

Department of History
Graduate History Course Descriptions
Fall 2017

HIS 8016-001
1750-1800

American Nation

W 7:30 PM-9:30 PM

Dr. Catherine Kerrison

The Peace of Paris in 1763 concluded a titanic struggle between Great Britain and France, from which Britain emerged with an empire enlarged by the additions of India and Canada. The colonists of British North America shared in the euphoria of this victory. But no sooner was the peace arranged, than problems began. This course will examine the many facets of the American uprising, from its colonial origins through to nationhood. Beginning with the colonial background, for example, we will ask did the colonists and their king speak the same language? What really propelled colonial Americans toward Revolution? What did words like ‘revolution’ and ‘republic’ mean in the eighteenth century? And did the Revolution accomplish what it set out to do? Tracing the path to revolution and nationhood, the class will also critically examine the ways historians have treated this formative period, including the introduction of the voices of those long forgotten: Indians, slaves, women, and the poor.

HIS 8026

U.S. Civil War

W 5:20 PM-7:20 PM

Dr. Judith Giesberg

The South seceded for states’ rights, Union soldiers fought for emancipation, and Lincoln died a martyr -- what else is there to be said about the Civil War? Everything! Despite commonly held assumptions such as these, little about what we think we “knew” about the Civil War has stood the test of time, the scrutiny of modern scholarship, and the revelations that can be found in considering new sources and deploying new methodologies. Indeed, scholarship on the U.S. Civil War is more lively and fresh today than it has ever been, having received new energy from scholars interested social and political history, the history of gender, and comparative slave societies. In this course, students will explore this scholarship in a course organized around a series of historiographical questions, including “Why War,” “Why fight,” “Who freed the slaves,” “Regular v. irregular warfare” and “How to remember?”

Students in this class will conduct original primary source research.

HIS 8202-001

Cities and the Making of Modern Europe 1750-1914

T 5:20-7:20

Dr. Craig Bailey

Consider the amazing growth of London, a city with around 500,000 inhabitants in 1700. The population had reached a million by 1800, 2.5 million in 1850 and 6 million in 1900. This expansion brought with it a host of intense social, economic, and environmental problems. Clean water, fresh food, and safe housing were in short supply. Crime and disease were on the rise. Established hierarchies, customs, and traditional relationships, as well as firm boundaries between cultures, races and sexes, were perceived to be breaking down. An army of critics rose up to attack the urban, blaming cities for society's woes. The metropolis was cast as an unnatural place, inhumane and destructive. Terms such as "atomizing" were employed to explain the collapse of "normal" human relationships into desperate isolation. The loneliest place is a crowd, so to speak.

Cast in stark relief to this negative perspective, an entirely different way of understanding urban life emerged. Here, the city became a place of liberation and of possibilities. A "crucible of creativity" as one author we will read puts it, where the critical mass of people, ideas and energy can drive forward positive change. Here too is where urban planning makes its mark. The city serves as a unique laboratory, a place where, yes, problems occur in scale and magnitude, but also a place where the necessary resources, knowledge, expertise and determination can be pooled and marshaled to meet those challenges head on, providing solutions to common societal problems more generally.

This course acknowledges that cities also can serve as laboratories for the historian, and in this spirit will explore European History from 1750 to 1914 through the lens of urbanization. Topics to be examined include (but are not limited to): urban environments and life in the city; urban spaces, housing, the street and the public sphere; health and hygiene; migration; urban planning; and the meanings and condition of Modernity. Readings will cover multiple cities, though particular emphasis will fall on Paris, London and Vienna. Students will have the opportunity to pursue additional topics and/or cities in twenty-page paper. A complete required readings list will be distributed by email before the semester begins.

HIS 8231-001

French Revolution and Napoleonic Era

R 5:20-7:20 PM

Alexander Varias

This course will be concerned with the history of and around the French Revolution, which extends to the previous trends of the Enlightenment and the aftermath of Napoleon's empire. Among the topics to be examined are: the importance of the literary world of the Salons; the Grub Street writers; the economic and social crisis leading to the revolution; the Bastille; the fall of monarchy; the Terror, the revolutionary wars, religious concerns and conflicts; counter-revolutions, and international repercussions of the revolutions and its legacy. Readings include

works by Rousseau, Robert Darnton, and Georges Lefebvre. Course requirements include a bibliographic essay paper.

HIS 8410-001

Atlantic World 1500-1800

M 7:30-9:30

Dr. Cristina Soriano

A study of the Atlantic world in its imperial and economic aspects from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries, including Europe, the Americas, the Caribbean, and Africa.

HIS 8850-001

Theory and Methods in History

R 7:30-9:30 PM

Dr. Elizabeth Kolsky and Dr. Andrew Liu

This course is designed to equip MA students with the language, methods, and theoretical foundations of the historical profession. It introduces students to diverse approaches that historians have used to investigate and write history, including turns toward visual, material, and linguistic analysis. By familiarizing students with history's evolving methodologies and scholarly vocabulary, this course will give students the opportunity to critically examine the ideological frameworks and assumptions that underpin the production of history. Our study will range widely, both geographically and chronologically, and will pay close attention to the intersections between historical representations and forms of power.