

GRS HI800: European Historiography

Professor Barbara Diefendorf

Office: 226 Bay State Road, room 402
Telephone: 353-8311; email: <bdiefend@bu.edu>
Office TR 11-12, T 2-3, and by appointment

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Tuesday 3:30-6:30
HIS 304

Books: (All are available at the BU Barnes and Noble Bookstore)

Thomas Kuhn, *The Copernican Revolution* (Harvard University Press)
Georges Lefebvre, *The Coming of the French Revolution* (Princeton)
Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (Vintage)
David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence* (Princeton)
Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms* (Johns Hopkins)
Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (Harper Perennial)

Additional readings will be available through Mugar Library's electronic resources (especially JSTOR) or posted to the class Blackboard site [<https://learn.bu.edu/>] the week before they are due to be read and discussed in class.

Description: This course is designed to introduce graduate students to a variety of historical approaches within a European context and to develop their critical and analytical skills through intensive reading, writing, and discussion. The point is not simply to acquaint students with a specific body of literature, or "classics" in European history, or to expose them to the methodological diversity that has characterized the writing of European history. Rather, our main task is to critically analyze changing attitudes toward sources, methods, analytic models, and narratives in European history and to attempt to draw from this useful lessons about the practice of history.

Requirements and Expectations: The course meets as a seminar; regular attendance and participation in discussion are essential. Written work will consist of (1) a one paragraph thesis statement (or "précis") for each book and article assigned, plus two suggested discussion questions each week; (2) three short essays evaluating particular sets of readings, and (3) a research proposal for a project in your own field of history that would employ some of the methods or insights drawn from books used in this class. Students will also do 10 minute oral presentations of their research proposals on the last day of class.

(1) For assigned books and articles, write a one-paragraph thesis statement, or "précis," that summarizes the work's argument. Do not simply tell what the piece is about; rather, identify the argument, or key points the author wants to get across. The paragraphs should be no longer than 250-400 words in length and are to be turned in on a weekly basis. I will read and make comments on them and return them, so that you can collect and turn them in again at the last class for a collective grade.

Email a double-spaced copy of the précis for each reading listed on the day's syllabus, along with two proposed discussion questions, to me at <bdiefend@bu.edu> by noon on the day of the class meeting at which these readings are to be discussed. Do not send the materials as an attachment but cut and paste them into the body of the email. Bring another copy to class to use as a starting point for the day's discussion, since I may not always have time to read and return the précis and questions on the day they are turned in.

Be sure to keep all of your précis and papers to turn in again at the last class. You will be graded on improvement on the précis and so are allowed but not required to rewrite them if, on the basis of my comments or your own impressions from class discussion, you think you were off base in your initial précis. If you rewrite the statement, you must nevertheless turn in the original with my comments at the end of the semester.

(2) Two essays analyzing assigned readings will be due in class on September 18 and November 13 respectively. The subject of each essay is given below, under the date for which it is due.

(3) The final written assignment, due by noon on Thursday, December 11, will be an ten to twelve page research proposal which you will develop by applying some of the insights and methods gained in our course readings to your own historical interests. You will not actually write the research paper you propose (at least not this semester) but rather will write an essay in which you set out the historical question or problem that you would want to examine if you were to write this paper, identify the principal sources you intend to use in researching the problem, and discuss the theoretical and methodological issues central to the project. You will give a ten to fifteen minute presentation of this proposal in the last class. You should plan to meet with your academic advisor early in the semester to discuss potential projects. I will begin asking for regular updates on your progress in defining a topic, scouting sources, and formulating a research hypothesis by mid-semester.

Summary of Written Assignments and Due Dates

Percent of Grade

Thesis statements, due for each reading	20%
First critical essay, due September 18	20
Second critical essay, due November 13	20
Research proposal, due December 11	20
Participation in class discussion and proposal presentation	<u>20</u>
Total:	100%

Unexcused late papers will be marked down a half grade (e.g.: B+ becomes B) for every day they are late. **All written work except your précis and study questions must be delivered in hard copy.** I cannot assume responsibility for downloading and printing out your assignments. If you cannot bring a paper to me in class, bring it to the History Department office (226 Bay State Road, room 308) and put it in my mailbox. Although it is rare, papers have been known to disappear from my mailbox (or be put in the wrong box), so if you put a paper in my box you should send me a second copy as an email attachment at the same time. The hard copy is what counts for grading, but the email back-up can serve as evidence of when the paper was submitted, in the unlikely event that there should be a question about this.

