. Smith, *Chosen peoples: sacred sources of national identity* (2003).

- *The antiquity of nations* (2004).

Ian N. Wood, *The modern origins of the early middle ages* (2013).

## 7. Sociology and historical sociology

### ONE of (a) and any ONE of (b)

(a)

Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a theory of practice* (1972; trans. Richard Nice 1977).

Max Weber, *The Protestant ethic and the 'spirit' of capitalism, and other writings*, trans. Peter Baehr and Gordon C. Wells (2002).

(b)

Perry Anderson, *Passages from antiquity to feudalism* (1974).

Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in education, society, and culture* (1970; trans. Richard Nice 1977; 2<sup>nd</sup> edn 1990).

David D'Avray, *Medieval religious rationalities: a Weberian analysis* (2010).

Emile Durkheim, *Elementary forms of religious life* (1912; trans. Karen E. Fields 1995).

- Michael Mann, *The sources of social power*, vol. 1: *A history of power from the beginnings to AD 1760* (1986).  
 Kevin J. Wanner, *Snorri Sturluson and the Edda: the conversion of cultural capital in medieval Scandinavia* (2008).  
 Anthony D. Smith, *The ethnic origins of nations* (1986).  
 - *Myths and memories of the nation* (1999).  
 - *Chosen peoples: sacred sources of national identity* (2003).  
 - *The antiquity of nations* (2004).

## 8. Women and gender

### All of (a) and any ONE of (b)

#### (a)

- Judith M. Bennett and Ruth Mazo Karras, 'Women, gender, and medieval historians', in J. M. Bennett and R. M. Karras (eds), *Oxford handbook of women and gender in medieval Europe* (2013), 1–17.  
 Joan Kelly, 'Did women have a Renaissance?', in J. Kelly, *Women, history, and theory: the essays of Joan Kelly* (1984), 19–50.  
 Dorothy Ko, 'Gender', in U. Rublack (ed.), *A concise companion to history* (2012), 203–25.  
 Joan W. Scott, 'Gender: a useful category of historical analysis', *American Historical Review* 91 (1986), 1053–75.

#### (b)

- Judith M. Bennett, *Women in the medieval English countryside: gender and household in Brigstock before the plague* (1987).  
 - 'Medievalism and feminism', *Speculum* 68 (1993), 309–31.  
 - *History matters: patriarchy and the challenge of feminism* (2006).  
 Judith M. Bennett and Ruth Mazo Karras (eds), *Oxford handbook of women and gender in medieval Europe* (2013).  
 Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy feast and holy fast: the religious significance of food to medieval women* (1987).  
 Elisabeth M. C. van Houts, *Memory and gender in medieval Europe, 900–1200* (1999).  
 Martha C. Howell, *The marriage exchange: property, social place, and gender in the cities of the Low Countries, 1300–1500* (1998).  
 Jane Humphries and Jacob L. Weisdorf, 'The wages of women in England, 1260–1850', *Journal of Economic History* 75, 2 (2015), 405–47.  
 Liz Herbert McAvoy, *Medieval anchoritisms: gender, space, and the solitary life* (2011).  
 Janet L. Nelson, *Courts, elites, and gendered power in the early middle ages: Charlemagne and others* (2007), I, II, V, X.  
 - *The Frankish world, 750–900* (1996), chapters 11, 12, 13.  
 - *Politics and ritual in early medieval Europe* (1986), pp. 1–48.  
 Rachel Stone, *Morality and masculinity in the Carolingian empire* (2012).  
 Merry Wiesner, *Working women in Renaissance Germany* (1986).  
 Heide Wunder, *He is the sun, she is the moon: women in early modern Germany* (1992; trans. Thomas Dunlap, 1998).

## 9. Anthropology

### Both articles in (a) and ONE each from (b) and (c)

#### (a)

- Clifford Geertz, 'Thick description: toward an interpretive theory of culture'; and 'Deep play: notes on the Balinese cockfight', both in *Interpretation of Cultures* (1973), 1–30; 412–53.

(b)

Arnold van Gennep, *The rites of passage* (1909; trans. Monika B. Vizedom and Gabriel L. Caffee, 1960).  
Marcel Mauss, *The gift* (1925; trans. Jane I. Guyer 2016).

Victor Turner, *The ritual process: structure and anti-structure* (1969).

James C. Scott, *Weapons of the weak* (1985).

(c)

Gerd Althoff, *Rules and rituals in medieval power games: a German perspective* (2020).

- *Family, friends, and followers: politics and social bonds in early medieval Europe* (1990; trans. Christopher Carroll, 2004).

Gerd Althoff, Johannes Fried, Patrick Geary (eds), *Medieval concepts of the past: ritual, memory, historiography* (2002), chapters 3 and 6.

Arnoud-Jan A. Bijsterveld, *Do ut des: gift-giving, 'memoria', and conflict management in the medieval Low Countries* (2007).

Philippe Buc, *The dangers of ritual: between early medieval texts and social scientific theory* (2001).

Simon Coleman and John Elsner, *Pilgrimage: past and present in world religions* (1995).

Wendy Davies and Paul Fouracre (eds), *The languages of gift in the early middle ages* (2010).

