HIST 5339: HISTORICAL THEORY & METHODS

FALL 2016

**INSTRUCTOR**: Christopher Morris

**OFFICE**: UH 346

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**OFFICE HOURS**: MWF

**SECTION INFORMATION:** HIST 5339/001

**TIME AND PLACE:** Monday Evening, 7-10, UH 13

**CONTENT AND OBJECTIVES**: This course is a basic introduction to the discipline of history and is required for all History M.A. and Ph.D. students. No prior knowledge of historiographical issues is expected or required, and the course therefore should be accessible to students regardless of their particular field of interest or concentration.

History is not just a craft; it is a way of thinking. It is an intellectual endeavor. This class is designed to make students think, not about the past, but about how historians think about the past. This we will do by jumping into some of the ongoing debates among historians over what it is they do and how they ought to do whatever it is they do. We will consider broad philosophical problems, survey some of the social theories underlying (explicitly and implicitly) much of modern historical thought, and review recent trends in the discipline. We will discuss current literary theories that question the whole enterprise of historical research and writing as it has been practiced over the last century. As historians, you will not want to take any of this lying down, so to speak, but will want to engage these important matters of life and death (for the discipline of history) intelligently, well informed, and enthusiastically.

The course will be divided into four or five sections, in which we will read about and discuss what it is historians do, or think they do, or say they ought to do. And then we will explore some examples of history theory and method applied to a particular topic. Historians disagree rather widely on what it is they do and how they do it. Some, you may be surprised to learn, don't believe the past is knowable at all. Others think it can be known, and know precisely. Some think the best histories tell good stories. Others think stories are for novels, and history is about analysis and explanation. It's enough to keep a good historian awake at night in existential insomnia. My intent is to give the class a few sleepless nights.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:** By the end of the semester students will be able: **A**) to explain what distinguishes history as an academic discipline; **B**) to describe the differences between fact, interpretation, and representation; **C**) to identify key issues and examples debated by (primarily but not exclusively U. S.) historians as they have argued over what differences there are between fact, interpretation, and representation; **D**) to identify many of the major (primarily but not exclusively U. S.) historians and the relevant texts in the history of historical theory and methods, since at least the mid-nineteenth century. Progress toward these outcomes will be monitored in class essays and discussions.

**TEXTS**:

Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*

Edward Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told*

Elkins, James. *Six Stories from the End of Representation: Images in Painting, Photography, Astronomy, Microscopy, Particle Physics, and Quantum Mechanics, 1980-2000*

Simon Schama, *Dead Certainties*

Other readings will be available for you to download and print at your convenience and expense.

**ASSIGNMENTS**:

Active participation in class discussions is absolutely essential. We will not be looking for correct answers in this class, or to solve issues once and for all. Instead, what we encourage is a willingness to grapple with complex and often contradictory ideas of what history really is, and this we will do as a group, by asking questions of one another, offering possible answers, suggesting new ways of looking at old issues, and of course suggesting entirely new issues. Open, forthright, but also polite discussion is essential to this process. I expect to hear all your voices (preferably not all at once).

In addition, each week selected students will be assigned to serve as discussion leaders. They will summarize the readings and open class discussions by pointing out what they take to be the essential points raised in the readings.

Written assignments will consist of short (2-3 page) essays, about 5 of them (one every third week), based on assigned readings. Students will choose which class readings to address with their other papers. In each essay students will be expected to: 1) identify the larger issue on which each reading offers a comment or point of view; 2) assess the significance of that larger issue for the study of history; 3) offer a critical evaluation of each reading’s comment on that larger point; 4) offer a point of your own, perhaps by suggesting a perspective on the larger issue that might be worth considering more fully (although you are not asked to consider your perspective more fully in these brief papers).

Rewrites will be permitted for all papers that do not receive a “B” or better, but no re-write can receive a grade higher than a “B”.

There will be no extra-credit assignments.

