

HIST-GA 1191
“Class” and Historiography:
A History of the Historical Discipline

Weds., 2:00-4:45
KJCC 607

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“[Economists] revolve in their eternal circle of landlords, capitalists, and labourers, until they seem to think of the distinction of society into those three classes, as if it were one of God’s ordinances, not man’s, and as little under human control as the division of day and night.” – John Stuart Mill

COURSE OVERVIEW

This colloquium examines the changing ways that historians have conceived of society (“the social”) since about 1960. While students will become familiar with a number of major works and scholars in British historiography, the colloquium is not primarily about Britain, or about society and culture since 1960. Rather, it offers an intellectual history of theoretical and methodological developments in the humanities and social sciences during the previous half-century.

This topic could be approached in a number of ways, as different historical fields worked through the implications of the “cultural” or “linguistic” turns differently. The trajectory that is our subject could be examined by following, say, the historiography of the French Revolution, or the development of women’s and gender history. In modern British historiography, with its inherited orientation around the causes and consequences of the Industrial Revolution, these developments came to be worked through in the literature on social class.

This course, then, follows the shifting fortunes of “class” as an analytical category in the previous half century. From a latent social reality, to an achievement of past actors, to a political construction, to an imposition of scholars, to just one cleavage among others (including gender, nation, and race), changing conceptions of “class” provide a way of understanding such broader developments as the new social history, history from below, post-modernism, the linguistic turn, cultural history, and the new imperial history, culminating in today’s orthodoxy on the imperative of writing imperial, global, and trans-national histories.

While the readings primarily draw from British historiography, the conceptual issues will interest students of any geographical area, and the final essay presents the opportunity for students to relate these developments to their own areas of specialization. The reading consists of about 2 books per week, and evaluation is based upon a combination of participation and three essays: a 1000-word book review, a 2000-word midterm essay, and a 4000-word final essay.

EXPECTATIONS

Each week we will **discuss** about 2 books (or the equivalent). The success of the colloquium depends upon your preparation and participation.

At some point during the semester, you will submit a **book review** of 1000 words (about 4 pages).

At the **midterm** (actually about 2/3 of the way through the term), you will write an essay of 2000 words (about 8 pages) titled, "Social History and the Cultural Turn." This assignment will explain the approach and achievements of social history, the problems that historians came to have with that approach, and the meaning and significance of the cultural turn that followed.

At the end of the semester, you will write a **historiographical essay** of 4000 words (about 16 pages). This essay will relate the conceptual developments we have been tracking to work in your own field of specialization. The goal of this assignment is to provide you with the opportunity to examine and explain the history of your field.

EVALUATION

20% Book review
40% Midterm essay
40% Final essay

TEXTS

Any editions acceptable.

* texts I will circulate.

** available electronically.

[] optional

Week 1, Jan. 24

Introduction

Week 2, Jan. 31

The Big Picture

Geoff Eley, *A Crooked Line* (2005).

*William H. Sewell, Jr. *Logics of History* (2005), 22-80.

[Dennis Dworkin, *Class Struggles* (2007), Introduction.]

Week 3, Feb. 7

How Do Disciplines Change?

*Peter Lambert, "The Professionalization and Institutionalization of History," in *Writing History: Theory and Practice*, eds. Stefan Berger, Heiko Feldner, and Kevin Passmore (2010), 40-58.

T. S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962).

*Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in this Class?* (1980), 356-371.

**Judith Surkis et al., "AHR Forum: 'Turns' in Critical Perspective," *AHR* 117:3 (2012): 698-813.

Week 4, Feb. 14

The Classical Inheritance

*Raymond Williams, "Class," *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fontana, 1983), pp. 60-69.

- *Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, in *Class*, ed. Patrick Joyce (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 21-30.
 - *Max Weber, in Joyce, *Class*, pp. 31-40.
 - *Anthony Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory: An Analysis of the Writings of Marx, Durkheim, and Max Weber* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 1-64, 119-184.
 - *Kevin B. Anderson, *Marx at the Margins: On Nationalism, Ethnicity, and Non-Western Societies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), selections.
- [Dworkin, Ch. 1]

Week 5, Feb. 21

The New Social History

- Harold Perkin, *The Origins of Modern English Society* (1969), Chaps. 1, 2, 6-10.
 - E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963), Preface & Part I.
 - *William Sewell, *Work and Revolution in France: The Language of Labor from the Old Regime to 1848* (1980), 1-15, 194-218.
- [Dworkin, Ch. 2.]
[Eley, "Marxist Historiography," *Writing History*, 61-80.]

Week 6, Feb. 28

The Postmodern Challenge

- *Sarah Maza, *Thinking about History* (2017), 157-234.
 - Hans Bertens, *The Idea of the Postmodern: A History* (1995), selections.
 - David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (1990), selections.
- [Dworkin, Ch. 3.]

