

# History 535: Historiography

Western Kentucky University, Spring Semester 2012

Instructor: Eric Reed (CH 233)

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Office Hours: Wed and Friday 10-11:30am

Course Description: This course will introduce you to the "history of history" and, more importantly, expose you to many of the most important approaches to doing history. You will read old and new classics meant to do just that. Each week will be devoted to exploring a unique "way" of doing history so that when you are done you will know how and why intellectual and social and gender and political and Marxist history are all different and valuable, depending on the questions historians pose and the sources they use.

Course Expectations: This course will require MORE OF YOUR TIME than a traditional, face-to-face class because of the nature of online teaching and learning. You will need to learn how to handle technology and software that may be unfamiliar to you, and you will need to thrive in a learning environment – cyberspace – that may intimidate you. You will need to motivate yourself, manage your time and effort carefully, and learn on your own with far less guidance than you might receive in a face-to-face course. **If you do not feel that you can devote 15 hours a week (some weeks more) to this course, then this course is not for you.**

Technology Requirements: This is an online course, and all the work you do will require you to use a computer. You must have a functional computer and access to the internet (preferably a highspeed connection). It will be helpful to have a printer, as well. **You must know how to use BlackBoard before the course begins. Finally, your official WKU email must be used for all email correspondence related to this course.**

Readings: The following are required books for the course. The books will be supplemented with articles related articles.

Caroline Hoefferle, "The Essential Historiography Reader" (Boston: Prentice Hall, 2011)

Mark Gilderhus, "History and Historians" [7th ed.] (Boston: Prentice Hall, 2010)

Benedict Anderson: Imagined Communities (London, Verso, 1991)

George Chauncey, "Gay New York" (London: Flamingo, 1995)

Thomas Kuhn, "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions" (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 3rd edition

Kenneth Pomeranz: The Great Divergence (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000)

Thomas Sugrue, "The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit (Princeton Studies in American Politics)" (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), orig. 1996.

Anthony Harkins, "Hillbilly" (New York: Oxford, 2002)

Vanessa Schwartz, "It's So French" (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 2007)

Catherine Gilbert Murdock, "Domesticating Drink: Women, Men, and Alcohol in America, 1870-1940" (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998)

E. P. Thompson, "Making of the English Working Class" (Vintage, 1966)

All of the required books will be available for purchase at the College Heights Bookstore in the Downing University Center. They are all in print. Used copies purchased from the Internet or new/used from off-campus bookstores may be cheaper.

Grading: The quality of your written work and the quality of your participation in our online discussions/debates will determine your grade. Your grade will be assigned using the standard A-F grading system. The assignments and their point values are described below in the "Assignments" section.

Total Points Earned	Grade
90% of possible points or better	A
80% and 89.99% of possible points	B
70% and 79.99% of possible points	C
60% and 69.99% of possible points	D
59.99% of points or less	F

The instructor reserves the right to award up to an additional 10% of the total points possible to each student. Such points will be given only to students that merit them because they show significant improvement in the quality of their work over the course of the semester. **Discretionary points are not given to any student automatically and will only be awarded at the end of the semester, if at all, and only to students who merit them, in the opinion of the instructor.** The number of discretionary points awarded will vary from student to student according to the instructor's evaluation of

each student's participation and improvement. Students who, in the opinion of the instructor, do not warrant discretionary points will not receive them. Your grades will be posted on a rolling basis to the BlackBoard gradebook, which you can access at any time.

Assignments: All assignments must be submitted electronically on Blackboard and are due Sunday night at 11:59pm at the end of the assignment week.

1. Book Summary/Analysis Papers: You will write a summary/analysis paper for each assigned book that (a) very summarizes the book's central arguments and (b) explains clearly, concisely, and accurately how the book is a good example of its "school" or approach to doing history. You will need to rely on your textbooks for an overview of the "schools" of history we cover and use them to interpret and understand the books you read. THE WORD LIMIT FOR SUMMARY/ANALYSIS PAPERS IS 1,200 WORDS, no exceptions. Each summary analysis paper is worth up to 100 points.