What your grades mean:

“A” – level of achievement meets requirements of graduate level history program

“B+” – level of achievement shows room for improvement, but also indicates an ability to improve to “A” level

“B” – level of achievement is satisfactory for advancement in this class, but is not at the highest level and may indicate the student will have problems meeting future graduate school requirements, especially at the doctoral level

“C” – level of achievement is not satisfactory for advancement in graduate history at either the M.A. or Ph. D. levels.

**ATTENDANCE:** At The University of Texas at Arlington, taking attendance is not required. Rather, each faculty member is free to develop his or her own methods of evaluating students’ academic performance, which includes establishing course-specific policies on attendance. As the instructor of this section, I will note attendance, as regular attendance is necessary for a participation grade. Students who miss more than two classes will find it difficult to earn a grade for the course of greater than C. Students who for whatever reason need to take an incomplete for the course are still required to attend class.

**GRADING**:

Participation and discussion leadership 25%

Written work 75%

**DROP POLICY:** Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance**. Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://wweb.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

**DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS:** UTArlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including *The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA),* and *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.* All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide “reasonable accommodations” to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of disability. Students are responsible for providing the instructor with official notification in the form of **a letter certified** by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD).Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Students experiencing a range of conditions (Physical, Learning, Chronic Health, Mental Health, and Sensory) that may cause diminished academic performance or other barriers to learning may seek services and/or accommodations by contacting:

**The Office for Students with Disabilities, (OSD)** [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or calling 817-272-3364. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability).

Counseling and Psychological Services, (CAPS) [www.uta.edu/caps/](http://www.uta.edu/caps/) or calling 817-272-3671 is also available to all students to help increase their understanding of personal issues, address mental and behavioral health problems and make positive changes in their lives.

**Non-Discrimination Policy:** *The University of Texas at Arlington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, genetic information, and/or veteran status in its educational programs or activities it operates. For more information, visit*[*uta.edu/eos*](http://www.uta.edu/hr/eos/index.php)*.*

**TITLE IX POLICY:** The University of Texas at Arlington (“University”) is committed to maintaining a learning and working environment that is free from discrimination based on sex in accordance with Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), which prohibits sex discrimination in employment; and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE Act). Sexual misconduct is a form of sex discrimination and will not be tolerated.*For information regarding Title IX, visit* [www.uta.edu/titleIX](http://www.uta.edu/titleIX) or contact Ms. Jean Hood, Vice President and Title IX Coordinator at (817) 272-7091 or <jmhood@uta.edu>.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** Students enrolled all UT Arlington courses are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

*I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington’s tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.*

*I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.*

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code in their courses by having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents’ Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university’s standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student’s suspension or expulsion from the University. Additional information is available at <https://www.uta.edu/conduct/>.

**ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION:** UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

**CAMPUS CARRY:** Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. Under the new law, openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/news/info/campus-carry/>

**STUDENT FEEDBACK SURVEY:** At the end of each term, students enrolled in face-to-face and online classes categorized as “lecture,” “seminar,” or “laboratory” are directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student’s feedback via the SFS database is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. Students’ anonymity will be protected to the extent that the law allows. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law and aggregate results are posted online. Data from SFS is also used for faculty and program evaluations. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

**FINAL REVIEW WEEK:** For semester-long courses**,** a period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

**EMERGENCY EXIT PROCEDURES:** Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.

**STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**:UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include [tutoring](http://www.uta.edu/universitycollege/current/academic-support/learning-center/tutoring/index.php), [major-based learning centers](http://www.uta.edu/universitycollege/resources/college-based-clinics-labs.php), developmental education, [advising and mentoring](http://www.uta.edu/universitycollege/resources/advising.php), personal counseling, and [federally funded programs](http://www.uta.edu/universitycollege/current/academic-support/mcnair/index.php). For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to [resources@uta.edu](mailto:resources@uta.edu), or view the information at <http://www.uta.edu/universitycollege/resources/index.php>.

