The Craft of History
510-550
Fall 2014
Tuesdays 5-7:40

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The Craft of History is unique in the master’s program at Rutgers-Camden. Rather than a readings or research course in a particular area of history, Craft is designed to familiarize students with major problems, questions, and methods that shape the discipline of history as a whole.

In the late 19th century, the study of history was conceived of as a science—and science was conceived of as being ahistorical. That is, history was a phenomenon that the historian could observe objectively, without affecting or being affected by the process of observation; likewise, scientific knowledge built progressively upon itself, existing outside any particular historical context. Over the course of the 20th century, though, understandings of history and science changed. Historians were recast not as objective observers of history but as subjective participants in history, who interpreted the past through their own biases and who were limited by their own historical context. By the 1960s, the very concept of “knowledge”—historical, scientific, and otherwise—had been destabilized, and claims to knowledge were often interpreted as claims to power. New understandings of how to study the past came to challenge traditional approaches, leading to an expansion of subjects of historical study but also to a final collapse of the consensus that had defined academic history at the start of the century.

The course is divided into two parts. In Part I, our readings cover a variety of major historiographical approaches. In Part II, we will examine several cases of historiographical debate and consider the boundaries between scholarship and fraud.

Required books:
Note: All other required readings will be posted at the Robeson Library online reserves.

2. Dennis Dworkin, Class Struggles (Routledge, 2006)

**Assignments and Grading:** Since this class is a seminar, students are expected to complete all reading assignments on time (that is, before the class for which they are listed on the schedule below) and to participate actively in discussion.

The course has three writing assignments, each of which will be 8–10 pages. For the first paper, you will come up with and answer a question that treats one week’s readings from weeks 1 through 5; you may turn it in at any time on or before October 7. For the second paper, you will do the same for the readings for weeks 6 through 9; you may turn it in at any time on or before November 11. For the third paper, you will consider the ways in which people have sought to distinguish valid from invalid claims about the past as covered in the readings from weeks 10 through 14; it will be due on December 16.

Your final grade will be distributed as follows:
- 30% for class participation
- 20% for the first paper
- 25% for the second paper
- 25% for the final paper.

**Attendance:** If you must miss a class, you will be required to write a 5-7-page paper on that week’s readings, to be submitted by the beginning of the next class meeting.

**SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND ASSIGNMENTS**

*Note: please read items in the order in which they appear below.*

**Unit I: Historians’ Approaches**

**Week 1, September 2**

*The History of History*

- Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The “Objectivity Question” and the American Historical Profession* whole book

**Week 2, September 9**

*Science as History*

- Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962)

**Week 3, September 16**

*Marxism*

- Excerpts from Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1 [pp. 671-715]
- Dworkin, Chapters 1-2
• E. P. Thompson, “Eighteenth-Century English Society: Class Struggle without Class?” Social History 3, no. 2 (May 1978): 133–65
• Excerpts from Ellen Meiksins Wood, Democracy Against Capitalism: Renewing Historical Materialism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995)
• Excerpts from Eric Hobsbawm, On History (The New Press, 1998) [pp. 141-156]

Week 4, September 23

Imperialism
• John A. Hobson, Imperialism: A Study (London: Allen Unwin, 1954; first published 1902), Part I, Chapter 6
• Vladimir I. Lenin, Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism, Chapters 7 and 10

Week 5, September 30

FIRST PAPER DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS

Hegemony and Slavery
• Dennis Dworkin, Class Struggles, Chapter 7
• T. J. Jackson Lears, “The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities,” American Historical Review 90, no. 3 (June 1985): 567–93

Week 6, October 7

Postmodernism
• Dworkin, Chapters 3–5
Week 7, October 14

**The History of Women, History of Gender, and History of Sexuality**

- Michel Foucault, “Excerpts from *The History of Sexuality*,” in *A Postmodern Reader*, 333–41
- Geoff Danaher et al., *Understanding Foucault*, Chapter 2
- Jean Baudrillard, “The Precession of Simulacra,” in *A Postmodern Reader*, 342–75

Week 8, October 21

**Nationalism**

- Anderson, *Imagined Communities*
- Eric Hobsbawm, “The Nation as Invented Tradition,” in *Nationalism*, 76–82
• Excerpts from Anthony Smith, *The Nation in History: Historiographical Debates about Ethnicity and Nationalism* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2000)

**Week 9, October 28**

**Postcolonialism**

• Said, *Orientalism*, 1-110
• Dworkin, Chapter 8

**Unit II: The Instability of Historical Knowledge, or, Problems in the Academy**

**Week 10, November 4**

**The Holocaust as a Case Study**

SECOND PAPER DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS

• Michael Shermer and Alex Grobman, *Denying History: Who Says the Holocaust never Happened and Why Do They Say It?*

**Week 11, November 11**

**The Bellesiles Incident**

• Michael Bellesiles, “Reply to Malcolm,” ibid., 343–45
• “Historians and Guns,” forum in *William and Mary Quarterly* 59, no. 1 (January 2002)
  o Robert Gross, “Introduction,” 203–4
• Gloria Main, “Many Things Forgotten: The Use of Probate Records in ‘Arming America,’” 211–16
• Randolph Roth, “Guns, Gun Culture, and Homicide: The Relationship Between Firearms, the Uses of Firearms, and Interpersonal Violence,” 223–40
• Michael Bellesiles, “Exploring America’s Gun Culture,” 241–68

• James Lindgren, “Fall from Grace: Arming America and the Bellesiles Scandal,” *Yale Law Journal* 111, no. 8 (June 2002): 2195–249
• Jerome Sternstein, “‘Pulped’ Fiction: Michael Bellesiles and His Yellow Note Pads,” *History News Network*
• Peter Charles Hoffer, *Past Imperfect: Facts, Fictions, and Fraud—American History from Bancroft to Ambrose, Bellesiles, Ellis, and Goodwin* (New York: Public Affairs, 2007), Chapter 5

**Week 12, November 18**

*History, Memory, and the Construction of Meaning I: Central America*

Arturo Arias, ed., *The Rigoberta Menchú Controversy* [skip pp. 156-170; 251-269; 309-350]

**Week 13, November 25**

*Thanksgiving Break--No Class Meeting*

**Week 14, December 2**

*History, Memory, and the Construction of Meaning II: The Old South*

David Blight, *Race and Reunion*

**Week 15, December 9**

*Summing Up*

Richard Evans, *In Defense of History*

**FINAL PAPER DUE DECEMBER 16 AT 5 P.M.**