Course Description

This seminar will explore the contemporary theory and philosophy of history. We will normally to read one or two articles or chapters per session in order to give them close attention. Intensive engagement with the class is important. Even though the readings are normally short compared to most history seminars, the abstract character of the work and the need to develop skills of logical reading and critique mean that the course will indeed be rigorous.

All readings will be made available through the course's Moodle.

Requirements and Grading

1. Class Participation and Attendance: 25%
   The core of the course is intense and careful reading and discussion of the articles. Class participation includes attendance, discussion, and required Moodle posts. To prepare for the seminar, students will need to post by 9AM (discuss) a question and a qualm to the professor. In the post, you should indicate at least one precise place in the text that interested or troubled you. You should also be prepared to explain your interest, doubt or criticism to the class during seminar discussion.

   As per our agreement, class sessions on February 23, March 9, and April 13 will take place at the Seminar for the Theory and Practice of History from 4:30-6:00 in Boger Hall 103.

   If you know you're going to have to miss a class, tell me. If you're having trouble of any sort that might affect your work, tell me. If you're having trouble getting it, tell me. I love to talk to you outside of class.

2. Paper 1: 20%
   The first paper of about 2000 words will be due on February 24. This paper will give you an option of choosing one of several paired articles and demonstrating your ability to read for and expose the theoretical argument and raise criticisms. It will ask you, potentially, to take sides. Its intention is to improve theoretical and philosophical reading and writing skills.

3. Paper 2: 20%
   The second paper of about 1800-2500 words will be due on March 31. In this paper, you'll be asked to try to raise a challenge or propose a sort of need that writing and thinking of history has and which could be worth further discussion. The paper might become the basis for further work in your last paper. It is not expected that the second paper will require very extensive additional reading but it will require meeting with the professor before the March break to discuss possible subjects and treatments.
4. Final Paper: 35%

The third paper is your major work for the semester. A topic paragraph will need to be submitted on April 7th. The paper, which should be between 4000 and 6000 words, can be on any relevant topic but must again be approved and developed in discussion with the professor. This paper will be due as late as is allowed by the rules and practicalities—this varies depending on class year, etc.—but will be no earlier than the end of the exam period.

Course Outline

From Historiography to Philosophy of History

WEEK ONE – January 26
Thurs— Introduction to History and Theory

WEEK TWO – January 31, February 2
Tues— History before Modernity
Reading: R. G. Collingwood, The Idea of History, 14-56
Thurs— NO CLASS

WEEK THREE – February 7, 9
Tues— Putting Modernity Together
Reading: J. G. Droysen, “History and the Historical Method”; Wilhelm Dilthey, “Excerpts from the Hermeneutics of the Human Sciences”
Thurs— Professional History: Historiographical Self-Consciousness
Reading: Hayden White, “The Historical Imagination between Metaphor and Irony” (45-80) and “Historical Consciousness and the Rebirth of the Philosophy of History” (267-280) from Metahistory.

WEEK FOUR — February 14, 16
Tues— The 20th century Thematic I
Reading: Marc Bloch, “History, Men, and Time” from The Craft of the Historian (21-47)
Thurs— The 20th century Thematic II
Reading: R.G. Collingwood, “Historical Evidence” (249-282) and “History as Re-enactment of Past Experience” (282-302)

WEEK FIVE – February 21, 23
Tues— The 20th century Thematic III
Reading: Walter Benjamin, “Ten Theses on the Philosophy of History”; CLR James, “Marxism”
Thurs 4:30-6:00, Boger Hall 113— Seminar on the Theory and Practice of History: Kathleen Davis
Reading: Kathleen Davis, “Periodization, History, and the Force of Law”

FIRST PAPER DUE

Concept History
WEEK SIX – February 28, March 2
Tues– Hans Georg Gadamer, TBD
Reading:
Thurs– Koselleck I
Reading: Koselleck, “The Eighteenth Century”

WEEK SEVEN— March 7, 9
Tues— Koselleck II
Reading: Koselleck, “Social History and Conceptual History”
**Thurs 4:30-6:00, Boger Hall 113** – Seminar on the Theory and Practice of History: Willibald Steinmetz
*Reading:* “Multiple Transformations: Temporal Frameworks for a European Conceptual History”

**SPRING BREAK**

**Problems of Language, Narrative, and Meaning**

**WEEK EIGHT— MARCH 28, 30**

_Tues— Intro_
*Reading:* Louis Mink, “Autonomy of Historical Understanding”

_Thurs— Historiographical Crisis_
*Reading:* Hayden White, “The Burden of History”

**SECOND PAPER DUE**

**WEEK NINE— April 4, 6**

_Tues— Historical Narratives_
*Reading:* Hayden White, “Narrative and Reality”

_Thurs— Problems of Narrative, Language and Meaning I_
*Reading:* David Carr, “Narrative and the Real World”

**WEEK TEN— April 11, 13**

_Tues— Problems of Narrative, Language and Meaning II_
*Reading:* Nancy Partner, “Hayden White at the AHA”; “Reality Fictions in an Age of Historicity”

**Thurs 4:30-6:00, Boger Hall 113** – Seminar on the Theory and Practice of History: Beatrice Han-Pile
*Reading:* “Hope and Agency”

**Power and History**

**WEEK ELEVEN— April 18, 20**

_Tues— Subject and History_
*Reading:* Michel Foucault, “Subject and History”

_Thurs— Gender_
*Reading:* Joan Scott, “Gender: a Useful Category”; “Gender: still a useful category”

**Recent Trends in Theory of History**

**WEEK TWELVE— April 25, 27**

_Tues— ‘Presence’_

_Thurs— The Ethics of the Past_
*Reading:* Berber Bevernage, “The Past is Evil/Evil is the Past”

**WEEK THIRTEEN— May 2, 4**

_Tues — Animals and History_
*Reading:* D. Gary Shaw, “The Torturer’s Horse”

_Thurs— Actor Network Theory_

**WEEK FOURTEEN – May 9**

_Tues — For a deconstructive approach to the past_
*Reading:* Ethan Kleinberg, “Haunting History: the past that is”

**Final Paper Due last normal allowed date at noon.**