Attendance: I expect students to attend class regularly and to contact me if illness or other serious problems cause them to miss more than a very occasional class. I also expect them to contact me ahead of time if they will miss a paper deadline, to provide a valid excuse for that missed deadline, and to make up the missed work as soon as possible. Students who miss more than one class for an **unexcused absence** will have their grade for the course lowered one-half grade for every additional unexcused absence.

Academic honesty: Finally, I expect students to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty as outlined in the university's Academic Conduct Code [available at <www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/>]. All work handed in for credit must be your own. I will refer cases of suspected academic misconduct to the Dean's Office and assign a grade of "F" for the course to any student whose work is judged by the Dean (after a hearing before a faculty/student Academic Conduct panel) to be plagiarized.

Course Outline and Assignments: *Readings and written assignments are to be completed by the beginning of class on the day for which they are assigned.* Journal articles are available online through the BU Library home page (search "ejournals A-Z" by journal title) unless otherwise noted, in which case they will be available on the course website (on the BU website, select "students" then "Blackboard" and then "HI800 European Historiography"; you will want to bookmark the site for future reference).

1. 9/2 Introduction: Thinking about History

Reading: Smith, Bonnie G. "Gender and the Practice of Scientific History: The Seminar and Archival Research in the Nineteenth Century," *The American Historical Review* 100:4 (October 1995): 1150-76.

Assignment: Prepare to discuss this article and, more generally, to talk about the questions of what history is, why we do it, and how we study and write it. To this end, bring in a book that inspires you to want to study history, and come prepared to talk for 5-10 minutes about what it is that you admire in this book and why. (The book does not need to be in European history, and you do not need to do a thesis statement for the Smith article.)

2. 9/9 Intellectual History and Historical Paradigms

Reading: Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Copernican Revolution*.

–Thomas S. Kuhn, Chapters 1 and 2: “Introduction: A Role for History” and “The Route to Normal Science,” in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd ed. (Chicago, 1970), pp. 1-22 (Available on the course Blackboard site).

– David A. Hollinger, “T.S. Kuhn’s Theory of Science and Its Implications for History,” *The American Historical Review* 78:2 (April 1973): 370-93 (available through JSTOR).

Assignment: A one paragraph thesis statement for Kuhn’s *Copernican Revolution* and the Hollinger article; two questions you propose for discussion of the book. Due by noon.

–The first part of our discussion will focus on how Kuhn tries to convince his reader of the correctness of his argument. In other words, how is the book structured to convey his argument? What kinds of evidence are used, and how? What sorts of rhetorical devices or strategies are used? [These are questions you should ask yourself in preparing to discuss each of the works assigned this semester.] The second part of our discussion will turn on the question of Kuhn’s concept of “paradigms” and the implications of his theory of science for history.

3. 9/16 History as Class Conflict

Reading: Georges Lefebvre, *The Coming of the French Revolution*.

–Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, “Who Intervened in 1788? A Commentary on *The Coming of the French Revolution*,” *The American Historical Review* 71 (1965): 77-103.

– Rejoinders of Jeffry Kaplow and Gilbert Shapiro, *The American Historical Review* 72 (1967): 497-522.

– If you have not previously read it, you should also read Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (online at www.marxists.org).

Assignment: One paragraph thesis statements for Lefebvre, Eisenstein, Kaplow, and Shapiro and two questions you propose for discussion of Lefebvre. Due by noon.

Paper 1: due in my mailbox by noon on Thursday, 9/18: An essay (5-8 double-spaced pages) evaluating the value of the concept of “paradigm change” for historians. Be sure to bring in both Kuhn’s *The Copernican Revolution* and Lefebvre’s *The Coming of the French Revolution* as test cases in your essay (but also other works of history with which you are familiar if you wish). Due in class..