**THE IDEAS CENTER (**2nd Floor of Central Library) offers **free** tutoring to all students with a focus on transfer students, sophomores, veterans and others undergoing a transition to UT Arlington. To schedule an appointment with a peer tutor or mentor email [IDEAS@uta.edu](mailto:IDEAS@uta.edu) or call (817) 272-6593.

**THE ENGLISH WRITING CENTER (411LIBR)**: The Writing Center Offers free tutoring in 20-, 40-, or 60-minute face-to-face and online sessions to all UTA students on any phase of their UTA coursework. Our hours are 9 am to 8 pm Mon.-Thurs., 9 am-3 pm Fri. and Noon-6 pm Sat. and Sun. Register and make appointments online at http://uta.mywconline.com. Classroom Visits, workshops, and specialized services for graduate students are also available. Please see [www.uta.edu/owl](http://www.uta.edu/owl) for detailed information on all our programs and services.

The Library’s 2nd floor Academic Plaza offers students a central hub of support services, including IDEAS Center, University Advising Services, Transfer UTA and various college/school advising hours. Services are available during the library’s hours of operation. <http://library.uta.edu/academic-plaza>

**SCHEDULE**

**PART ONE: WHAT IS HISTORY?**

Aug. 29 Introduction

Sept. 5 Labor Day Holiday—No Class

Sept. 12 The Idea of Historical Objectivity

READINGS: Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream*, chapters 1 and 2; Texas Textbook Debate (Blackboard); Wood, “In defense of Academic History” (Blackboard)

Sept. 19 History As Knowledge and Power

READINGS: Foucault, “Two Lectures,” from *Power/Knowledge* (Blackboard)

DISCUSSION LEADERS: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Sept. 26 Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*

DISCUSSION LEADERS: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**PART TWO: HISTORY AS STORY**

Oct. 3 Return to Narrative

READINGS: Lawrence Stone, “The Revival of narrative: reflections on a new old history” (Blackboard); James Goodman, “For the Love of Stories” (Blackboard); Cronon “AHA Presidential Address: Storytelling” (Blackboard)

DISCUSSION LEADERS: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Oct. 10 Narrative, Representation, and Objectivity

READINGS: Dominick LaCapra, “Rhetoric and History” (Blackboard); Aaron Sachs, “History as Creative Non-Fiction” (Blackboard)

DISCUSSION LEADERS: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Oct. 17 **Case Study No. 2**:

Simon Schama, *Dead Certainties*

DISCUSSION LEADERS: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**PART THREE: HISTORY AS TRUTH**

Oct. 24 Historical Facts and Truth

READINGS: Robert F. Berkhofer, “Historical Representations and Truthfulness”; Painter, “Representing Truth: Sojourner Truth’s Knowing and Becoming Known”

DISCUSSION LEADERS: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Oct. 31 Determinisims (Material and Ideological) OR Historical Contingencies

READINGS: Marx and Engels, “Bourgeois and Proletarians”; Weber, “Spirit of Capitalism”; Fields, “Ideology and Race in American History”; Kornblith, “Rethinking the Coming of the Civil War”

DISCUSSION LEADERS: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Nov. 7 **Case Study No. 3: Telling The Truth About American Slavery**

Edward Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told*

DISCUSSION LEADERS: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**PART FOUR: CHRONOLOGIES, SUBJECTS, AREAS: NEW HISTORIES OF TIME, SPACE AND DIGITAL IMAGERY**

Nov. 14 The Fragmentation of History

READINGS:

DISCUSSION LEADERS: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Nov. 21 Seeing History

READINGS: Brown, “Historians and Photography”; Cook, “Seeing the Visual in U.S. History”;

DISCUSSION LEADERS: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Nov. 28 **Case Study No. 3**

Elkins, James. *Six Stories From the End of Representation*

**PART FIVE: ONCE AGAIN, WHAT IS HISTORY?**

Dec. 5

DISCUSSION LEADERS: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_