HH 3001
HISTORIOGRAPHY: THEORY AND METHODS

Contact details

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Course Aims

Do historians uncover the truth, organize the facts and formulate possible causal explanations or just tell stories that sell? Can history be written “as it actually happened”? Are all human histories always provisional and conditional? How is a reconstruction of the past possible given that historians cannot rethink the thoughts of the dead or relive their lives? Are historians unfairly imposing the questions of the present to the past? Is the writing of history ultimately a power game that ensures the dominance of those who possess it? In a world in which an ever-growing chorus of voices is heard, what are the criteria by which a historical work can be held as valid? With the coming of the digital age in humanities and social sciences, will history ultimately perish as a discipline and profession? In this course, we will discuss the aforementioned questions by examining history’s relationship to science, postmodernism, colonialism, nation building, gender, identity politics and globalization. Building on the basic skills acquired in HH 1001: What is History, this course offers a more advanced introduction to the theories and methodologies underpinning our craft.

Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, you (as a student) would be able to:

1. Identify major methodological developments in the English-language literature in the 20th century.
2. Compare and contrast the major historical approaches.
3. Synthesize and engage in various theoretical debates.
4. Articulate compelling, evidence-based, and well-reasoned arguments in written and oral form.
5. Formulate original historical arguments and explanations that effectively deploy primary and secondary source evidence.
Requirements and Expectations

- Students must attend the weekly seminars and take part in discussions.
- I will generally only post slides, if available, on Blackboard after class.
- Students must read the assigned materials before each class. Those readings listed under “further reading” are not mandatory; they are for those who wish to explore the topic further. Essential readings will be accessible on Blackboard. Students can find further readings in the reserves section of the HSS library.
- Students should check Blackboard for important information regarding the course and assignments.
- Students should arrive on time; late arrival will result in a deduction of participation marks.
- Note that NTU’s Policy on Student Code of Conduct applies.
- All work must be your own. Plagiarism of any material from outside sources for written work or presentations or in the final exam will result in automatic failure of the entire course. Please see the section on plagiarism below.
- If you would like to set up a consultation, please email me to set up a time. Tuesdays and Thursdays are generally the most convenient for me.
- I do not answer student emails on weekends or outside business hours (9 am-5 pm, Monday-Friday). You can expect a response within two business days to emails sent on weekdays.

Assessment

Individual class participation (10%)

Since discussion and debate with fellow students will be an important means by which you will develop your critical thinking and communication skills, your contribution to discussion in class will be assessed. It is not enough to merely turn up to class. Rather, you will be assessed on the extent to which you participate in and contribute to the class discussion.

Group work (online and in-class) (10%

a) **Online question post:** Every week with compulsory readings, each group posts five questions in relation to the compulsory readings on the Blackboard discussion board. The questions need to be there by 8 am on the day of class. Questions should engage with the methodology critically.

b) **In-class question discussion:** The group will together choose one question (from your five posted questions) to present at the beginning of class. One student will
read out the question to the class and discuss why you asked this question, i.e., the rationale or thinking behind the question. The task of presenting the question in class will be rotated among the group. You are expected to participate equally in the question presentation task.

c) In-class group work: Each week we will do at least one group activity, followed by a whole class discussion. You will be assessed on how well your group contributes to the class discussion and the degree to which all group members are included in, and able to participate meaningfully in, group work.

Research essay proposal (15%)
Due Week 7, Monday 23 September 11:59 pm
800 words

The research essay proposal should contain the following elements:

1. State your essay question and explain why you are exploring this question. An essay question is not the same as an essay topic or subject area and needs to take the form of a question.
2. Discuss the key issues or points of debate in the secondary source literature. How will your analysis contribute to, extend or (perhaps) challenge this secondary literature? (You don’t necessarily need to disagree with previous authors on the subject, but good research projects extend the existing literature in new directions, ask new questions or contribute a fresh perspective.)
3. Discuss the theoretical or methodological approach/es you will take in the essay. As the purpose of this course is to deepen your understanding of historiography, you are expected to engage with theories and methodologies. You can draw on the approaches to history in the course syllabus, or other approaches we have not covered. But either way, I expect to see engagement with history theories and methodologies.
4. Discuss the available primary sources for the topic and any anticipated limitations in the primary source evidence. Using a mix of primary sources strengthens the analysis. If you only have access to certain kinds of primary sources, how will this impact your analysis?

