

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

Undergraduate Course Descriptions – Fall 2023

Below you will find descriptions for upper-division seminars and tutorials which the History Department will be offering in Fall 2023. Please refer to the course catalog for a complete list of History courses.

An important note regarding HIST497 (Research Seminar) and HIST498 (Reading Tutorial): These classes are often viewed as a kind of culminating experience for history majors. All history majors must take HIST497 (Research Seminar) and HIST498 (Reading Tutorial) in order to graduate. We strongly recommend that you take these classes in different semesters, and, if possible, that you don't leave HIST 497 for your final semester. These seminar-style classes are capped at 15 students to allow you to delve deeply into a reading topic (498) or to conduct primary source research (497). They also provide wonderful opportunities to create and experience intellectual communities in the classroom.

Permission numbers are not required to enroll in HIST497 or HIST498!

Please note that if you failed HIST497/498 and must retake it, you should contact the History Department office as soon as possible, and ideally before the start of enrollment. For these emergency situations, the department will be able to provide you with a permission number to ensure that you get the seminar you need to substitute for the failed seminar so you can graduate.

Skip to Courses

HIST 497A (12727) PROSEMINAR: Narratives in the History of the Pre-Modern South West Asia and North Africa

HIST 497A (21056) PROSEMINAR: Laboratory of the Modern Age: Society and Culture in Weimar Germany

HIST 497A (21158) PROSEMINAR: Chocolate: Mass Consumption and Advertising in the 19th/20th Centuries

HIST 498C (12264) TUTORIAL: History of Soviet and post-Soviet Russian Cinema

HIST 498C (12762) TUTORIAL: History, Narrative and Comics

HIST 498C (21161) TUTORIAL: Unfreedom: Incarceration in the Early American North

HIST 497A (12727) PROSEMINAR: Narratives in the History of the Pre-Modern South West Asia and North Africa

Dr. Rachel Howes | W 1900-2145 | SH287

The most important sources for the history of the pre-modern Middle East (aka South West Asia and North Africa - SWANA) are narrative and literary sources. While historians of the SWANA region in the period before 1800 do use other sources, the narrative and literary sources form the backbone of most studies and provide context for the rest. Thus, this class will focus on these sources, and students will learn how to develop a research project based on them. While Dr. Howes' field of study, and thus the focus of the class, is the SWANA region, she encourages students who are interested in comparative topics in pre-modern history to use this class to develop those interests and compare narrative and literary sources from other regions to the Middle East.

The focus of this course will be the production of an article-length paper based on primary sources. With guidance from Dr. Howes, students will be encouraged to pick and read one pre-modern Middle Eastern narrative in translation, develop and research a topic that begins with that source, and write and write approximately a 20-page paper on that subject. Students will be expected to base this paper largely on primary sources. Students can choose from of a variety of texts: religious and political literature, poetry and prose, as well as more traditional historical texts such as chronicles and biographies. For more information contact Dr. Howes at rachel.howes@csun.edu.

HIST 497A (21056) PROSEMINAR: Laboratory of the Modern Age: Society and Culture in Weimar Germany

Dr. Donal O'Sullivan | M 1600-1845 | SH302

Between 1918 and 1933, the new democratic Germany went through political, economic, and social turmoil. Yet, artists, writers, filmmakers, architects, and social activists pursued fresh avenues and enjoyed newly found freedoms as they "danced on the volcano". Everywhere, young men and women challenged traditional values. They protested against social, artistic, and sexual norms. Weimar Culture became a laboratory of change and witnessed revolutionary transformations in many areas. Some observers have called it "the birth of modernism", with a melody of drugs, sex and jazz providing the soundtrack. Yet underneath the "Babylon Berlin" of feverish hedonism, poets, critics and painters explored brand-new perspectives, questioning past models. We will explore how and why Germany became a hub for radical ideas which have impacted modern society ever since. Among the topics we will discuss are expressionism, the Bauhaus, theater, film, literature, women's liberation, the cult of the body, and many more. The class will mention but not focus on political events of this time period. Instead, students will get a chance to explore social and cultural history.



