

Hist 61000: HISTORY: THEORY AND METHOD

COURSE INFORMATION

CRN: 18283

Instructor Info:

Dr. T. Cole Jones

Email: colejones@purdue.edu

Office: UNIV 222

Class Time and Location:

Mondays, 6-8:50PM

UNIV 319

Student Hours: By Appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This graduate seminar is an introduction to the theories, methods, and practices of professional history writing. It is designed to provide first-year graduate students with a thorough foundation in the essential skills and concepts necessary for producing high-quality historical research and writing. This seminar serves as a crucial steppingstone for students embarking on their academic journey in the field of history.

We will delve into the theoretical foundations of history writing, exposing students to various approaches and frameworks. Students will examine key debates and schools of thought that have shaped the discipline, such as social history, political history, cultural history, and gender history. Through critical analysis of canonic works and contemporary scholarship, students will develop a nuanced understanding of the historiographical landscape and its implications for their own research. By the end of the seminar, students will possess the necessary skills to embark on independent research projects and critically engage with historical scholarship.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

1. Identify the key problems, methodologies, and debates that have shaped the field of academic history.
2. Evaluate the methodological, theoretical, and conceptual frameworks that underpin contemporary scholarship.
3. Critique historians' uses of source material.
4. Engage with complex historical and historiographical arguments.
5. Appreciate the dynamics of change and continuity across time.
6. Understand how historians turn a historical question into a published piece of scholarship.
7. Prepare an application for a scholarly grant.

7. Write clearly and persuasively.

COURSE MATERIALS

Please obtain complete copies of the books listed below, whether in paper or electronic form. You are welcome to borrow the books via Purdue Libraries or Interlibrary Loan, but, if you use this method, you will need to plan at least a few weeks ahead. If I have specified the edition, please make sure to obtain this particular version.

Please bring to class your copy/copies of that day's reading/s, in whatever form (paper/electronic) you have used to read and annotate the text.

ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

Your grade for the course will be assessed in accordance with the following assignments and responsibilities.

Participation: 50%

Attendance at all class meetings is mandatory. But attendance and participation are not the same thing. Participation in this class may take different forms, including asking and answering questions raised by assigned readings and other materials. For each class, come with at least one question (not a comment, but a critical question) about the reading and be prepared to raise this question in class. Participation also comes in the form of presenting your ideas and work, reading and commenting upon others' ideas and work, and engaging in follow-up discussions.

Book Review: 20% Due: October 16

You will select and read a book in your field, and you will write an academic book review. This review will conform to the standards of the American Historical Review. Your discussion should not only summarize the book's argument but also place it in historiographic context and evaluate it for method, sources, and contribution. (4-5 pages double-spaced).

Mock Grant Proposal and Presentation: 30% Due: November 13

You will write a proposal (4-5 pages double-spaced) for an imaginary funding opportunity. Your proposal should be based on the research topic you plan to explore further in HIST 611. Your proposal should outline the historical problem you seek to solve, its significance, and the sources and methods required to address it. Towards the end of class, you will present your proposed project to your peers in class.

CLASSROOM POLICIES

My policies are simple:

Attend class on time.
Do the reading on time.
Do the assignments on time.
Be respectful.
Use common sense.

Do your own work. Do not plagiarize or cheat.
Do not use ChatGPT or other AI writing software.
Do not use contractions in formal writing.
If you have a question, ask me in person or via Email.
Late assignments will be penalized **one-third grade per day** [example: an A paper that is one day late becomes an A- paper]

If you cheat or plagiarize, you will fail this course. Period.

For a more detailed explanation of the above, see the University Policies:

“Purdue prohibits ‘dishonesty in connection with any University activity. Cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information to the University are examples of dishonesty.’ [Part 5, Section III-B-2-a, Student Regulations] Furthermore, the University Senate has stipulated that ‘the commitment of acts of cheating, lying, and deceit in any of their diverse forms (such as the use of substitutes for taking examinations, the use of illegal cribs, plagiarism, and copying during examinations) is dishonest and must not be tolerated. Moreover, knowingly to aid and abet, directly or indirectly, other parties in committing dishonest acts is in itself dishonest.’ [University Senate Document 72-18, December 15, 1972]”

<https://www.purdue.edu/odos/academic-integrity/>

Attendance Policy:

University policy states that students are expected to be present for every meeting of the classes in which they are enrolled. For the purposes of this course, being “present” means attending all face-to-face meetings unless you are ill or need to be absent for reasons excused by University regulations: grief/bereavement, military service, jury duty, parenting leave or certain medically excused absences (go to the [Office of the Dean of Students \(ODOS\) website](#) for details on how to submit those requests).

If you must miss class at any point in time during the semester, please reach out to me via Purdue email so that we can communicate about how you can maintain your academic progress.

Students with Disabilities:

Students who need special accommodations to participate fully in class should contact me as soon as possible. While I will do everything in my power to accommodate your needs, Purdue University requires you to provide me with appropriate written documentation and to have that documentation on file with Student Services. Students should be aware that Services for Student Disabilities are available at 494-1247 if you need further assistance.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1

Mon., Aug. 21: Introduction to Thinking Historically

Reading: Thomas Andrews and Flannery Burke, “What Does it Mean to Think Historically,”
Perspectives on History (Jan.: 2007)

Week 2

Mon., Aug. 28: Objectivity

Reading: Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: the ‘Objectivity Question’ and the American Historical Profession* (1988)

Week 3

Mon., Sep. 4: Labor Day, No Class, Submit question via Brightspace

Reading: Sarah Maza, *Thinking About History* (2017)

Week 4

Mon., Sep. 11: Marxism, Materialism, and Class

Readings: E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (1966)

Week 5

Mon., Sep. 18: Politics and Ideology

Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (2009)

Week 6

Mon., Sep. 25: The Cultural Turn

Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (2009)

Week 7

Mon., Oct. 2: Microhistory

Reading: Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-century Miller* (2013)

Week 8

Mon., Oct. 9: Fall Break, No Class

Week 9

Mon., Oct. 16: Scientific Revolutions BOOK REVIEW DUE via Brightspace

Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1996)

Week 10

Mon., Oct. 23: Race

Reading: Winthrop D. Jordan, *White Over Black* (1968)

Week 11

Mon., Oct. 30: Women and Gender

Reading: Joan Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (1999)

Week 12

Mon., Nov. 6: Environmental

Reading: William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (2003)

Week 13

Mon., Nov. 13: War and Violence GRANT PROPOSAL DUE via Brightspace

Reading: David Bell, *The First Total War* (2007)

Week 14

Mon., Nov. 20: Religion (Presentations)

Robert Orsi, *Between Heaven and Earth: The Religious Worlds People Make and the Scholars Who Study Them* (2005)

Week 15

Mon., Nov. 27: Sexuality (Presentations)

Reading: Margot Canaday, *The Stright State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth Century America* (2009)

Week 16

Mon., Dec. 4: Transnational (Presentations)

Reading: Thomas Bender, *A Nation Among Nations: America's Place in World History* (2006)