4. 9/23 Varieties of Social History

Reading: Lucien Febvre, *Life in Renaissance France*, ed. and tr. Marian Rothstein, xiii-xx, 1-23 and 70-90 (Introduction and chapters 1, “The Silhouette of a Civilization,” and 3, “The Quest for God” (on Blackboard).

– Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, tr. Siân Reynolds (New York, 1972), prefaces and tables of contents (on Blackboard).

–H. R. Trevor-Roper, “Fernand Braudel, the *Annales*, and the Mediterranean,” *The Journal of Modern History* 44:4 (December 1972): 468-79.

– E.P. Thompson, “The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century,” *Past and Present*, no. 50 (February 1971): 76-136.

– Natalie Zemon Davis, “The Rites of Violence: Religious Riot in Sixteenth-Century France,” *Past and Present*, no. 59 (May 1973): 51-91.

– *Recommended:* Interviews with E.P. Thompson and Natalie Zemon Davis published by MARHO (the Radical Historians Organization) in *Visions of History*, pp. 5-23 and 99-122 (on Blackboard).

Assignment: One paragraph thesis statements for the Thompson and Davis articles, and two questions for discussion. Due by noon.

5. 9/30 **Rethinking Social History: The Social Sciences and the Power of Events**

Reading: Susan Desan, "Crowds, Community, and Ritual in the Work of E. P. Thompson and Natalie Davis," in *The New Cultural History*, edited by Lynn Hunt, 47-71 (on Blackboard).

– Charles Tilly, "Anthropology, History, and the Annales," *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 1:3/4 (Winter-Spring 1978): 207-13.

– François Furet, "Beyond the Annales," *The Journal of Social History* 55:3 (September 1983): 389-410.

– William H. Sewell, Jr., "Historical Events as Transformations of Structures: Inventing Revolution at the Bastille," *Theory and Society* 25:6 (December 1996): 841-81 (JSTOR).

Assignment: A one paragraph thesis statement for the Desan, Tilly, Furet, and Sewell articles and two questions you propose for discussion. Due by noon.

6. 10/7 **Microhistory**

Reading: Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms*. (If you do not have the 2013 edition of the book, you should also read the new preface, which I will post to Blackboard).

Assignment: A one paragraph thesis statement for Ginzburg and two questions you propose for discussion. Due by noon.

– Bring in three reviews of *The Cheese and the Worms* and prepare to discuss the way these reviews situate the work in a broader historical field.

7. 10/14 No class: Monday schedule

8. 10/21 **Postmodernism and Cultural History**

Reading: Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*.

– Patricia O'Brien, "Michel Foucault's History of Culture," in Lynn Hunt, ed., *The New Cultural History*, 25-46 (on Blackboard).

Assignment: One paragraph thesis statements for Foucault and O'Brien and two questions you propose for discussion. Due by noon.

9. 10/28 **History and Gender**

Reading: Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review* 91 (1986): 1053-75.

– Elizabeth Heineman, "The Hour of the Woman: Memories of Germany's 'Crisis Years' and West German National Identity," *The American Historical Review* 101:2 (April 1996): 354-95.

– Joan W. Scott, "Unanswered Questions" in the *AHR* Forum: Revisiting Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review* 113:5 (December 2008): 1422-29 (you do not need to read the entire forum; it is Joan Scott's reflections on her own earlier article that will interest us here).

Assignment: One paragraph thesis statements for Scott's "Gender" and the Heineman article and two questions you propose for discussion. Due by noon.

10. 11/4 **History and Alterity**

Reading: David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence*.

– R. I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Authority and Deviance in Western Europe, 950-1250*, 2nd ed., vi-x, 1-5, and 144-71 (preface to the second edition, Introduction, and chapter 5, "A Persecuting Society.")

Assignment: One paragraph thesis statements for Nirenberg and two questions you propose for discussion. Due by noon.

– Bring in three reviews of *Communities of Violence* or *The Formation of a Persecuting Society* and prepare to discuss both the principal criticisms raised of these books and the way in which the authors of the reviews situate them in the broader historical literature.

11. 11/11 **Europe and the World: Orientalism, Postcoloniality, and Transnationalism**

Reading: Edward W. Said, "Introduction," in *Orientalism* (New York, 1978), 1-28 (on Blackboard).

–Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for 'Indian' Pasts?" *Representations* 37:2 (1992): 1-23.

