

History Honors (HITO 196)
Fall 2008 Tuesday, 9-11:50AM H&SS 5086

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Office Hours: H&SS 4047, MW, 5-6PM, or by appointment

Course Description and Grading: This course is intended to help students begin to write a senior honors thesis by exploring the mechanics of historical writing, while also addressing the varying methodologies employed by professional historians. Students are expected to come to each seminar prepared to discuss the assigned readings, and are expected to complete all written work. Written assignments include reading responses, presentations, and a final honors paper (5-7 pages) due on December 13 by 4PM.

Books available at UCSD Bookstore and on Reserve

Richard Marius, *A Short Guide to Writing about History*, 4th ed. (Longman, Addison-Wesley)
Davidson and Lytle, *After the Fact: The Art of Historical Detection*, 5th edition (McGraw- Hill)
Georg Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific History to the Post-Modern Challenge* (Wesleyan University)
Jonathan D. Spence, *Emperor of China: Self-Portrait of K'ang-Hsi* (Random House)
Charles Maier, *Among Empires: American Ascendancy and its Predecessors* (Harvard)
Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Harvard)
Yuri Slezkine, *The Jewish Century* (Princeton)

Syllabus

September 30- Practicing History- **COME PREPARED HAVING DONE MARIUS AND DAVIDSON/LYTLER READING**

Marius, *A Short Guide to Writing about History*, chs.1-3
Davidson and Lytle, *After the Fact*, Intro, prologue, and chapter 1
Assign Davidson/ Lytle for oral reports on one chapter and CD documents

October 7- Mechanics of Writing History

(also note Professor Patterson presentation)
Marius, *A Short Guide*, chaps. 4-8, pay special attention/critique writing sample,

Appendix A

Write one paragraph commenting on writing sample
Davidson and Lytle, *After the Fact*, chaps. 2-3

October 14- Methods of American Historians

(**MEET IN GEISEL LIBRARY- Library Electronics Classroom (274)??**)

Davidson and Lytle, *After the Fact*, chaps. 4-5

October 21- Methods of American Historians in the 20th century

Davidson and Lytle, *After the Fact*, chaps. 6-7

(Ryan Jordan talk)

October 28- Big Picture and Guiding Paradigms

Davidson and Lytle, *After the Fact*, chaps. 8-9

Iggers, *Historiography in the 20th Century*

November 4- Primary Sources and Invention in Biography (Write one page summary)

Jonathan Spence, *Emperor of China: Self-Portrait of K'ang-Hsi*; Reviews from JSTOR

Davidson and Lytle, *After the Fact*, chaps. 10-11

November 11- **No Class**

November 18- Extrapolation in Micro-History

Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre*; Finley/Davis Debate on JSTOR,
American Historical Review 93:3 (June 1988), 553-603

Davidson and Lytle, *After the Fact*, chaps. 12-13

November 25- The Provocative Thesis

Yuri Slezkine, *The Jewish Century*; Reviews from JSTOR

Davidson and Lytle, *After the Fact*, chaps. 14-15

December 2- Comparative History

Charles Maier, *Among Empires*; Reviews from JSTOR

Davidson and Lytle, chaps. 16-17

December 13- Precis of your honors paper (5-7 pp.); written version due by 4PM

HITO 196- Honors Seminar- Reading/Notes Suggestions

- For all of the reading, especially readings that relate to your area of interest, try to keep your own project in mind. How do the methodologies or questions being asked by a given historian relate to your work? Is the historian (or are the historians) missing something either in terms of evidence or argument that would include in your own thesis?

- When doing the reading, especially the works by Mintz, Spence, Davis, and Slezkine, try to make a concerted effort to examine the footnotes, to understand and critique exactly how a historian builds his or her own case- what are the sources being used? Are there significant omissions? What kind of sources would you prefer he or she look at? Is the historian asking a question that you think is important (why or why not?)

- You also should read the above books (Mintz, Spence, Davis, and Slezkine) as quickly and efficiently as possible- again- with an eye to understand and critique the methods used by these historians. You should not read these books as though I am going to examine you on the details.

- Also make a point of looking up book reviews on JSTOR (or another search engine, such as scholar.google.com) in order to help you understand how professional historians critique their colleagues. This will give you a good idea both about methodological or theoretical concerns (what questions they think are important), and also help you learn the tools of a professional historian so that you can see the limitations of a given work.

- Make a point of taking notes on all of the reading throughout the semester (try not to read without taking notes), and make sure to be constantly writing down ideas about your own project- you will not be able to remember everything (!)