

History 300
Approaches to History
 Fall 2004

Terry Seip
 Office: SOS 255
 E-mail: tseip@usc.edu
 Phone: (213) 740-1656
 Hours: 9:45-11:45 TuTh
 9:00-11:00 M
 & by app't

12:30-1:50TTh
 MHP 102

Through readings, discussion, and writing, this class explores the intellectual, professional, and personal dimensions of history. We initially look at the origins and evolution of historical writing and then reflect on the nature of the craft at the theoretical level and the relationships between the historian and his/her society and culture. During the second part of the course, we investigate the varieties of history--the differing approaches and methodologies--the various ways in which historians work to reconstruct the past. The primary goal of the course is to give you a solid grounding in historiography, the diverse methodologies and interpretations, the perennial problems, and, not least, the excitement of the discipline.

I. Required Readings:

- John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History: Aims, Methods, and New Directions in the Study of Modern History*, 3rd Revised Edition (New York: Longman, 2002)
 John Tosh (ed.), *Historians on History* (New York: Longman, 2000)
 Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983)
 Michael Shaara, *The Killer Angels* (New York: Ballantine, 1974)
 James West Davidson & Mark Hamilton Lytle, *After the Fact: The Art of Historical Detection* Fifth Edition (one volume edition; Boston: McGraw Hill, 2000); special package includes Primary Source Investigator CD-ROM, Davidson & Lytle, *After the Fact Interactive: The Visible and Invisible Worlds of Salem* (Interactive CD; Boston: McGraw Hill, 2003), and Davidson & Lytle, *After the Fact Interactive: From Rosie to Lucy* (Interactive CD; Boston: McGraw Hill, 2003)

II. Course Requirements:

The heartbeat of this class is discussion. I will simply assume that each student has not only completed, but also thought about and prepared to discuss the readings in advance of each class meeting. On the selections in Tosh (ed.) *Historians*, and on the chapters in Davidson & Lytle, each student will have primary discussant/discussion starter responsibilities, but the core of the discussion grade (30%) will be based on daily participation. There will be a midterm exam (tentative: October 14) and a final exam (Tuesday, December 14, 11:00-1:00)—each worth 15% of your semester grade based on readings, discussions, my occasional presentations, and possible guest lectures. Finally, there will be four short (four to six pages) writing assignments (40%) based on readings—Davis (book and film), Shaara, Davidson & Lytle—and a thought piece. I will formalize guidelines for these in later handouts.

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to Seip as early in the semester as possible. DSP: STU 301, (213) 740-0776, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

III. Tentative Schedule:

Aug. 24 Introduction: On Critical Reading, Discussion, and Writing—and Getting to Know One Another and Seip

I. Historiography: Origins and Evolution

Aug. 26 Lecture: The Roots of Western History: The Ancient World
Discussion: On Historical Awareness and Social Memory
Readings: Tosh, *Pursuit*, Preface, ch. 1

Aug. 31 Lecture: Medieval and Early Modern Historical Writing
Discussion: The Uses of History and the Nature of Primary Sources
Readings: Tosh, *Pursuit*, ch. 2-3

Sept. 2 Lecture: The Nineteenth Century: The Golden Age of History
Discussion: Using Sources and Mainstream History
Readings: Tosh, *Pursuit*, chs. 4-5

Sept. 7 Lecture: The Evolution of History as a Profession: The Twentieth Century
Discussion: Questions of Interpretation and the Limits of Historical Knowledge
Readings: Tosh, *Pursuit*, chs. 6-7

II. Interlude I: The Return of Martin Guerre

Sept. 9 Martin Guerre in Text
Reading: Davis, *Return*, all.

Sept. 14 Martin Guerre in Film: Carriere and Vigne, *Le Retour de Martin Guerre*

Sept. 16 On Balance: Martin Guerre in Text, Film, and Ripoff

III. Reflections on the Nature of the Animal

Sept. 21 Discussion: History for Its Own Sake
Reading: Tosh (ed.), *Historians*, Part One

Sept. 23 Discussion: Political Histories
Readings: Tosh (ed.), *Historians*, Part Two
Tosh, *Pursuit*, ch. 8

- Sept. 28 Discussion: The New Radicalism
Readings: Tosh (ed.), *Historians*, Part Three
Tosh, *Pursuit*, ch. 8, 10
- Sept. 30 Discussion: Learning from History
Readings: Tosh (ed.), *Historians*, Part Four
- Oct. 5 Discussion: History as Social Science, or, Worshiping at the Shrine of the
Bitch-Goddess of Quantification
Readings: Tosh (ed.), *Historians*, Part Five
Tosh, *Pursuit*, ch. 9
- Oct. 7 Discussion: The Impact of Postmodernism and Beyond Academe
12 Reading: Tosh (ed.), *Historians*, Parts Six and Seven
Tosh, *Pursuit*, chs. 10-11

***** **Thursday, October 14, Midterm Exam** *****

IV. Methods and Approaches, I

- Oct. 19 "Prologue: The Strange Death of Silas Deane: The Problem of Selecting
Evidence" (D&L, xv-xxxv)
"Serving Time in Virginia: The Perspectives of Evidence in Social History" (D&L, ch. 1)
- Oct. 21 "The Visible and Invisible Worlds of Salem: Studying Crisis at the Community Level"
(D&L, ch. 2 and Interactive CD)
- Oct. 26 "Declaring Independence: The Strategies of Documentary Analysis" (D&L, ch. 3)
"Material Witness: Hearth and Home in the Material Culture of a Market
Economy (D&L, ch. 4)
- Oct. 28 "Jackson's Frontier--and Turner's: History and Grand Theory" (D&L, ch. 5)
"The Invisible Pioneers: Ecological Transformations Along the Western
Frontier" (D&L, ch. 6)
- Nov. 2 "The Madness of John Brown: The Uses of Psychohistory" (D&L, ch. 7)
"The View from the Bottom Rail: Oral History and the Freedpeople" (D&L, ch. 8)

V. Interlude II: Where Has the Popular Audience Gone? On the Power of Character and Narrative

- Nov. 4 Gettysburg in "Traditional Text" (handout)
Shaara: "Monday, June 29, 1863"
"Wednesday, July 1, 1863: The First Day"
- Nov. 9 Shaara: "Thursday, July 2, 1863: The Second Day"
"Friday, July 3, 1863," Afterward

VI. Methods and Approaches, II

- Nov. 11 "The Mirror With a Memory: Photographic Evidence and the Urban Scene" (D&L, ch. 9)
"USDA Government Inspected: The Jungle of Political History" (D&L, ch. 10)
- Nov. 16 "Sacco and Vanzetti: The Case of History Versus Law" (D&L, ch. 11)
"Dust Bowl Odyssey: The Collective History of Migration" (D&L, ch. 12)
- Nov. 18 "From Rosie to Lucy: The Mass Media and Images of Women in the 1950s"
(D&L, ch. 14 and Interactive CD)
- Nov. 23 "The Decision to Drop the Bomb: The Uses of Models in History" (D&L, ch. 13)
"Breaking into Watergate: Plumbing a Presidency through Audio Tapes" (D&L, ch. 15)
- Nov. 30 "Where Trouble Comes: History and Myth in the Films of Vietnam" (D&L, ch. 16)
"Culture and History in the Shaping of Gender Identities" (D&L, ch. 17)
- Dec. 2 Reflection and Review

******* Final Exam, Tuesday, December 14, 11:00-1:00 *******