The secondary literature, primary sources and theoretical approach (points 2-4 above) should be fully referenced in footnotes, using the Course Style Guide in the appendix to this syllabus. You should include a bibliography.

The proposal should be in prose, with full sentences and paragraphs. Although all four elements listed above need to be included in the proposal, the structure is up to you. If you like, you can organise the proposal under the following headings: Essay question;
Secondary literature; Theoretical and methodological approach; Primary sources. However, this is not compulsory.

The late submission penalty for this assignment is **2% per day** that the assignment is late.

**Take-home essay test (20%)**
Due Week 9, Friday 18 October 11:59pm
3 questions

During week 9, students will be given **5 full days (Monday 14 October 12:00 am until Friday 18 October 11:59 pm)** to complete a take-home test, in essay format.

The focus of the take-home test will be on analysing how *historical change* is perceived in the week 2-8 course readings. You may be asked to compare and contrast different compulsory readings. You may also be asked to examine how a particular compulsory reading relates to the broader methodology examined that week (e.g. Marxist, gender or postmodernist history): is there anything specific about this work that deviates from the broader approach with which it is associated?

You should include examples from the readings to illustrate your argument. Your answers should be clearly expressed and logically structured.

The responses will be marked on: a) argument and analysis; b) understanding of the historiography; c) evidence/supporting examples; d) structure; e) expression and grammar.

I do not recommend that you brainstorm your responses to the questions with other students. This can result in your essays having a very similar or identical argument to another student’s essays, which is plagiarism, even if the phrasing or structure is different. **Plagiarism will be penalised** according to NTU’s policies.

The essay responses should be **fully referenced in footnotes**, using the Course Style Guide in the appendix to this syllabus. However, a bibliography is not necessary.

The **late submission penalty** for this assignment is **5% per day** that the assignment is late. There is an increased penalty due to the time-sensitive nature of this assignment.
Research essay (45%)
Due exam week 1, Monday 18 November 11:59 pm
3000 words

The final research essay should be a well-argued and well-researched piece of writing, based on both primary and secondary source research.

The essay should:
- present a clear research question and a convincing overarching argument (please state the question itself at the beginning of the essay in a heading);
- analyze the major points of debate in the secondary literature on the subject and highlight how your approach is similar to and/or different from that of other historians;
- draw on relevant historical methodology/ies and theory/ies to frame the research question, approach and argument;
- analyse a variety of primary source data to support the argument of the essay.

The research essay can be a chapter of a student’s final year project (FYP).

The essay should be fully referenced in footnotes, using the Course Style Guide in the appendix to this syllabus.

The late submission penalty for this assignment is 2% per day that the assignment is late.

Assignment policies

Plagiarism and improper citation

NTU’s academic integrity policy applies at all times. If you don't know what plagiarism is or are unclear on the details, review this module: http://academicintegrity.ntu.edu.sg/for-students/module.

Plagiarism occurs when an author attempts to pass off the work of another author as their own. It is a serious offence. Assignments that have significant plagiarism will receive a fail mark. Assignments that contain minor incidents of plagiarism (e.g. inadequate paraphrasing or improper citation practices) will be significantly marked down or failed.

The following are general principles for proper citation:
  a) Quote sentences or phrases that you feel are particularly important or cannot be matched by paraphrasing. Every direct quote requires a reference in a footnote.
b) Paraphrasing material shows that you understand it and extensive quotes (particularly from secondary sources) are not recommended. **You need to reference a source in a footnote whenever you borrow an idea, argument or piece of information from another author.** If a paragraph or sentence contains material paraphrased from several different sources, you can cite multiple sources separated by semi-colons in one footnote at the end of the sentence.

### Late submission of assignments

The **late penalty varies** depending on the nature of the assignment. The following late submission penalties apply:

1. **Essay proposal: 2% per day that the assignment is late**
2. **Take-home format test: 5% per day that the assignment is late (due to the time-sensitive nature of the assignment)**
3. **Major essay: 2% per day that the assignment is late**

Written **feedback will not be given** on assignments that are **3 or more days late**.