HIST 497A (21158) PROSEMINAR: Chocolate: Mass Consumption and Advertising in the 19th/20th Centuries

Dr. Patricia Juarez-Dappe | T 1600-1845 | SH264



People have been consuming chocolate for over 3000 years. A Mesoamerican legacy to the world, the European nobility quickly adopted chocolate as their favorite beverage and a powerful status symbol. During the 19th century, modern processing techniques and the expansion of cacao production into new areas made chocolate available to the masses and change its social identity for ever. This seminar focuses on chocolate advertising during the 19th and 20th centuries. It addresses the role of ads as texts that illuminate social and cultural norms of a region and a period. After discussing the history of chocolate and the evolution of the advertising industry, students will examine chocolate ads and their representations of gender, race, indigenous cultures, and sex, among other important topics. It is recommended (not required) that students have some background in world history or the history of chocolate in order to enroll in this class.

HIST 498C (12264) TUTORIAL: History of Soviet and post-Soviet Russian Cinema

Dr. Miriam Neirick | TH 1600-1845 | SH167



This course examines the history of Soviet and post-Soviet Russian cinema. Students will view and discuss films that exemplify succeeding periods in Russia's cinematic history, including the avant-garde experimental cinema of the 1920s, Stalin-era socialist realist musical comedies, wartime propaganda films, late Soviet films that document the crimes of the Soviet state and dramatize the disintegration of Soviet society, and the first post-Soviet Russian blockbusters. Students will also be asked to read criticism of the individual films, scholarship pertaining to the institutional history of the Soviet and post-Soviet Russian film industry, and primary documents relating to cinematic aesthetics and production.

HIST 498C (12762) TUTORIAL: History, Narrative and Comics

Dr. Richard Horowitz | T 1900-2145 | SH287

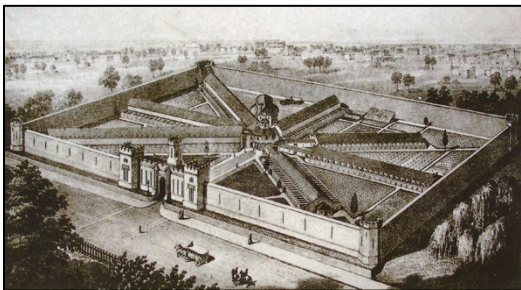
For almost a century, comics in America were created for humor and to entertain kids – they were not taken seriously. But in recent decades -- particularly since the publication of Art Spiegelman’s Maus -- comics (or “graphic novels” “graphic memoirs” “graphic histories”) have increasingly engaged with historical topics. In this tutorial we will explore the relationship between traditional historical narratives and comics. We will explore how historians, journalists and comics artists have used both text -based narratives and comics to interpret the past. We will consider the potential for better graphic histories and reinventions of text-based narratives and try making our own innovative historical works.



HIST 498C (21161) TUTORIAL: Unfreedom: Incarceration in the Early American North

Dr. Marissa Jenrich | W 1600-1845 | SH102

In 1858, then-Senate candidate Abraham Lincoln declared before the Illinois Republican State Convention that the American "government [could] not endure permanently half slave and half free." In many ways, Lincoln was right; within three years, the United States would find itself engrossed in a



brutal and bloody war to end slavery. In other ways, however, Lincoln may have been oversimplifying his second point. Could the nation, as Lincoln suggested, be so effortlessly divided into the "Slave South" and the "Free North"?

This course will attempt to answer this question by examining the various policies, agencies, and institutions of carcerality in the colonial and antebellum North in order to challenge Lincoln's all-too-easy division between slavery and freedom. In particular, we will explore the ways in which state and local powers above the Mason-Dixon line also sought to exert control over and glean labor from the diverse communities they deemed “undesirable.” Through this process, we'll engage a wide variety of academic and creative sources to explore how scholars have discussed these phenomena, as well as a wealth of primary texts, including records of sale, almshouse ledgers, newspapers, and prison memoirs, that unearth the daily lives of ordinary folks caught in the crosshairs of state control.

In particular, we will highlight the experiences and resistance of enslaved and indentured people, wayward women, "unruly" children, those experiencing physical and mental illness, and the poor. In its focus on institutions like asylums, schools, jails, and even private homes, this class aspires to disrupt depictions of the American North as a beacon of progress and reform, while also highlighting the muddiness of categories like "free" and "enslaved" during this period. In rigorously examining our past systems and institutions of (un)freedom, this class posits that we can come to better understand the roots of our contemporary carceral crisis.