HI:200 The Historians’ Craft
Spring 2019
History Dept., Room 504
Thursdays, 3:30-6:15pm

Instructor:
Prof. Alexis Peri
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226 Bay State Rd. #203
Office Hours: Tuesdays 10-12 and Thursdays 2-3 & by appointment

Course Description:
What is history? Why don’t historians all work by a unified, singular historical method, as scientists do? Is history a science, a humanity, a social science, or none of the above? And what is it like to be a professional historian? We will confront these questions. We will interrogate the practice of history and think deliberately about how best to produce and consume representations of the past. Students will hone their skills in finding and interpreting primary sources (ranging from archival documents and photographs to maps, films, and exhibitions) and secondary sources, examining how scholars represent the same set of events in strikingly different ways.

Course Objectives:
• Understand what history is and how historians produce and secure knowledge
• Formulate robust research questions from reading primary and secondary sources
• Create and conduct an effective research plan
• Properly attribute historical borrowing with citations and references
• Practice persuasive argumentation, in written and oral form

“People are trapped in history, and history is trapped in them.” James Baldwin, Notes of a Native Son

“Historians are gossips who tease the dead.” Voltaire, Scribbling Books

“History is philosophy teaching by examples.” Thucydides

“History is a pack of lies about events that never happened told by people who weren’t there.” George Santayana

People are trapped in history, and history is trapped in them.” James Baldwin, Notes of a Native Son
Learning Outcomes- A Checklist:
You will possess the following essential skills that will serve you at BU and beyond:

✓ To “gut” a complex historical monograph in a short amount of time, distilling its argument, methodology, and stakes
✓ To write professional-style AHA book reviews
✓ To analyze primary sources critically
✓ To work with archivists and archival sources
✓ To locate recent historical sources in a variety of forms using BU’s library system
✓ To research and write a historical essay
✓ To become critical viewers of maps, museum exhibits, and documentary films
✓ To apply for internships and jobs seeking applicants with a history major’s skills
✓ To interrogate historical claims and assumptions that surround us in everyday life

Finally, you not only will scrutinize the methods of practicing historians, you will think about the kind of historian you want to become at BU and beyond.

Required Readings:
• Timothy Tackett, When the King Took Flight (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

These books are on reserve at Mugar Library

All other required readings are posted on Blackboard

I require you to bring copies of the readings to the class period for which they are assigned. We will work through the readings and read aloud from them.

Course Requirements:
Attendance & Active Participation 30%
2 Book Reviews (2-3 pages each) 26% (13% each)
Library Scavenger Hunt 3%
Primary Source Analysis Paper (3-4 pages) 15%
Virtual Research Paper (9-10 pages) or Teaching History Project (9-10 pages) (for history education majors)

Grade Scale:
- A = 93-100
- A- = 90-92
- B+ = 87-89
- B = 83-86
- B- = 80-82
- C+ = 77-79
- C = 73-76
- C- = 70-72

Essays & All Written Work:
All papers must be typed in Times New Roman, 12-point font and double-spaced with 1-inch margins. Every essay must have a title, page numbers, and footnotes in Chicago Style format. Footnotes should be single-spaced and in 10-point font. A citation guide and grading rubric are posted on Blackboard.

Attendance:
Students should prepare for, attend, and actively participate in all class meetings. I monitor your contributions and preparedness (do you read attentively, do you have the reading with you, etc.). Students are allowed 2 unexcused absences without penalty. Additional, undocumented absences will hurt a student’s grade. Students who miss 4 or more classes will be in danger of not passing the course.

Student athletes, musicians, and actors and others whose extracurricular activities may conflict with the class must tell me within first 2 weeks of class what dates they will miss, so that arrangements can be made for them to make up work. They should also notify me as soon as possible if conflicts emerge because of postseason play, performances, etc.

Any student who is unable to take the quizzes, midterm, or final at the scheduled times must give me 2 weeks (14 days) prior notice.

Late Work:
Assignments are to be handed in on the date listed below at the very start of class or by the specific time listed. A paper will be marked down 1/3 of a grade for each day it is late (an A will become an A-, a B+ will become a B, etc.). I will not accept assignments that are more than 7 days late. If you need an extension, let me know well in advance (at least 6 days). I consider extensions when there is a compelling reason and sufficient notice. Do not ask for an extension right before the deadline.

Laptops and Mobile Devices:
Laptops maybe used to take notes or consult the readings. Cell phones and other mobile devices must be silenced and cannot be used at any time. If students are using laptops or
other devices for purposes other than taking notes and analyzing assigned readings, the privilege to use them will be revoked by the instructor.

