HIS 394H: Introduction to Historical Inquiry

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Fridays, 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.
and by appointment

History 394 is an introductory seminar for all doctoral students in history at UT. Its purpose is to deepen your understanding of the discipline of history by exploring some (and only some) of the conversations and debates among historians from different geographic and temporal fields. The seminar will require all of us (instructors included!) to stretch considerably beyond our own areas of expertise and interest. We will be concerned less with the specific findings of the works we read than with their frameworks, concepts, theoretical assumptions, and research methods.

We have chosen to focus on questions about the scope and scale of historical study. We begin with nations and nation-states as units of historical analysis and then move on to considering a range of alternative frameworks. We look at ‘bigger’ histories -- world, global, imperial, or transnational -- and the various methodological issues they pose. We study some examples of ‘microhistory.’ Among these frameworks we have included households, a traditional choice, and also interiors (literal and metaphorical) and subjectivity, which are less traditional. We intend this list of topics to be suggestive and interesting, not comprehensive.

About course requirements and expectations: Full participation in class discussion is a primary requirement of this and all graduate seminars. You are expected to attend every class, to come prepared with ideas and questions about each week’s readings, to connect present readings with previous assignments, and to engage each other with respect, curiosity, and open minds.

Assignments

1) Each week, two of you will be responsible for leading the seminar discussion. We will sort out who’s doing which week during our first class meeting. The co-seminar leaders will either send the two of us an outline before class meets, or bring two copies of the outline to class.

2 a-b) Each of you will write two short essays (5-6 pages each) on questions we will assign. The first will be due in class on Wednesday September 28; the second will be due in the main history office by noon on Monday November 14.

3) Your final assignment involves attending a history-oriented lecture or academic paper being given on campus (your choice but we strongly recommend you check out the offerings from such
bodies as the IHS, South Asia Institute (SAI), British Studies, Long Institute of Latin American Studies (LLILAS), the John L. Warfield Center for African and African American Studies and so on. You will write 4-5 pages in which you reflect on the methodology and framing of the piece and on its reception. Due in class on **Wednesday November 30**.

Each assignment counts for 25% of your grade.

**TEXTS**
Readings marked with an asterisk will be available to you through the class Blackboard website, accessible at [http://courses.utexas.edu](http://courses.utexas.edu). Journal articles are accessible via the library catalogue. We will outline the procedure for accessing these on the first day of class.

Texts you will need to acquire are:

**SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS**

**August 24** INTRODUCTION

**August 31** HISTORY AND THE HUMANITIES
*Stanley Fish, ‘Is There A Text In This Class?’ in *Is There A Text In This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980)

**September 7** NATIONS

**September 14** EMPIRES

**September 21** GLOBAL/TRANSNATIONAL CURRENTS
*Fred Cooper, ‘Globalization,’ in his Colonialism in Question
‘Conversation: On Transnational History,’ American Historical Review 111, no. 5 (December 2006): 1441-1464
David Abulafia, ‘Mediterranean History as Global History’, History and Theory 50, no. 2 (May 2011): 220–228

September 28 NETWORKS & CROSSINGS
*Fernand Braudel, The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II
Matthew Guterl and Christine Skwiot, ‘Atlantic and Pacific Crossings: Race, Empire, and “the Labor Problem” in the Late Nineteenth Century,’ Radical History Review 91 (Winter 2005): 40–61

October 5 SLAVERY AS DIASPORA

October 12 MICROHISTORY 1

October 19 MICROHISTORY 2

October 26 BODIES


November 2  PRIVATE AND PUBLIC


Craig J. Calhoun, ‘Introduction: Habermas and the Public Sphere,’ in Habermas and the Public Sphere (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992)

November 9  SUBJECTIVITY

November 16  NO CLASS SECOND PAPER DUE MONDAY, NOVEMBER 14

November 23: NO CLASS

November 30: EVALUATIONS AND FINAL WRAP-UP DISCUSSION