

HIST 275 The Craft of History – short version for web

Spring 2024, University of Massachusetts-Amherst, Department of History

Professor Siddique

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What questions, problems, and concepts lie at the heart of modern historical inquiry? This course provides history majors with an introduction to philosophies of history, historical methodologies, general schools of historiography, and problems in professional development. We will consider how historians pose questions, and how they find, select, evaluate, interpret, and analyze evidence in order to propose answers to these questions. Finally, we will reflect upon the purposes and goals of both studying and writing history, at a moment when the discipline occupies a precarious position in the university and a contested position in society.

Our inquiry is grounded in an exploration of six key interconnected problems:

1. Who is the subject of historical inquiry?
2. How do historians think about space?
3. How do historians write about concepts?
4. How is historical knowledge produced?
5. How do historians think about causality?
6. How do historians think about the line between “fact” and “fiction” in writing about the past?

Finally, an *overarching theme* of the course will be the question of what the state of the historical profession is today – and specifically, why so many people believe it is in ‘crisis.’

Schedule

Monday, 2/5: Introduction

Maza, 1-9

Daniel Bessner and Michael Brenes, “A Moral Stain on the Profession,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 26, 2019

I. The History of Whom?

Wednesday, 2/7

Maza, 10-34

EP Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963), preface, chapter 1, chapter 6

Monday, 2/12

Maza, 34-44

Joan Scott, “Women in the Making of the English Working Class,” in *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 68-90, 231-232

Carolyn Steedman, "The Price of Experience: Women and the Making of the English Working Class," *Radical History Review*, 59 (1994), 108-119

Wednesday, 2/14

Ranajit Guha, "The Small Voice of History," 1993, in *The Small Voice of History: Collected Essays* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2002), 304-317

Monday, 2/19

No Class, President's Day

Wednesday, 2/21

Zeb Tortorici, *Sins Against Nature: Sex & Archives in Colonial New Spain* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), Introduction, chapters 1, 2, and 3

Paper #1 Due Friday, February 23

II. The History of Where?

Monday, 2/26

Maza, 45-71

Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections On the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983; 1991; London: Verso, 2006), 1-36, 187-206 [if you find the book interesting, please read more! It's a classic, and well worth reading in full. The listed page numbers are what is required, and which will be the focus of the discussion].

Wednesday, 2/28

Maza, 71-82

Martin W. Lewis and Kären Wigen, *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), preface, introduction, chapter 1, chapter 2, chapter 3

Monday, 3/4

Tessa Murphy, *The Creole Archipelago: Race and Borders in the Colonial Caribbean* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021), introduction, chapter 1, chapter 2, chapter 3

Paper #2 Due Friday, March 8

III. The History of What?

Wednesday, 3/6

Maza, 83-91

Quentin Skinner, "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas," *History & Theory*, 8 (1969), 3-53

Monday, 3/11

Maza, 91-108

Taylor M. Moore, "An (Un)Natural History: Tracing the Magical Rhinoceros Horn in Egypt," *Isis*, 114 (2023), 469-489

Wednesday, 3/13

Maza, 108-117

Leah Aronowsky, "Gas Guzzling Gaia, or: A Prehistory of Climate Change Denialism," *Critical Inquiry*, 47 (2021), 306-327

Monday, 3/18 and Wednesday, 3/20: No meetings; Spring Break

Monday, 3/25

Asheesh Kapur Siddique, *The Archive of Empire: Knowledge, Conquest, and the Making of the Early Modern British World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2024), **TBA**

Paper #3 Due Friday, March 29

IV. How Is History Produced?

Wednesday, 3/27

Maza, 118-124

Anthony Grafton, *The Footnote: A Curious History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), chapters 1, 2, and 3

Monday, 4/1: Visit from Dr. Kate Freedman, Librarian for History and Graduate Student Services

Wednesday 4/3

Maza, 124-137

Carl Becker, "Everyman His Own Historian," *American Historical Review*, 37 (1932), 221-236

Michael J. Brown, "Overlapping Origins, Diverging Paths: 'Public History' and the 'Public Intellectual,'" *The Public Historian*, 45 (2023), 7-42

Monday, 4/8

Maza, 146-156

History Workshop Journal Podcast on "Archives, Archiving, and Decolonisation," December 14, 2023

Rose Miyonga, "'We Kept Them to Remember': Tin Trunk Archives and the Emotional History of the Mau Mau War," *History Workshop Journal*, 96 (2023), 96-114

Jon Piccini, "'Thinking in Papua New Guinean Terms': the Sensitive Files Case of 1972 and Australia's Migrated Archive," *History Workshop Journal*, 96 (2023), 115-133

Paper #4 Due Friday, April 12

V. Causes or Meanings?

Wednesday, 4/10

Maza, 157-166

“AHR Conversation: Explaining Historical Change; or, The Lost History of Causes,” *American Historical Review*, 120 (2015), 1368-1423

Monday, 4/15: No class

Wednesday, 4/17

Maza, 166-178

William H. Sewell, Jr., “Historical Events as Transformations of Structures: Inventing Revolution at the Bastille,” *Theory and Society*, 25 (1996), 841-881

Monday, 4/22

Maza, 178-185

Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Basic Books, 1984), introduction, chapter 2

Wednesday, 4/24

Maza, 185-198

Keith Michael Baker and Dan Edelstein, “Introduction,” in Baker and Edelstein (eds.), *Scripting Revolution: A Historical Approach to the Comparative Study of Revolutions* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015), 1-11

Sarah Knott, “Narrating the Age of Revolution,” *William & Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 73, no. 1 (January 2016), 3-36

Paper #5 Due Friday, May 3

VI. Facts or Fictions?

Monday, 4/29

Maza, 199-208

Lorraine Daston, “Objectivity and Impartiality: Epistemic Virtues in the Humanities,” in Rens Bod, Jaap Maat, and Thijs Weststeijn (eds.), *The Making of the Humanities*, iii (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2014), 27-41

Wednesday, May 1

Maza, 209-216

Carolyn Steedman, “Something She Called A Fever: Michelet, Derrida, and Dust,” *American Historical Review*, 106 (October 2001), 1159-1180

Monday, May 6

Maza, 216-225

Arnold Davidson, “Closing Up the Corpses,” 1990, in *The Emergence of Sexuality: Historical Epistemology and the Formation of Concepts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 1-29

Ian Hacking, “Making Up People,” 1986, in *Historical Ontology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 99-114

V. Conclusion: Does History Have a Future?

Wednesday, May 8

L. Renato Grigoli, "The 2023 AHA Academic Jobs Report," *Perspectives on History*, September 2023

Daniel Bessner, "The Dangerous Decline of the Historical Profession," *New York Times*, January 14, 2023

Josh Carmony, "Ground Operations," *Contingent Magazine*, March 22, 2021

Erin Bartram, "A Profession, If You Can Keep It," *Contingent Magazine*, January 7, 2023

Asheesh Kapur Siddique, "Does Humanities Research Still Matter?," *Inside Higher Ed*, August 15, 2023

Paper #6 due Wednesday, May 15 in lieu of a final exam