**Accommodations:**
Students with documented disabilities who need accommodations should contact me as early in the semester as possible. Please contact Office of Disability Services at 353-3658 for information. All discussions will be confidential.

**Academic Honesty:**
Plagiarism—the passing off of another person’s research, ideas, or writing as one’s own—and cheating will not be tolerated. Paraphrasing without acknowledgment of authorship also is plagiarism. If I witness or hear of any academic dishonesty, I am obligated to report it to the Dean’s Office. You are responsible to know and follow the BU Academic Conduct Code: [http://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/](http://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/)

**Schedule of Readings & Assignments**

1/24: Introduction
- In-class clip: The History Boys (dir. Nicholas Hytner, 2006)
- In-class mystery documents

1/31: What is History? Why aren’t we sure?

**Unit I: Historians at Work: Reconstructing and Debating the Past**

**Unit 1 Assignments:**

**2 Professional-Style Book Reviews:**
You will write 2 book reviews, written in the format prescribed by the American Historical Association’s main journal, *American Historical Review (AHR)*. Your review should cover the main historiographical work(s) assigned for 2 of the 3 classes between 2/14 and 2/28. Each review is due at the start of the class for which the reviewed readings are assigned. Each review should be 2-3 double-spaced pages in length. Do not exceed 3 pages. Scan through recent *AHR* reviews (on JSTOR and on blackboard) as models and follow their example closely. At the top of the page, give the full citations of the work(s) in Chicago-style format. Then write a review that 1. briefly summarizes the main content and arguments 2. Analyses those arguments and how well they are constructed and
supported with evidence (i.e. the book’s sources and method) 3. If relevant, analyzes the works comparatively, creating a dialogue between their authors, methods, and arguments. 4. Sign the review with your name, institutional affiliation, and email address. **Before you write, check out the grading rubric** for the book reviews on blackboard. There is also a **citation guide** on blackboard. There is no need to bring in outside sources, but if you do, cite them using footnotes in Chicago style.

If you wish, you can write 3 book reviews, one for each week, and I will drop your lowest score.

In advance of tackling the readings and **before writing your first review**, read:

2/7: Fact and Fiction in Historical Narratives
- Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre*
- Finlay/ Davis debate in the *American Historical Review*, Vol. 93 (June 1988)
- In-class clip: “The Return of Martin Guerre” (dir. Daniel Vigne, 1982)

2/14: How do Revolutions Happen?
- Timothy Tackett, *When the King took Flight* (all)

2/21: Explaining Human Behavior: The Holocaust
- Daniel Goldhagen, *Hitler’s Willing Executioners* (Introduction, Chapters 2, 6-9, Epilogue and Appendix 1: “Note on Method”)
- Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men* (preface, Chapters 1, 5-9, 16-18 and Afterword)

2/28: History in Politics and Morality: The Atomic Bomb Controversy
- Wilson D. Miscamble, *The Most Controversial Decision: Truman, the Atomic Bombs, and the Defeat of Japan*
- Ronald Takaki, *Hiroshima: Why America Dropped the Atomic Bomb*

**Unit II: Sources, Methods, and Approaches**

**Unit 2 Assignments:**
**Library Scavenger Hunt:** This assignment will be given out on 3/28. You will begin it during that class period and have until 6 pm on 3/29 to hand it in. Please place it in my mailbox in the History Department’s main office: 226 Bay State Rd. #308. If after 5pm, please put it in the office’s drop box/mail slot.
**Primary Source Analysis:** Give a detailed, critical, close reading of a primary source that you located during our visit to the Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center. Go back to the archive and study your source in-depth. Write a 3-4 page essay analyzing and interpreting the article. After describing the item, 1. give its context (who produced it, when and where was it made, what was its purpose, who was it made for). 2. Work with the specific details of the artifact to discern what historical narrative it might tell or what insights it reveals. 3. Discuss how this item might be a useful source for a research project. How would you use it? Please consult the rubric for essays on blackboard for how you will be graded. This assignment is due on 4/11 by 10pm in electronic form. Please email your assignment to me as a Pdf or a Microsoft Word format.

3/7: NO CLASS MEETING.

3/14: NO CLASS. SPRING BREAK

3/21: The Craft of Research
- Peruse Mugar’s “history” Subject Guide: [http://archives.bu.edu/collections/subjects](http://archives.bu.edu/collections/subjects)

Meet at Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center, 5th Floor of Mugar Library at 3:30, for a session with archivist Sarah Pratt on the archive’s collections. You will start your primary source analysis paper during this session!