### Extensions

It is each student’s responsibility to ensure that their assignment is **properly uploaded on Blackboard**. If you have any issues, immediately email me your assignment and an explanation of the technical difficulty you are having in order to minimize the deducted late penalty.

**If you require an extension please email me prior to day the assignment is due.** Extensions will only be given in cases of illness (in which a student presents a medical certificate) or in very serious (and rare) extenuating circumstances (such as a death or sudden hospitalization in the student’s family).
Course Outline

Week 1: Introduction

I will discuss the main objectives of the course, practical issues, and questions regarding assessment. I will also offer a brief introduction to some of the main questions, as well as a first macro-overview of some of the developments in twentieth-century historiography. For the introduction, I will base myself on these readings, which I will post on Blackboard (I do not expect you to read them before class, but they may be helpful for further study).

Non-compulsory reading (theory and method):

An example of mid-20th century historical critique:

Week 2: Annales

Compulsory reading:

Further reading (theory and method):
Week 3: Marxist Historiography and New Social History

Compulsory reading:

Further reading (theory and method):

Week 4: Postmodernism and the Linguistic Turn

Compulsory reading:

Further reading (theory and method):

Week 5: Gender

Compulsory reading:

Further reading (theory and method):
Week 6: Postcolonialism

Compulsory reading:

Further reading (theory and method):

Week 7: Subaltern Studies

Compulsory reading:

Further reading (theory and critiques):
Recess week

**Week 8: Microhistory**

*Compulsory reading:*
TBA

*Further reading (theory and method):*

*Another example of microhistory:*

**Week 9: NO CLASS - Take-Home Essay Format Test**

This week you have your take-home essay format test, running from Monday 12 am until Friday 11:59 pm and there is no class.

Please take note that during this week I am travelling for work, so it will take 24 hours for me to respond to any queries on the take-home. I can only answer the sorts of questions that I could answer in an exam, i.e., on the test instructions.

**Week 10: Oral History**

*Compulsory reading:*

*Further reading (theory and method):*

Another example of oral history:

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**Week 11: Global History**

**Compulsory reading:**

**Further reading (theory and method):**

Another example of global history:

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**Week 12: CLASS CHOICE – Environmental History OR History of Emotions**

Students will vote for which they would prefer—environmental history or the history of emotions—and we will cover the class choice this week.

Readings TBA.

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**Week 13: NO CLASS – Essay Writing Week**
Textbooks, Readers, and General Works on Historiography


Appendix: Course Style Guide

1. Format of all written assignments

1.A. Font

The essay should be in Times New Roman font. The body of paragraphs should be 12 point size. Headings should be 14 point size and footnotes 10 point size.

1.B. Spacing

The body of the essay (including block quotations) should be double spaced. However, footnotes may be single spaced.

2. Elements of style

2.A. Quotations

Double quotation marks should be used. Quotations within quotations should be indicated with single quotation marks. Place commas and full stops inside quotations and other punctuation marks (e.g. colons and semi-colons) outside the quotation, unless they are part of the quoted text.

Short quotes: Short quotations from other sources should be included in quotation marks within the body of the paragraph.

Block quotes: Quotations of four or more lines (before indenting) should be formatted as a block quote. In a block quote, the quoted text should be in a separate paragraph from the main text and indented from the margin. Neither italics nor quotation marks should be used in a block quote unless they appear in the original. The footnote to the quote should be included at the end of the quote, after the punctuation mark. The quoted text should be in double line spacing (like the main text).
2.B. Spelling

The essay should be in the English language. Students may use either American or British spelling, but should be consistent throughout. Quotations should follow the original text precisely, even if there are spelling or grammatical errors in the original. Students should insert “[sic]” after spelling and grammatical mistakes in quotations.

2.C. Italics

Italics should be used for non-English language words. However, words of non-English language origin that are commonly used in English (such as “bazaar”) do not need to be in italics. Moreover, foreign language proper nouns such as names, places, and organisations (for example, “Guomindang” or “Barisan Nasional”) should not be italicised.