Week 7, Mar. 7

Languages of Class

- *Gareth Stedman Jones, "Rethinking Chartism," *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History, 1832-1982* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983), pp. 90-178.
 - *Joan Scott, "On Language, Gender, and Working Class History," *International Labor and Working Class History* 31 (1987), pp. 1-13.
 - *Bryan Palmer, "Response to Joan Scott," *International Labor and Working Class History* 31 (1987), pp. 14-23.
 - *Christine Stansell, "A Response to Joan Scott," *International Labor and Working Class History* 31 (1987), pp. 24-29.
 - *Anson Rabinbach, "Rationalism and Utopia as Languages of Nature: A Note," *International Labor and Working Class History* 31 (1987), pp. 30-36.
 - *Joan Scott, "A Reply to Criticism," *International Labor and Working Class History* 32 (1987), pp. 39-45.
- [Dworkin, Ch. 5]

Spring Break

Week 8, Mar. 21

The Social in Question

- *David Mayfield and Susan Thorne, "Social History and its Discontents: Gareth Stedman Jones and the Politics of Language," *Social History* 17 (1992), pp. 165-188.
 - *Jon Lawrence and Miles Taylor, "The Poverty of Protest: Gareth Stedman Jones and the Politics of Language – A Reply," *Social History* 18 (1993), pp. 1-15.
 - *Patrick Joyce, "The Imaginary Discontents of Social History: A Note of Response to Mayfield and Thorne, and Lawrence and Taylor," *Social History* 18 (1993), pp. 81-85.
 - *James Vernon, "Who's Afraid of the 'Linguistic Turn'? The Politics of Social History and its Discontents," *Social History* 19 (1994), pp. 81-97.
 - *Patrick Joyce, "The End of Social History?" *Social History* 20 (1995), pp. 73-91.
 - *Geoff Eley, "Starting Over: The Present, the Postmodern, and the Moment of Social History," *Social History* 20 (1995), pp. 355-364.
- [Kevin Passmore, "Poststructuralism and History," *Writing History*, 123-146.]

Week 9, Mar. 28

After the Social

Sarah Maza, *The Myth of the French Bourgeoisie* (2003).

Dror Wahrman, *Imagining the Middle Class* (1995).

[Dworkin, Ch. 4]

Midterm essay due.

Week 10, Apr. 4

From Women's History to Gender History

*Catherine Hall, "Feminism and Feminist History," *White, Male, and Middle Class: Explorations in Feminism and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992), pp. 1-42.

*Joan Kelly, "The Doubled Vision of Feminist Theory: A Postscript to the 'Women and Power' Conference," *Feminist Studies* 1, pp. 216-227.

*Joan Scott, "Women in *The Making of the English Working Class*," *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), pp. 68-90.

Anna Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class* (1995), 1-10, 177-247, 264-271.

[Dworkin, Ch. 6]

[Laura Lee Downs, "From Women's History to Gender History," *Writing History*, 286-312.]

Week 11, Apr. 11

Alternative Foundations: Nation, Race, Empire

Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (1992), 1-54, 283-319, 364-377.

*E. P. Thompson, "Which Britons?" *Making History: Writings on History and Culture* (New York: New Press, 1994), pp. 319-329.

Paul Gilroy, *"There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack": The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (1987), 11-42.

Catherine Hall, Keith McClelland, & Jane Rendall, *Defining the Victorian Nation: Class, Race, Gender, and the Reform Act of 1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000), 1-70, 179-233.

[Dworkin, Ch. 7]

Week 12, Apr. 18

The New Imperial History

*Kathleen Wilson, *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire, and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 1-28.

*Kathleen Wilson, *A New Imperial History* (2004), 1-26, 345-362.

**A. G. Hopkins, "Back to the Future: From National History to Imperial History," *Past and Present* 164:1 (1999): 198-243.

**Stephen Howe, "The Slow Death and Strange Rebirths of Imperial History," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 29:2 (2001): 131-141.

**Peter Stansky et al., "NACBS Report on the State and Future of British Studies in North America" (1999): <http://www.nacbs.org/archive/nacbs-report-on-the-state-and-future-of-british-studies>

[Andrew Sartori, "The British Empire and its Liberal Mission," *Journal of Modern History* 78:3 (September 2006): 623-642.]

[Durba Ghosh, "Another Set of Imperial Turns?" *American Historical Review* 117:3 (June 2012): 772-793.]

Week 13, Apr. 25

The Return of the Social

**Ron Suskind, "Faith, Certainty, and the Presidency of George W. Bush," *New York Times Magazine* (17 October 2004): <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/10/17/magazine/faith-certainty-and-the-presidency-of-george-w-bush.html>

Terry Eagleton, *After Theory* (2003), 1-139.

**Bruno Latour, "Why Has Critique Run out of Steam?" *Critical Inquiry* (Winter 2004): 225-248.

**Stanley Fish, "Postmodern Warfare," *Harper's* (July 2002), 33-40.

Week 14, May 2

The Social Reconstituted

Judith Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight* (1992), 1-13.

Judith Walkowitz, *Nights Out* (2012).

**"AHR Forum: Geoff Eley's *A Crooked Line*," *AHR* 113 (April 2008): 391-437.

[Dworkin, Conclusion.]