–Carola Dietze, "Toward a History on Equal Terms: A Discussion of 'Provincializing Europe'," *History and Theory* 47:1(February 2008), 69-84.

–Dipesh Chakrabarty, "In Defense of *Provincializing Europe*: A Response to Carola Dietze," *History and Theory* 47 (February 2008): 85-96.

–"AHR Conversation: On Transnational History," in *The American Historical Review* 111: 3 (December 2006): 1440-64. Participants: C. A. Bayly, Sven Beckert, Matthew Connelly, Isabel Hofmeyr, Wendy Kozol, and Patricia Seed.

Assignment: One paragraph thesis statements for Said, Chakrabarty (both articles), and Dietze and two questions that you propose for discussion. Due by noon.

Paper 3: Due in my mailbox on Thursday, November 13: Write an essay of 7 to 10 pages presenting a discussion of *one* of the following questions:

- 1) What are some of the ways in which historians have tried to account for the motivations underlying human actions? What are the advantages and limitations of each of the approaches you discuss?
- 2) What is the role of narrative in history, and why is this role debated? Consider in your answer the problem of voice and viewpoint but also the challenge of theorizing events.
- 3) How have historians tried to grapple with the desire to incorporate previously unheard voices into their histories, and how successful would you judge these efforts?
- 4) What are some of the ways in which historians have theorized the underlying structures that influence history? What are the advantages offered by a structural approach to history, and what are the limitations of this approach?

Draw your evidence and examples from the historical readings to date. Remember, though, that what is important here is a discussion of historical methods and not a recounting of the readings. You may use short-form citations (eg.: Kuhn, 42) as appropriate.

12. 11/18 **Unmastered Pasts**

Reading: Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (1998 reprint edition, with a new "Afterword")

–Eric D. Weitz, "The Modernity of Genocides: War, Race, and Revolution in the Twentieth Century," in *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective*, ed. Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan (Cambridge, 2003), 53-73 (on Blackboard).

Assignment: One paragraph thesis statements for Browning and Weitz and two questions you propose for discussion. Due by noon.

13. 11/25 Individual appointments to discuss research proposals

14. 12/2 **History and Memory**

Reading: Robert G. Moeller, "War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany," *The American Historical Review* 101 (1996): 1008-48.

– Alan Confino, "Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method," *The American Historical Review* 102 (1997): 1372-85.

–Gavriel Rosenfeld, "A Looming Crash or a Soft landing? Forecasting the Future of the Memory 'Industry'," *The Journal of Modern History* 81:1 (March 2009), 122-58.

Assignment: One paragraph thesis statements for Moeller, Confino, and Rosenfeld and two questions you propose for discussion. Due by noon.

15. 12/9 **Doing History:** Oral presentations on final projects

Assignment: Research proposal due by noon on Thursday, December 12, along with a folder containing all of the work turned in over the course of the semester.

Paper 3 is to be a research proposal of the sort that graduate students submit to their thesis advisors when planning a dissertation and historians submit to outside foundations when applying for a fellowship or research grant. Your proposal should be 10-12 double-spaced pages in length, plus a one-page bibliography listing the primary sources and secondary works that you would need to examine for such a project. The proposal should begin with a paragraph or two outlining the subject of the project and explaining why it deserves further study. The proposal should then give a fuller background on the subject, setting it into the appropriate historiographical context and explaining what documentary sources might offer new insights into the topic. The proposal should also set out, at least as a hypothesis, the working thesis or argument that you would hope to demonstrate through your research. Finally, it should discuss the theories or historical methods that you plan to apply in researching the topic. In other words, the essay should put to use the historical skills you have acquired during the semester but slant them toward your own research interests. It should refer back to this semester's readings where relevant, though the topic itself will not necessarily be in European history.

You will also make a 10-15 minute oral presentation of your research proposal during the last class meeting. As with the written proposal, you should explain how you arrived at your topic, why the questions you propose to ask are significant ones, and how you would go about answering them if you were to undertake the research project. Note that the 15 minute limit means that you will not have time simply to read your paper out loud. Instead plan on presenting your thinking to your peers so as to involve them in your work. Let me know if you want to use PowerPoint for your presentation.