Jack Goody, *Production and reproduction: a comparative study of the domestic domain* (1977).

Jack Goody, Joan Thirsk, and E. P. Thompson (eds), *Family and inheritance: rural society in western Europe, 1200–1800* (1978).

William Ian Miller, *Bloodtaking and peacemaking: feud, law, and society in saga Iceland* (1990).

Victor Turner and Edith Turner, *Image and pilgrimage in Christian culture* (2011).

David Warren Sabean, *Property, production, and family in Neckarhausen, 1700–1870* (1990).

## 10. Art

### All of (a) and ONE of (b)

(a)

Max Baxandall, *Painting and experience in fifteenth-century Italy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn 1 (1988).

John Berger, *Ways of seeing* (1973).

E. H. Gombrich, *The story of art*, 16<sup>th</sup> edn (1995 or later imprint), chapters V to XV.

(b)

Max Baxandall, *The limewood sculptors of Renaissance Germany* (1980).

Jill E. Caskey, *Art and patronage in the medieval Mediterranean: merchant culture in the region of Amalfi* (2004).

Georges Duby, *Art and society in the middle ages* (1995; trans. Jean Birrell, 2000).

- *The ages of the cathedrals: art and society, 980–1420* (1976; trans. Eleanor LeVieux and Barbara Thompson, 1981).

Elina Gertsman, *The Dance of Death in the middle ages: image, text, performance* (2010).

Marianne Hirsch, *Family frames: photography, narrative, and postmemory* (1997).

Jacqueline Jung, *The gothic screen: space, sculpture, and community in the cathedrals of France and Germany, ca.1200–1400* (2012).

Ethan Matt Kavaler, *Pieter Bruegel: parables of order and enterprise* (1999).

Joseph Leo Koerner, *The moment of self-portraiture in German renaissance art* (1993).

- *The reformation of the image* (2004).

Anthony D. Smith, *The nation made real: art and national identity in western Europe, 1600–1850* (2013).

## 11. Environment and ecology

### All of (a) and ONE of (b)

(a)

Richard C. Hoffmann, *An environmental history of medieval Europe* (2014).

John McNeill, 'Environment', in Ulinka Rublack (ed.), *A concise companion to history* (2012), 299–315.

(b)

Ellen F. Arnold, *Negotiating the landscape: environment and monastic identity in the medieval Ardennes* (2013).

Bruce M. S. Campbell, *The great transition: climate, disease, and society in the late medieval world* (2016).

Brian Fagan, *The Little Ice Age: how climate made history 1300–1850* (2001).

Kyle Harper, *The fate of Rome: climate, disease, and the end of an empire* (2017).

Andreas Malm, *Fossil capital: the rise of steam power and the roots of global warming* (2016).

Jon Mathieu, *History of the Alps, 1500–1900: environment, development, society* (1998; trans. Matthew Vester, 2009).

Geoffrey Parker, *Global crisis: war, climate change, and catastrophe in the seventeenth century* (2013).

Joachim Radkau, *Nature and power: a global history of the environment* (2002; trans. Thomas Dunlap, 2008).

Paolo Squatriti, *Water and society in early medieval Italy AD400–1000* (2002).

- *Landscape and change in early medieval Italy: chestnuts, economy, and culture* (2013).

Paul Warde, *Ecology, economy, and state formation in early modern Germany* (2006).

## 12. Global history

### All of (a) and ONE of (b)

(a)

Catherine Holmes and Naomi Standen (eds), *The global middle ages* (2018 = *Past and Present Supplement* 13).

(b)

Anne Curry and David A. Graff (eds), *Cambridge history of war*, vol. 2: *War and the medieval world* (2020), 615–82.

James Belich et al. (eds), *The prospect of global history* (2019).

Sebastian Conrad, *What is global history?* (2016).

Sarah Foot and Chase Robinson (eds), *Oxford history of historical writing*, vol. 2: *400–1400* (2015), 431–628.

Jean-Paul Ghobrial (ed.), *Global history and microhistory* (2019 = *Past and Present Supplement* 14).

Monica Green, 'Emerging diseases, re-emerging histories', *Centaurus* 62 (2020), 234–47.

Benjamin Z. Kedar and Merry Wiesner-Hanks (eds), *Cambridge World History*, vol. 5: *Expanding webs of exchange and conflict, 500CE–1500CE* (2015).

Joachim Radkau, *Nature and power: a global history of the environment* (2002, translation by T. Dunlap, 2008).

Ulinka Rublack (ed.), *A concise companion to history* (2012), 3–78.

Daniel Woolf, *A concise history of history: global historiography from antiquity to the present* (2019).

Chris Wickham, 'Administrator's time: the social memory of the early medieval state, east and west', in B. Sadeghi (ed.), *Islamic cultures, Islamic contexts* (2015), 430–67.

- 'Jiangnan style: doing global economic history in the medieval period', in J. H. Arnold, M. Hilton, and J. R uger (eds), *History after Hobsbawm: writing the past for the twenty-first century* (2017), 121–39.

Also skim through one or more issues of the journal *The Medieval Globe*.