Department of International History  
Academic year 2019 - 2020

Historiography: the Historian’s Craft  
HI080 - Fall- 6 ECTS  
Wednesday 16h15 – 18h00

Course Description

This course is designed as a guided tour through the discipline of history via a sampling of influential and/or innovative historiographical interventions since 1945. After an initial methods section, the course will focus on a series of key texts with divergent methodologies, from across time-periods, geographical foci, and subject matter. Together the class will engage in critical reading and analysis as we explore the kinds of questions that historians ask and the methods they use to answer them. The goal is both to broaden the students’ general historical education and also to help them narrow in on the methods most relevant to their own research.

PROFESSOR

Carolyn Biltoft  
carolyn.biltoft@graduateinstitute.ch

Office: P2 545  
Phone: +41 022 908 62 31  
Office Hours: W. 12:30-2:00

ASSISTANT

Frank Afari  
frank.afari@graduateinstitute.ch

Office: P2 501  
Phone: +41 77 233 93 54  
Office Hours: Thursdays 15:00-17:00

Syllabus

Grading Scheme

- Intermittent Writing Assignments/Participation 25%
- Final Paper 50% (12-15 pages)
- Peer Review 25%

Explanation Assignments:

- Short Writing Assignments
  Throughout the semester you will be expected to undertake a number of brief writing assignments. These will be explained further in class.

- Final Paper
  For your final paper you may choose one of three options. 1.) You may write a classic historiographical review essay based on any one of the group of readings covered in class. 2.) You may write a review essay or “literature review” relevant to your future. 3.) You may choose a primary source/document relevant to your own research and conduct a “close reading” or analysis of this document, using any of the secondary sources discussed in class as your “lens” or point of departure. Papers may be submitted in either French or English.
• **Professor/Peer Review Feedback**

We will dedicate an entire class period towards the end of the semester where you exchange/discuss your papers with a chosen partner in advance of submitting them for a final grade. Please take this part of the process seriously. You are here to learn to think and write as scholars, and this includes acquiring the ability to give and receive honest, constructive, and thoughtful feedback. Read your partner’s paper with great care, and plan to receive and consider their comments seriously as well. Everyone will give a copy of their comments on their partner’s papers to both their partner and to me.

*Please note that you may also always submit rough drafts to me. You need to give me at least one week BEFORE the due date however, so that we can return our comments to you a few days before your deadline.*

**Reading Schedule**

- **18/9 Welcome! The Labors and Pleasures of the Historian’s Craft**
  - **25/9 How do Historians Ask Questions?**
  - **2/10 How do Historians Read and Write?**
    - Jim Cullen, *Essaying the Past*, Part II
  - **9/10 Writing Assignment: What is your Driving Question?**
    - By Midnight, submit first to Frank Afari who will forward to Professor Biltoft
  - **16/10 Les Annales**

**Further Reading**


- **23/10 Historical Microcosms**

**Further Reading**

Francesca Trivellato, « Is There a Future for Italian Microhistory in the Age of Global History? » in California Italian Studies, 1 (2), 2011 found https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0z94n9hq

Alain Corbin, A History of Silence: From the Renaissance to the Present Day (New York: Polity, 2018)

• 30/10 Macrocosms:

Further Reading
  o Patrick Manning, Navigating World History: Historians Create a Global Past (Palgrave, 2003)
  o D Olstein, Thinking History Globally (NYC: Plagrave, 2014)

• 6/11 History And Memory

Further Reading
  o Takashi Yoshida, The Making of the 'Rape of the Nanking': History and Memory in Japan, China and the United States (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

• 13/11 Frank Afari on his research experience
• 20/11 Paper Proposal Due
• 27/11 Ideas and Discourse
Further Reading

- Hayden White « The Question of Narrative in Contemporary Historical Theory” *History and Theory* Vol. 23, No. 1 (Feb., 1984), 1-33

### 4/12 History Beyond the “Limits”


Further Reading


### 11/12 Writing Day

### 18/12 Exchange Rough Drafts with your Peer Review Partner (cc Professor Biltoft)