HIST 612  
Fall 2008

Historical Methods and Writing

Instructor: Carlos Aguirre  
Office and phone number: 369 McKenzie Hall, 346-5905  
Office hours: Wed, 11-12, Thurs, 12-1  
E-mail address: caguirre@uoregon.edu

Course Description

This colloquium is intended to provide a comprehensive introduction to the most relevant fields of study, theoretical debates, and methodological trends in the discipline of history. It is the first of a three-part sequence that will offer graduate students the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the process of conceiving, researching, and producing historically-informed work. The goal is to set a solid foundation for our students to master current historiographical trends and help them define/refine their own research agenda.

Course Requirements:

1) Oral presentation (20%). Each student will be in charge of introducing one of the sessions (a 15-20 minute presentation), offering a critical summary of the readings, highlighting the main contributions of the assigned materials, and suggesting issues for discussion.

2) A historian’s critical profile (30%). Each student will choose a prominent historian in his/her field and will prepare a 5-page historiographical profile (main contributions, controversies and debates s/he was involved in, theoretical influences, career evolution, etc.). This exercise will be due on week 9 and will be circulated to all other students. We will discuss them during our final meeting.

3) Two book reviews (15% each). Each student will write two book reviews (2-3 pages each). The books will be chosen among those being assigned for the seminar. Students must submit their first book review NO LATER than week 5. The second will be due on or before week 9.

4) Participation (20%). Attendance is mandatory and participation in discussions is expected. The quality of the class is greatly dependent on the students’ ability to raise questions and contribute to our discussions. More than one unjustified absence will result in a grade penalty.
Schedule of topics and readings

Week 1: Introduction to the seminar

Week 2: Recent trends in US Historiography

Readings:

Suggested:
Week 3: The Archive


Suggested:

Rebecca Comay, ed. *Lost in the Archives* (Toronto: Alphabet City Media, 2002)
Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire* (London: Verso, 1993)

Week 4: Class

Readings:
Suggested:
Elizabeth Schmidt, Mobilizing the Masses. Gender, Ethnicity, and Class in the Nationalist Movement in Guinea, 1939-1958 (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2005)

Week 5: The State

Reading: James Scott, Seeing Like a State. How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition have Failed (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

Suggested:
Miguel Angel Centeno, Blood and Debt. War and the Nation-State in Latin America (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2002).

**Week 6: Gender and Nationalism**

Reading: Beth Baron, *Egypt as a Woman. Nationalism, Gender, and Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005)

Suggested:

Gopal Balakrishnan, ed. *Mapping the Nation* (Verso, 1996)


**Week 7: Subaltern Studies**

**Readings:**


**Suggested:**


**Week 8: Slavery and Emancipation and Comparative Perspective**

**Readings:**

**Suggested:**
Peabody, Sue, "There are no slaves in France": the political culture of race and slavery in the Ancien Régime (Oxford University Press, 1996).
Laurent Dubois and John D. Garrigus, eds. *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean 1789-1804* (Bedfort/St. Martin’s, 2006).
Week 9: Immigration and Whiteness


Suggested:


Week 10: Wrap-up session and discussion of historians’ profiles