3/28: How we Read and Analyze: Primary Sources, in Print and on Display
- LIBRARY SCAVENGER HUNT BEGINS! Given out in class; due 3/29 by 6pm

**Unit III: Historians in the Field and in Public**

**Unit 3 Assignment:**
**Topic For Virtual Research Paper:** Please hand in 1. a stated topic for your virtual research project (project as a whole is described in detail at the end of the syllabus), 2. A statement of your primary research question(s) 3. an annotated bibliography that includes 2 primary sources and 2 secondary sources. This is due on 4/25 at the start of class.
4/4: Putting your History Skills to Work: Professionalization and Landing that Position
  • Class visit from Ms. Jesse Ohrenberger, Associate Director of Career Education, Boston University Center for Career Development
    Please be sure to bring a networked laptop computer/tablet to this class

4/11: History on Display: Maps and Museums

4/11: PRIMARCY SOURCE ANALYSIS DUE, 10pm. Please email the paper to the instructor as a Microsoft Word or a pdf document. Please put your name in the file and in the file name.

4/18: History on the Big Screen: Documentary Film
  • Visit from Documentary Film Producer, Writer, and Historian Gene Tempest

4/25: Being There: The Historian’s Role
  • Kate Brown, *Dispatches from Dystopia* (Chpts 1, 3, 5) *This is an unpublished manuscript and cannot be circulated or cited without the author’s permission.*

TOpic FOR VIRTUAL RESEARCH PAPER DUE, START OF CLASS (see above for instructions re. 3 items of which ‘topic” consists)

5/2: Conclusions: Where do we go from here?
  • “What will Historians Say about 2018?” *Politico*, 28 December 2018
  • Rael, Under “Editing and Evaluation,” read “Peer Evaluations,” section 8b
    [http://www.bowdoin.edu/writing-guides/](http://www.bowdoin.edu/writing-guides/)
  • In-class peer: review of drafts of virtual research projects

5/9 Final Project Due, 10 pm in electronic format. Please email your paper to the instructor as a Microsoft Word or a pdf document. Please put your name in the file and in the file name.
Virtual Research Paper, Due May 9th at 10 pm

You will prepare all the major components of a research paper without writing the paper itself. This project should serve as good preparation for any research paper you may write in the future, including your thesis. This assignment has 3 components; the sum total of them should equal 9-10 double-spaced pages in 12-point font and with 1-inch margins.

Your assignment is to complete:
1. An annotated bibliography of at least 8 secondary sources and 3 primary sources. After you give the properly formatted bibliographic citation, write a 1-paragraph annotation that summarizes the content of that source and how you will use it for your paper. Format all citations in Chicago style. Your secondary sources must be from reputable, academic presses or peer-reviewed popular presses and they should be current, no earlier than the 1990s. One of your 8 sources may be from an assigned reading on the syllabus.
2. 3 primary source analyses of your chosen sources. These primary sources must be from the Howard Gotlieb archives or from another archival or special collections library (examples could be: a museum or university archive, the Massachusetts Historical Association, etc.). Your primary sources may include: photographs, letters, diaries, public records, oral histories, etc. Each of your analyses should be 2 pages. You may revise one of the analyses you have already written for the class if it is relevant to your topic.1
3. An opening, introductory paragraph for the paper, which proposes a research question and offers a specific, concrete, and debatable thesis.2

Topics You may select your own topic, just be sure there is an adequate primary source base available here at BU or in Boston. I highly recommend selecting a topic that you would consider tackling for your thesis. Below are the collections held at the Gotlieb archive, but there are other possibilities. These are vast subject areas; your project must not only look at a specific topic, but take a concrete stance on that topic.

- Advertising Subject Guide
- African American Collections
  - Business and Economics Subject Guide
  - Drama Subject Guide
  - Education Subject Guide
  - History and Culture Subject Guide
  - Journalism Subject Guide
  - Music Subject Guide
  - Novels Subject Guide

1 For a discussion of primary sources, please see “How to Read a Primary Source,” in Patrick Rael, Reading, Writing, and Researching for History: A Guide for College Students (Brunswick, ME: Bowdoin College, 2004), Section 2B, 16-19. Also see the UWM Library’s online Research guide for History 293.
2 For a description of forming a hypothesis (or thesis), please see Rael, “The Thesis,” Section 5C, pp. 52-58.
• Nursing Subject Guide
• Poetry Subject Guide
• Politics, Public Affairs, and Social Activism Subject Guide
• Visual Arts Subject Guide

