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GRADUATE SEMINAR IN HISTORIOGRAPHY

Spring 2007

Professor Neal M. Rosendorf
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Historiography is often viewed by graduate students as the intellectual equivalent of cod liver oil: it may be good for you, but it is unpalatable and difficult to digest. To be sure, grappling with the central animating ideas of the historical discipline is not easy. Yet, unless we come to grips with how and why historians construct their arguments, how the discipline has evolved over time, and indeed what sets history apart as a discrete field of scholarly inquiry, our research, writing and teaching of the subject is built upon a foundation of sand.

In this course we will be looking, first, at how prominent historians past and present have considered the nature of history, the field's central debates, and the job of historians; and second, at some of the most interesting ideas currently at play in the subfield of US international history (your humble professor's specialization). Writing assignments will include one-page bulletized talking points, several 3-5pp. brief essays, and a final 10pp. historiographic (of course!) essay due at the last class meeting (which, yes, will be the usual wine-and cheese reception at said humble professor's abode). Class participation will count for 20% of the grade; the balance will be based on the writing assignments.

Reading List

Thomas Bender, ed., *Rethinking American History in a Global Age* (UC Press, 2002)

Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft* (Vintage, 1964)

Fernand Braudel, *On History*, Sarah Matthews, transl. (Univ. of Chicago, 1982)

David Cannadine, ed, *What Is History Now?* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2004)

E. H. Carr, *What Is History?* (Vintage, 1967)

David Christian, *Maps of Time: An Introduction to Big History* (UC Press, 2005) [Online excerpts]

Matthew Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria's Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era* (Oxford, 2002)

Colin Elman and Miriam Fendius Elman, *Bridges and Boundaries: Historians, Political Scientists, and the Study of International Relations* (MIT Press, 2001)

David H. Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought* (Harper, 1970)

John Gaddis, *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past* (Oxford, 2004)

Georg Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge* (Wesleyan, 2005)

Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge, 1988)

Fred Spier, *The Structure of Big History: From the Big Bang Until Today* (Amsterdam Univ. Press, 1996)

SYLLABUS

Week One: 1/23—Course Introduction

Week Two: 1/30—Gaddis, *The Landscape of History*
(1pp bulletized discussion points)

Week Three: 2/6—Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies*: Introduction; chapters 1-6, 9, Conclusion
(3pp essay: most significant fallacies, and why?)

Week Four: 2/13—Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century*
(1pp. bulletized discussion points)

[NO MEETING 2/20—Presidents' Weekend]

Week Five: 2/27—Novick, *That Noble Dream* (I) Preface, Introduction, parts I-II
(1pp. bulletized discussion points)

Week Six: 3/6—Novick, *That Noble Dream* (II) parts III-IV
(3pp. essay on objectivity vs. subjectivity issue, utilizing Iggers and Novick)

Week Seven: 3/13—Bloch, *The Historian's Craft*
(1pp. bulletized discussion points)

Week Eight: 3/20—Braudel, *On History*
(1pp. bulletized discussion points)

Week Nine: 3/27—Carr, *What Is History?*
(1pp. bulletized discussion points)
(5-6pp. essay comparing and contrasting Bloch's, Braudel's and Carr's understanding of history—working in Gaddis for good measure—due 4/10)

[NO MEETING 4/3—Passover/Easter]

Week Ten: 4/10—Cannadine, ed., *What Is History Now?*
(1pp. bulletized discussion points)

Week Eleven: 4/17— Spier, *The Structure of Big History*;
Christian, *Maps of Time*, Introduction, at <http://www.ucpress.edu/books/pages/9249/9249.intro.html>;
additional excerpts, at
http://books.google.com/books?id=Bs_sLdKGS5gC&pg=PR18&lpg=PR18&dq=david+christian+big+history&source=web&ots=yD9WUlwvFL&sig=YnJV2HuYotPFatSvkcmRdXiVhnE#PPA595,M1 (or just “Google” the author and title; at “Contents” on right-hand side, click on “more” for complete table of contents—read through all excerpted sections)
(3pp. essay: is “Big History” really history?)

Week Twelve: 4/24— Elman and Elman, eds., *Bridges and Boundaries*: Introduction, part I, all, part II, chapters 11-13, part III, all
(3pp. essay: IR Historians vs. IR Political Scientists: Who’s Right?)

Week Thirteen: 5/1—Bender, ed., *Rethinking American History in a Global Age*: Introduction, chapters 1-4, 11-12, 15-16
(1pp. bulletized discussion points)

Week Fourteen: 5/8—Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution*
(10pp. essay: Are we all Braudelians now? [if you have another topic idea, please consult with Prof. Rosendorf])