

## **UNDERGRADUATE** COURSE DESCRIPTIONS - Spring 2019 – version 3

### A SPECIAL WORD REGARDING PROSEMINARS AND TUTORIALS

Please note that all Proseminars (497), Tutorials (498), are RESTRICTED classes. This means that enrollment is by consent of the instructor only, and that you CANNOT enroll in them simply by asking for a permission number. You must personally contact the professor so that he/she can determine whether your enrollment is appropriate given the particular content, approach, requirements, and level of the course. Before contacting the professor, be sure you have read the description of the class provided below. The professor will then decide whether to give you a permission number. Also, since these courses fill up quickly, DO NOT wait until your registration date (or even later) to contact the professor. Do so as soon as you have determined that you wish to take the course. Following these procedures will assist both you and your professors.

### **History 497A | Historians and Historical Narratives before 1800 | MW 1400-1515 | Dr. Rachel Howes**

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The most important sources for the history of the pre-modern World are narrative and literary sources. While historians of the world 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.

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 pre-modern narrative sources in translation, develop and research a topic that is based on these sources, and write a 20-30 page paper on that subject. Students will be expected to base this paper largely on primary sources. Students can choose from a variety of texts: religious and political literature, poetry and prose, as well as more traditional historical texts such as chronicles and biographies.

Although no specific courses are a pre-requisite, it will help you a great deal to read a general survey of the place and time you are interested in before the class begins in January.

If you are interested in this class, contact Dr. Howes at [Rachel.howes@csun.edu](mailto:Rachel.howes@csun.edu).

### **History 497B | Tuesdays 1600-1845 | SH184 | Dr. Josh Sides**

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Advanced Topics in California History. In this proseminar, students will develop research topics on the history of California. In addition to conducting weekly readings of secondary sources, students will also begin conducting primary research on their respective topics by the second week of the seminar. Prior completion of 488 is recommended, but definitely not required.

### **UPDATE** History 497C Tutorial (**FORMELY History 498C Tutorial**) | **The History of the United States Military from 1815 to 1865 | Mondays and Wednesdays 1100-1215 | SH268 | Professor Tristan Traviolia**

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From ratification of the Treaty of Ghent in 1815 to the Confederate surrender at Appomattox Court House in 1865, the military arguably surpassed the postal service as the most important federal government institution. During this half century the United States military fought a war declared by Congress against Mexico, defeated the internal insurrection of the Civil War, suppressed the slave trade and pirates in the Atlantic, opened foreign ports to American commerce at the behest of the state department, administered federal policy toward Indian tribes, surveyed the routes that dominate American travel and commerce west of the Mississippi to this day, completed the mapping of the continent, protected the settlers pouring west of the Mississippi River, and saw three former officers serve as Presidents of the United States.

By the end of the course students will understand the evolution of the ideology of American military science, the growth of the Army and Navy as public institutions, the nation's choice to rely on an armed citizen militia instead of large professional forces, and the impact that graduates of the military academies had on the country.

This is a readings course which examines the U.S. South writ large. Students will be exposed to some of the most important and most recent scholarship, especially related to slavery; gender; and the character of southern violence (as manifested in the Civil War and the racial conflicts from Reconstruction through the 1960s), among other topics of interest. The focus will be on southern culture over time and the interplay between the world that slavery created and its postbellum aftermath. Students will explore various themes of southern history including the southern rage to explain itself along with the interaction of race and the "mythic South" in the formation of southern identity and the legacy of slavery in contemporary politics. Students will (1) write precis on selected secondary historical sources and present their findings; (2) participate actively in class discussions centered on the readings and subsequent outcomes and conclusions; and 3) produce a historiographic essay on a specific topic in southern history that can be used as a scholarly literature review for future research.

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**History 498C | Tuesdays 1900-2145 | SH288 | Dr. Miriam Neirick**

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.

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**History 498C | Wednesdays 1600-1845 | SH279 | Dr. Nan Yamane**

We are literally surrounded by history in the memories of those around us, a rich source for understanding the past. Anthropologists and historians have used oral history as a method of recording the history of groups of people who have not left written records. For example, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in the 1930s sponsored interviews with people who had been slaves, interviews that can be found at the Library of Congress website.\* "Slave Narratives" have provided insights into slavery from the perspective of folks whose experiences would otherwise not have been recorded, as well as insights into the Great Depression. These narratives were a collaborative effort, and in this class we will address some of the theoretical, ethical, and practical issues that have come to define the (ever changing) collaborative process known as Oral History--a process that creates public record.

We will begin with examples of Oral Histories, and then in the first seven weeks of class discuss them as well as theoretical and ethical issues that inform the "collaboration." We will also address the practical methods of Oral History as you design your own project. We will address topics such as memory, subjectivity, ethical and legal issues, communication barriers, designing and implementing a project, and then "transcribing" interviews--addressing the newest ways of doing so via programs that allow the segmenting of interviews on websites. It is also possible to video interviews, though we will focus on the preservation of interviews via voice recordings (and words).

The example of the WPA's Slave Narratives is a famous one, a public record both used in the writing of histories, as well as studied for an understanding of the nature of oral history. In the 1960s, in writing history from the "bottom-up," historians also began to interview laborers in an effort to view daily life for the "common" person (people who did not typically write memoirs). Military interviews have also been significant, interviews conducted both within and outside the military establishment. Interviews with women have provided insight into a variety of life experiences, from birth control in the early twentieth century to Rosie-the-Riveter work during WWII. Oral Histories have flourished in contemporary American culture, and the web, along with new technologies, has only made it easier to record people's stories--stories that we might otherwise not have heard. NPR stations around the country, for example, have made their studios available to local communities in "Storycorps," for the "sharing and preserving the stories of our lives."\*\*

While understanding historical significance is important to the process of Oral History, we will focus on two critical elements of the process that are especially challenging in our fast-paced world of technological change--listening carefully to others and then retelling their stories.

\*Federal Writers' Project (WPA), "Born in Slavery," Library of Congress Website:

<https://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html>

\*\*NPR, Storycorps: <http://www.npr.org/series/4516989/storycorps>