

**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY**  
**Undergraduate Course Descriptions**  
**Fall 2024**

Below you will find descriptions for upper-division seminars and tutorials which the History Department will be offering in Fall 2024. Please refer to the [course catalog](#) for a complete list of History courses.

**An important note regarding HIST 497 (Research Seminar) and HIST 498 (Reading Tutorial):** These classes are often viewed as a kind of culminating experience for history majors. All history majors must take HIST 497 (Research Seminar) and HIST 498 (Reading Tutorial) in order to graduate. We strongly recommend that you take these classes in different semesters, and, if possible, 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 HIST 497 or HIST 498!

Please note that if you failed HIST 497/498 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.

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## **HIST 497J (20890) PROSEMINAR: “Sword and Shield” - The Stasi in East Germany**

Dr. Donal O’Sullivan | M 1600-1845 | SH288

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The course attempts to shed light into the structure and activities of the MfS (Secret Police) in the German Democratic Republic (GDR). Modeled on the KGB, the MfS monitored the entire society and hunted down opponents of the Communist regime. Apart from surveillance, the MfS also actively conducted disinformation campaigns, kidnappings, and physical liquidation operations. The Stasi operated its own “university” to train their agents how to psychologically destroy “enemies of the people”. Tens of thousands of informants reported to the Stasi on their relatives, friends, neighbors, and classmates. Students will learn to understand the development of the Stasi as well as the eventual failure to protect the Communist system from collapse. We will conduct research from actual case files and secondary sources.



## **HIST 497P (20892) PROSEMINAR: Anywhere, California**

Dr. Josh Sides | TH 1600-1845 | MA308

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In this course, students will conduct original research into a place in California. It might be a town, or a neighborhood, or a monument. Students will conduct directed readings about the place, and travel there for additional research (financial support provided).

## **HIST 497W (20891) PROSEMINAR: Travelers, Sojourners, and Migrants in the 20th Century World**

Dr. Richard Horowitz | TTH 1430-1545 | MA303

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This research seminar will utilize the remarkable holdings of CSUN Library’s special collections to explore how individuals experienced travel, sojourning, and migration during the mid-twentieth century. We will look at letters, memoirs, oral history accounts, photos, legal and personal documents, and other ephemera as we reconstruct how people experienced living outside of their native places between roughly 1920 and 1980. Our starting point will be the experiences of “Old China Hands” – foreigners who lived in China in the decades prior to the Communist Revolution in 1949. These included refugees from the Bolsheviks, the Nazis who found safe harbor in Shanghai and other Chinese cities when most countries restricted immigration, Americans serving in the military or government, and people who were part of missionary or charitable groups.



## HIST 498C (12197) TUTORIAL: History of Soviet and post-Soviet Russian Cinema

Dr. Miriam Neirick | W 1900-2145 | SH288

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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 read criticism of the individual films, scholarship on the institutional history of the Soviet and post-Soviet Russian film industry, and primary sources documenting the history of aesthetic movements, film productions, and reception.

## HIST 498C (13316) TUTORIAL: Napoleon and the World

Dr. Erik Goldner | T 1600-1845 | SH288

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Explore how the age of the French Revolution and Napoleon changed the world. Examine how the world, in turn, changed the French Revolution and Napoleon. We'll read lots of books on the French Revolution and Napoleon, and we'll also explore how those subjects have been depicted in film, including Ridley Scott's movie *Napoleon* (2023). This course is open to students of all interests, but it may especially appeal to you if you like political, cultural, and/or military history, as well as European, Atlantic, and/or world history.



## HIST 498C (12676) TUTORIAL: Read the News! Engaging with the Present to Understand the Past

Dr. Clementine Oliver | MW 1000-1115 | MA332

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In this **experimental** seminar, we will attempt to recreate the ethos of an eighteenth-century English Coffee house where individuals gathered to read the news. By recreating the news-reading culture of centuries past, we will hope to engage in the present day, in civil society, and in the public sphere of the twenty-first century, if such a thing still exists. The presidential election will be an unavoidable topic of discussion, so particular emphasis will be placed on civil discourse, factual or credible reporting, and debunking so-called "fake news." This is a class for students who would like to be better informed citizens, and who would like to participate in a student-centered community engaged in thoughtful and challenging conversations about the present and the past.

**Requirements:** All students must subscribe to and read a daily newspaper. We have access to the Wall Street Journal through CSUN Library, but students may also read the LA Times, New York Times, or Washington Post. Students will be responsible for weekly summaries of new stories and weekly postings on Canvas. Students will be required to write a five to ten-page paper reflecting on the crisis in journalism, the rise of alternative sources of information/disinformation, and whether "ghosting the news" has unforeseen consequences for our system of governance and the structure of society.

**Attendance is mandatory. If a student misses more than three class meetings over the course of the semester, the student will receive a FAILING GRADE.** Consider yourself forewarned!

## **HIST 498C (21274) TUTORIAL: Reel Africa: (De)Constructing History in Film**

Dr. Sylvia Macauley | TH 1600-1845 | MA301

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This course will examine the history and culture of Africa through films by both European and African directors. Using cinematography (the art and science of film photography) we will trace the directors' portrayals of major epochs and historical moments in Africa from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present. We will start with early encounters between Europeans and Africans on the continent, then the era of imperial rule and the fight against colonialism and apartheid and conclude with the challenges of post-apartheid and post-independence such as civil war, genocide, and reconstruction. We will pay special attention to the filmmakers' interpretations of issues such as race, class, gender, and ethnicity, and how these intersect with the historical record on African history and culture. Using an interdisciplinary approach, this course will introduce students to multiple ways of thinking about issues, problems, and concepts. It will also enable them to use different modes of inquiry to evaluate competing and complementary frameworks of knowing and to construct their own ways of knowing.