2. Discussion Boards: You will participate in discussion board exchanges with your classmate and the instructor several times during the semester. These discussion boards are meant to replace traditional in-class and will offer you a chance to share your analyses and ideas in an intellectual forum. You will be graded on the quality of your participation in each discussion board. You must post at least two responses to each discussion board, and each response must be posted at least 12 hours apart. Each response must be significant and should try to address other points/postings raised on the discussion board. Simple phrases such as "I agree" do not count as significant postings. You must fully explain yourself and back up the points you make in your postings with evidence drawn from our readings. For example, follow up "I agree" by explaining why you agree in detail. NOTE: The instructor will be particularly impressed by postings that incorporate material from and references to our assigned readings and primary source documents. Each discussion board will be worth up to 50 points.

3. Explore the Journals Assignments: The vanguard of the historical profession exists in academic journals. Twice you will be asked to "explore the journals" in order to get a flavor for emerging trends in the profession and get a sense for how journal publishing differs from book publishing. For each "explore the journals" assignment I will ask you to read and summarize clearly, concisely, and thoroughly at least four research articles (not book reviews) of your choice from a recent calendar year (no more than six years ago) in a major history journal and share those summaries with your classmates. That way, everyone will be more up-to-date about what's happening at the cutting edge of the profession. You will have electronic access to the assigned journals through our library, and you are responsible for figuring out how the access works. Each "explore the journals" assignment will be worth up to 100 points.

Note: I have put examples of summary/analysis papers and an "explore the journal" assignment on the Blackboard site to serve as guides for you. You may find it amusing to know that these are papers I wrote in my first year as a graduate student in the year

XXXX.

### Class Schedule (Subject to Change)

#### Week of Jan. 23

Log into Blackboard and paste a comment on the “Introductory Discussion” board.

#### Week of Jan. 30

Discussion: What is the purpose of history? Is history science? What are the strengths and weaknesses of history as science?

Readings: Hoefflerle, Introduction and Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7; Gilderhus, Chapters 1-6

#### Week of Feb. 6

Book Summary/Analysis, Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London, Verso, 1991)

#### Week of Feb. 13

Explore the Journals: Pick a year of one of the following journals, read four articles, write short, crisp summaries of them (approx. 500 words each), and submit the reviews as one document on Blackboard.

- American Historical Review
- Past and Present

#### Week of Feb. 20

Book Summary/Analysis, George Chauncey, “Gay New York” (London: Flamingo, 1995)

Additional Reading: Finish Gilderhus; Hoefflerle, chapter 8.

#### Week of Feb. 27

Nothing Due!

#### Week of March 5

Book Summary/Analysis, Thomas Kuhn, “The Structure of Scientific Revolutions” (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 3rd edition

#### Week of March 12

Book Summary/Analysis, E. P. Thompson, “Making of the English Working Class” (Vintage, 1966)

#### Week of March 19

Explore the Journals: Pick a year of one of the following journals, read four articles, write short, crisp summaries of them (approx. 500 words each), and submit the reviews as one document on Blackboard.

- Journal of Social History
- Journal of Modern History

Week of March 26

Discussion and readings TBD

Week of April 2

Book Summary/Analysis, Catherine Gilbert Murdock, "Domesticating Drink: Women, Men, and Alcohol in America, 1870-1940" (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998)

Week of April 9

Book Summary/Analysis, Anthony Harkins, "Hillbilly" (New York: Oxford, 2002)

Week of April 16

Book Summary/Analysis, Vanessa Schwartz, "It's So French" (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 2007)

Week of April 23

Discussion: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it," is an oft-repeated catchphrase that is invoked to emphasize the predictive power of studying history. How true is this assertion? Can studying the past predict the future? Why or why not?

Readings: Review Gilderhus; Hoefflerle, chapter 3.

Week of April 30

Book Summary/Analysis, Kenneth Pomeranz: The Great Divergence (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000)

Additional reading: Hoefflerle, chapter 9

Week of May 7

Book Summary/Analysis, Thomas Sugrue, "The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit (Princeton Studies in American Politics)" (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), orig. 1996.