• Artists, Cartoonists, and Illustrators Subject Guide
• Children's Literature Subject Guide
• Civil Rights Subject Guide
• Criminals, Cops, and Judges Subject Guide
• Criticism Subject Guide
• Cuisine, Nutrition, and Agriculture Subject Guide
• Dance Subject Guide
• Diplomacy Subject Guide
• Editing and Publishing Subject Guide
• Espionage Subject Guide
• Helen Deutsch Research Section
• History and Biography Subject Guide
• Humor, Comedy, and Satire Subject Guide
• Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi Collections Subject Guide
• Irish Collections Subject Guide
• Italian Collections Subject Guide
• Jewish Studies Subject Guide
• Journalism Subject Guide
• LGBT Subject Guide
• Literary Collections Subject Guide
• Mass Communications Subject Guide
• Military History Subject Guide
• Music Collections Subject Guide
• Musicology Subject Guide
• Mystery and Suspense Fiction Subject Guide
• New Yorker Magazine Subject Guide
• Opera Subject Guide
• Philosophy Subject Guide
• Photography Subject Guide
• Poetry Subject Guide
• Propaganda Subject Guide
• Public Affairs Subject Guide
• Public Relations Subject Guide
• Radio Subject Guide
• Religion and Spirituality Subject Guide
• Romance Languages Subject Guide
• Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror Subject Guide
• Science Subject Guide
• South African Collections Subject Guide
Television Subject Guide
The Hollywood Ten and the Blacklist Era Subject Guide
The Vietnam War Subject Guide
Theatre and Film Subject Guide
Translation Subject Guide
Women’s Studies Collections

- Children's Literature Subject Guide
- Drama, Film, and Television Subject Guide
- Education Subject Guide
- History and Culture Subject Guide
- Journalism Subject Guide
- Music and Dance Subject Guide
- Novels and Short Stories Subject Guide
- Poetry Subject Guide
- Politics, Religion, Public Affairs, and Social Activism Subject Guide
- Popular Fiction Subject Guide
- Science and Health Professions Subject Guide
- Visual Arts Subject Guide

For more, go to:
http://hgar-srv3.bu.edu/home
http://hgar-srv3.bu.edu/web/guest/collections/subjects

Teaching History Project for History Education Majors, Due May 9th at 10 pm

In lieu of doing the virtual research paper, you can choose to do this alternative project. It will be due on the same date and in the same format as the virtual research paper, comprise the same length, and be worth the same amount. Include any necessary footnotes.

This assignment has 3 components; the sum total of them should equal 10-12 double-spaced pages in 12-point font and with 1-inch margins.

4. Write 2-3 pages that summarize your pedagogical approach and how you will incorporate it into your history lesson plans. This should include:
   i. a discussion of how you think history should be presented to students (be sure to specify ages/grade-level is your target audience, based on your particular focus/expertise)
   ii. what methods you would use (in terms of sources, approaches, frameworks, scholarly debates, etc)
iii. what your learning objectives would be for your students studying history.
iv. Which historical, historiographical, and methodological issues might your raise with them, how, and why?

5. Compose 3 original history lesson plans. Each lesson plan should be about 3 pages. The lesson plans should include the historical background required for the lesson, the main learning objectives, the academic and historical skills that will be gained, and all materials required for the lesson. You should also explain the procedure you would use to go about teaching the lesson plan (order of events i.e. how will you introduce the lesson, when will you ask guiding questions, when will you present a new source, etc.). If assignments or activities are incorporated into your lesson plan, you should include all aspects of these assessments (what resources the students will require, how long will they have to complete the assignment, the specific skills students will use, etc).

6. All class materials, activity instructions, handouts, assignments or similar components mentioned in your lesson plans should be made and handed in with the project.

CHECKLIST FOR YOUR PROJECT

✓ Is my statement of teaching philosophy/pedagogical approach clear and specific about:
  o What I understand history to be/to mean
  o How I think history should be taught to students, based on my definition of it
  o What concrete methods/activities/techniques I will use to impart history this way
  o What overall learning objectives I have for my students

✓ Do I bring in specific examples to illustrate my points?
✓ Is my teaching philosophy/pedagogical approach 2-3 pages in length?

✓ Are each of my lesson plans:
  o Organized to show how the time period will be structured and what I will cover during that block
  o Specific about the topic to be covered and the specific historical/historiographical questions or sub-themes on which the lesson will focus (not just “I will do a unit on the progressives” but: “My lesson will cover: who were the progressives, why did they emerge from a particular social class and at a particular time in US history? What were their major aims and ideals? How successful were they in creating policy and programs to support those goals?”)
  o Designed around concrete learning objectives for that specific lesson
Based on specific sources (not just: “I will use photographs or personal accounts” but “I will use photographs of X, of the diary of Y, or the specific painting by Z”)

Connected to my pedagogical philosophy and overall teaching goals

✓ Somewhere in my materials, do I specify about the ages/grade-level that make up the target audience

✓ Do I include samples of the handouts, assignments, tasks, or assessments that I will use in class as well as my instructions to the students regarding them?