2.D. References to titles in the text

References to the titles of books, pamphlets, films, etc. should follow the referencing style (see section 2 below). Thus, the following titles should be italicised: books; pamphlets; periodicals; plays; and films. The following should be enclosed in quotation marks: titles of articles; book chapters; unpublished works; and theses.

2.E. Brackets

Round brackets should be used in the main text (these are round brackets). Square brackets should be used for insertions in quotations, if an insertion is required so that the quoted sentence makes sense. For example: Washington stated in his 1796 Farewell Address, “The unity of government which constitutes you one people is also now dear to you [the American people].”

2.F. Numbers and dates

Spell out numbers less than ten, except for page numbers and dates, and material in footnotes and bibliography (see section 2 below on referencing style).
For dates, use the following forms: 20 December 1875; 1875–77; nineteenth century; 1870s; 200 B.C. and A.D. 200. Including A.D. is only necessary if non-inclusion would cause confusion. Abbreviations may be used in footnotes, e.g.: 20 Dec. 1875.

The following are examples of correct and incorrect references to decades:
The doctor gave up smoking back in the 1980’s. → Incorrect
The doctor gave up smoking back in the 1980s. → Correct
The doctor gave up smoking back in the ’80’s. → Incorrect
The doctor gave up smoking back in the ’80s. → Correct

3. Footnote and bibliography referencing style

Students are required to use the 16th edition of the Chicago Manual of Style, which is available on-shelf in the NTU library. Below are examples of footnote and bibliography references taken from the Chicago style guide.

3.A. Footnotes

The first time a work is referenced in the footnotes, a full reference (including full author name, title and publication details) should be used. Subsequent references should be shortened to author’s family name, short title and page number. When the same work is referenced in two consecutive footnotes, “Ibid., [page number]” should be used for the second footnote.

**Book**

One author

[Short reference: Pollan, *Omnivore’s Dilemma*, 3.]

Two or more authors

Four or more authors: List all of the authors in the bibliography; in the note, list only the first author, followed by et al. (“and others”):


Editor, translator, or compiler instead of author


[Short reference: Lattimore, *Iliad*, 24.]

Editor, translator, or compiler in addition to author


[Short reference: García Márquez, *Cholera*, 33.]

Chapter or other part of a book

Book chapter:


Preface, foreword, introduction, or similar part of a book


[Short reference: Rieger, introduction, xxxiii.]

Book published electronically

If a book is available in more than one format, cite the version you consulted. For books consulted online, list a URL. Include the year that the book was published, not the date it was put online, or the date you accessed it. If no fixed page numbers are available, you can include a section title or chapter number.


**Periodical**

**Article in a print journal**

In a note, list the specific page numbers consulted, if any. In the bibliography, list the page range for the whole article. If you access a print journal electronically, you do not need to include the URL or DOI (Digital Object Identifier). A DOI is a permanent ID that, when appended to http://dx.doi.org/ in the address bar of an Internet browser, will lead to the source. URL’s and DOI’s are only necessary for journals which are published in electronic format only (see below).


   [Short reference: Weinstein, “Plato’s *Republic,*” 452–53.]

**Article in an online journal**

Include a DOI if the journal lists one. If no DOI is available, list a URL. Do not include an access date.


**Article in a newspaper or popular magazine**

If you consulted the article online, include a URL; an access date is not necessary. If no author is identified, begin the citation with the article title.


Book review

[Short reference: Kamp, “Deconstructing Dinner.”]

Unpublished source

Essay or dissertation

[Short reference: Choi, “Contesting Imaginaires.”]

Paper presented at a meeting or conference

[Short reference: Adelman, “Such Stuff as Dreams.”]

Website

Because website content is subject to change, include an access date or, if available, a date that the site was last modified.


3. “Google Privacy Policy.” [Short reference]

3.B. Bibliography

The bibliography below contains examples of each of the source types listed above. **The source type is included in square brackets after the example. You obviously should not include this in your bibliography.** The sources should be listed in the bibliography according to alphabetical order (as below).

For journal articles and book chapters, include the page number range of the article/chapter in the bibliography. For other types of books, it is not necessary to include the pages or chapters you consulted.

Bibliography entries should be indented from the margin from the second line (as below).


