

Fall 2018

History Graduate Course Descriptions

510	Denise Phillips	Introduction to Graduate Studies	F 12:20-3:20
512	Laura Nenzi	The Profession of History	R 12:40-3:25
517	Brandon Winford	Readings in African-American History	T 3:40-6:20
544	Luke Harlow	U.S. Historiography, Colonial Times to Reconstruction	M 3:35-6:35
580	Susan Lawrence	The History of the Body	R 3:40-6:20
585	Alison Vacca	Women as Cultural Mediators in Medieval Islam	W 2:30-5:30
630	Jay Rubenstein	Holy War in the Middle Ages	T 12:40-3:25
632	Vejas Liulevicius	Research in Modern European History	M 12:20-3:20

History 510: Introduction to Graduate Studies

Dr. Phillips

The purpose of this course is to introduce beginning graduate students to the varied strategies and conceptual tools historians use to study the past. It will provide students with an introduction to the history of the discipline, give them practice interpreting theoretically sophisticated texts, and expose them to important recent methodological debates in the field.

History 512: The Profession of History

Dr. Nenzi

You are completing your Ph.D. and the prospect of facing the job market looms ahead. Now what? This class combines readings about various aspects of the profession with “hands-on” activities in order to prepare you for the job market and for life with a History Ph.D. May the odds be ever in your favor.

History 544: Major Problems in American History: Colonial Period Through Reconstruction

Dr. Harlow

Required for all Americanist graduate students. This readings seminar explores some of the major themes and significant historiographic debates in American history from the colonial period through the era of the Civil War. It serves as essential preparation for comprehensive exams, and furthermore provides significant background information for teaching the first half of the U.S. history survey.

History 580: The History of the Body

Dr. Lawrence

The body has a history, both as a physical object and a cultural metaphor. In this readings course, we will focus on the physical body, especially to explore the diverse ways that people in the past understood and experienced their own bodies. At the same time, we will consider how physical and cultural bodies constantly define and re-define each other. To do this, we will read not only works by historians, but also those by anthropologists, philosophers, and critical theorists. We will discuss what it means for the body to be culturally constructed and to be a site for the operation of political and scientific power. We will roam rather broadly through time and space, from classical Chinese thought to postmodern cyborgs. Students will be expected to contribute one short primary source for class analysis, to prepare reading questions

to guide discussion and to develop a historiographical paper on a topic that connects with their own disciplinary or research interests. Questioning, debates and multiple interpretive strategies will be warmly welcomed.

History 585: Women as Cultural Mediators in Medieval Islam

Dr. Vacca

The early and medieval Islamic world was remarkably ethnically, religiously, and linguistically diverse, and yet extant sources provide little information about how people negotiated social difference. Many anecdotes about cross-cultural, interreligious, multiethnic, and polyglot engagements (e.g., Arab-Persian, steppe-sedentary, or Muslim-Christian encounters) involve women as mediators or as markers of alterity. In this course, we will discuss the political and social power of elite women in the medieval Islamic world, but we will also examine the appearance of women as textual markers of difference and change in sources penned by men.

History 630: War and Peace in the Middle Ages

Dr. Rubenstein

The purpose of this class is to produce a research paper built on an examination of the intersection between warfare and spirituality in the Middle Ages. Topics will include, but not be limited to, Crusades and Christian-Muslim relations. Course meetings will fall into three groups. In the first third of the class we will examine a selection of common readings (partly secondary sources, partly primary sources in translation) to develop approaches for reading accounts of religious warfare. During this time, students will choose topics to focus on for research papers. In the second third of the class, the class will read primary source material related to research projects chosen by seminar participants. In the final third of the class, we will workshop drafts of papers.

History 632: Research Seminar in Modern European History

Dr. Liulevicius

This graduate research seminar will engage in research in primary sources in modern European history, while also reading in historiography about fame, status, charisma, heroism, celebrity, cults of personality, and leadership. Our common readings involve a special emphasis on how status and fame have been understood and deployed. Our examination will range from medieval political theology and the idea of “the King’s two bodies” examined by Ernst Kantorowicz, through Scottish philosopher and polemicist Thomas Carlyle’s famed 1841 work, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* and German sociologist Max Weber’s articulation of “charismatic authority”, on to examinations of how modern celebrity works and has been used in dictatorial regimes. How is fame understood? Is it good or suspect? How is celebrity (or notoriety) wielded and represented? What rankings obtain in a society, or are contested? How is authority legitimized, whether in politics, culture, society, or personal relations? How is it challenged or overthrown? After we establish a common conceptual frame of reference and field of questions, participants will move on to individual research projects. In your own research project, you will make a significant contribution to the study of modern Europe through engaging primary sources, informed by the debates and insights of the readings we will discuss in common. Thus, your final product should tell us something new, useful, and provocative about how fame, status, and celebrity should be understood or evaluated in history! This research seminar also welcomes Americanist and medievalist graduate students who would like to engage these broad concepts in their own research fields.