**WHAT IS HISTORY?**

History 101

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**Course overview**

You might think you know what history is: it's what happened in the past—the names, dates, and events that fill textbooks and high school classes. But think again. What actually happened in the past is not always clear. The past is the subject of intense conflicts—from "history wars" among academics and politicians to actual military confrontations between nations. History, then, is not about memorizing facts. It is about asking questions about the past, finding clues, and piecing those clues together into stories. Telling these stories forces us to make choices about what to put in and what to leave out; about main plots and subplots; about lead and supporting characters; and about how to connect the dots with our imaginations when information is lacking.

Does this mean history is fiction? Who gets to do history—whose stories should we listen to and accept as true? How are ideas and practices of history different in different parts of the world? How do political struggles, in the United States and around the globe, shape the way people see the past and use it in their everyday lives? Can history predict or improve the future, and if not, what is history for? Must histories only be written in books, or can myths, movies, music, art, or fairy tales fulfill a similar purpose? This course will introduce you to various ways in which scholars and societies in different global contexts have approached the past. But above all, it will teach you new ways of thinking critically about the world you live in—its past, present, and future.

This course is structured into two lectures per week, supplemented by a weekly discussion section. The discussion section will be conducted by your Graduate Student Instructor (GSI). Weekly section meetings complement lectures and can involve separate readings and exercises. These weekly meetings in smaller groups are an opportunity to discuss and further delve into material presented in lectures and course readings.

Since History 101 meets the Race and Ethnicity (R&E) requirement, we will do a lot of thinking about how ideas about race are formed and reproduced in different global contexts and with what effects. We will make frequent connections in our lectures, sections, and assignments between ideas of race, ethnicity, culture, and power in other places and times and in the present-day United States. We fully encourage students to further develop these connections and to share your thoughts about how studying the construction of racial and ethnic differences in other places and times helps you understand your present-day society.

This course is designed to help you develop a key set of competencies that will serve you well no matter what your further pursuits. These include:
• Critical inquiry and analysis
• Develop empathy through historical and cultural understanding
• Understand the complexity of the historical record, and thus of all experience
• Generate significant questions about the past, and develop strategies to answer them
• Craft (historical) narrative and argument
• Practice historical thinking as central to engaged citizenship

Required Texts

  Available for purchase at campus bookstores; a few copies on reserve at UGL.

• All other readings are in the coursepack.

  Students must bring all required texts to lecture and section.

Assignments and Grading Criteria

• A 3-4 page essay (due at the end of Unit I)......................................................... 15%
• Two reading quizzes.......................................................................................... 5%
• Three take-home exams (for Units II, III, and IV)........................................ 45%
• Lecture Participation: ....................................................................................... 15%
• Section Participation: ......................................................................................... 20%

All major assignments (essays, quizzes, and take-home exams) are also clearly marked throughout the syllabus with this icon: ✶.

Participation grades will be based on attendance in lecture and section, online posts for section, and engaged, thoughtful participation in lecture and section discussions. **This course uses iClickers for in-class exercises in the lecture sessions**, so please be sure to bring one to class every day. Points earned through responses to iClickers are part of your participation grade (15% of course grade—see above). iClicker questions will be based on course readings and other materials prepared in advance and/or material presented in class. 1 point will be awarded for each correct answer (there are usually 2-3 questions per session). In addition, iClicker responses will be used for attendance; you will receive an attendance point by responding to all iClicker questions for a session (whether your answers are correct or not).

All coursepack readings are numbered on the syllabus to match numbers in the coursepack, and they correspond to specific lectures. **You must complete the required readings before the stated lecture.**
The best way to prepare for class is to read actively—that is, read all of the assigned
texts with a critical eye, take notes, and come to sections and lectures ready to pose
questions and engage the ideas presented. We will post reading guides to help you
focus your reading and to draw connections between readings and lectures.

**Important:** Students must fulfill the requirements in all grading areas of this course. In
other words, you cannot sacrifice a percentage of your grade by choosing not to hand in
a particular assignment or failing to attend/participate in lecture or section and still
expect to pass the course.

**Unit I: Foundations**

1.1 | Introduction

1.2 | Thinking Our Way into the Past

2.1 | History's Ingredients I: Time and Space

2.2 | History's Ingredients II: Evidence and Narrative

3.1 | History's Ingredients III: Visual Sources Workshop

3.2 | A History of History
      Book 1, Chapters 1-13 (pp. 3-8)
      Book 2, Chapters 35-45 (pp. 108-114) and 142-147 (pp. 152-154).

4.1 | Foundations Revisited
   ✤ ESSAY on assigned section of Martin Bernal’s *Black Athena* due before lecture.

**Unit II: The Modern Discipline**

**4.2| History and the Nation-State**


**5.1| History and Empire I: The British in India**


**5.2| History and Empire II: The Black Legend**


**6.1| Can Fiction do History?**

- **READING QUIZ 1 on “The Highland Widow” to be completed before lecture.**


**6.2| New Histories I: Gender and Culture**


**7.1| New Histories II: Race and Power**


**7.2| New Histories III: Microhistory**

- **READING QUIZ 2 on Davis’ book to be completed before lecture.**

**Unit III: Thinking Outside the Book**

8.1 | Can Movies do History?: The Case of Martin Guerre (I)
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In-class viewing of *Le retour de Martin Guerre* (Director: Daniel Vigne, 1982).

8.2 | Can Movies do History? The Case of Martin Guerre (II)

Exam on Unit II due.

Finish in-class viewing of *Le retour de Martin Guerre*.

9.1 | Oral History
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9.2 | Embodied Pasts: History and the Senses (Guest Lecture)
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10.1 | Different Cultures, Different Experiences of History
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10.2 | The Double Helix of History and DNA (Guest Lecture)
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* For the second reading for this week, go to http://www.monticello.org/site/plantation-and-slavery/thomas-jefferson-and-sally-hemings-brief-account to read a brief account of the history of the relationship between Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings. Pay particular attention to the role of DNA in helping to uncover this story and revise longstanding historical narratives.
11.1 | **Music as History** *(Guest Lecture)*


**Unit IV: History in the Present**

11.2 | **History Wars**


12.1 | **The Public Life of History**

Before lecture, watch the following documentary about South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission: “Long Night’s Journey into Day” (Directors: Deborah Hoffman and Frances Reid, 2002).

12.2 | **Haunted Histories**

- **EXAM on Unit III due.**


13.1 | **Fairy Tales as History?**


13.2 | **Remembering and Representing War (I)**


In-class viewing of *Gallipoli* (Director: Peter Weir, 1981).

14.1 | **Remembering and Representing War (II)**


Finish in-class viewing of *Gallipoli*.

14.2 | **The Future of History**

- **EXAM on Unit IV due.**