

Fall 2009
Thurs 2-4pm
CGIS S540
(1730 Cambridge St)

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History 2121
Cultural History of Early Modern Europe
Graduate research seminar

This course will expose graduate students to various kinds of primary sources and methods of research and analysis in cultural and intellectual history of the early modern period. The emphasis of the course will be on France 1500-1700, but students with the requisite background may write their research paper on a topic in another national context. Open to qualified undergraduates with the consent of the instructor.

Requirements:

- informed and active participation, based on weekly reading assignments (25%)
- research assignments, including prospectus and oral presentation (25%)
- final seminar paper (20-30pp) (50%)

Course goals:

1. discussing examples and methods of cultural history (see the "Reading" each week)
2. working with one or more primary sources of your choice toward a major seminar paper due on December 18. Toward this end a number of intermediate assignments are listed for many weeks. In working on these assignments students may change sources from one assignment to the next and may focus on another source for the seminar paper, but these exercises are designed to build expertise relevant to the seminar paper, so I recommend selecting sources relevant to your paper topic (and these choices may help you hone that paper topic). At least one of these sources must be physically available at Harvard (i.e. not a microfilm or modern edition).

On order at the COOP (prices from amazon.com):

Peter Burke, *What is Cultural History?* (Polity Press); 978-0745644103; \$19.95
Wayne C Booth, *The Craft of Research* (U of Chicago, 2008), 978-0226065663; \$11.56
(recommended) Natalie Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford UP, 1975); 978-0804709729; \$26 [book is fully on-line through Hollis]
Natalie Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Harvard UP, 1984); 978-0674766914; \$13.50
Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books* (Stanford UP, 1994); 978-0804722674; \$18.85
Steven Shapin, *A Social History of Truth* (U of Chicago, 1995); 978-0226750194; \$18
Lisa Jardine, *Worldly Goods: a new history of the Renaissance* (Norton, 1998); 978-0393318661; \$13.50
Carlo Ginzburg, *Clues, myths and historical method* (Johns Hopkins UP, 1992), 978-0801843884; \$22.50
Robert Darnton, *Forbidden Bestsellers of Pre-Revolutionary France* (Norton, 1996) 978-0393314427; \$12.50

Montaigne, *Essays*, tr. Michael Screech (Penguin, 1993); 978-0140446043; \$16.50 [any edition or translation is fine, but abridged editions may not have some the more unusual essays I have assigned]

Syllabus

Week I (Sept 3): what is cultural history?

Kinds of history; kinds of sources; kinds of questions.

Movie screening, Wed Sept 9, 7-9pm, CGIS North/Knafel K-050: (in conjunction with Hist 1151) screening of the movie "The Return of Martin Guerre" (1982) [the DVD is also on reserve in Lamont]

Week II (Sept 10): early forms of cultural history: focus on popular culture

Reading: Peter Burke, *What is Cultural history?* chs 1-3 [50pp]

Natalie Z. Davis, *Society and Culture in Sixteenth-Century France* [full text available on Hollis], chs. 3-5

Natalie Davis, *The return of Martin Guerre* (1984) and the related Forum in *American Historical Review* 97:5 (1992) [on e-resources]

Week III (Sept 17): practices, representations and constructions

Assignment: choose a source to work on that's available at Houghton Library and report it to me by email

Reading: Peter Burke, *What is Cultural History?* chs. 4-6

Roger Chartier, "Intellectual history/histoire des mentalités: a dual reevaluation," in his *Cultural History: Between Practices and Representation*, pp. 19-52.

Steven Shapin, *A Social History of Truth*

Week IV (Sept 24): material culture

Reading: Patrick Geary, "Sacred commodities: the circulation of medieval relics" in *The Social Life of Things*, ed. Arjun Appadurai, pp. 169-91 [on website]

Lisa Jardine, *Worldly Goods: a new history of the Renaissance*

Bill Brown, "Thing Theory," *Critical Inquiry* 28: 1 (2001), 1-28

Week V (Oct 1): book history *session held at Houghton Library*

Meet in the Houghton Library lobby at the usual time: items on view will include sources chosen by the students in the class (insofar as possible)

Reading: Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books*

William Sherman, "What did Renaissance Readers Write in their Books?" in *Books and Reading in Early Modern England*, pp. 119-37

Week VI (Oct 8): doing research in cultural history

Assignments: HOLLIS self-test in primary and secondary sources (for discussion in class) + formulate your principal research questions (for discussion in class, then please report them to me by email by the end of that day—i.e. after the discussion)

Reading: Wayne Booth, *The Craft of Research*

Carlo Ginzburg, *Clues, myths and historical method*, chapters on high and low, clues, inquisitor as anthropologist

Week VII (Oct 15): contextualizing texts

Assignment: identify at least five other works representing a variety of ways of contextualizing your text (e.g. other works by the same author, models or sources cited/alluded to in your text, works of similar type in other fields, works of different type on similar topic). Explain and describe your choices. Be ready to discuss in class and please email me a written report (2-3pp).

Reading: Robert Darnton, *Forbidden Bestsellers of Pre-Revolutionary France*, parts 1 and 3 and skim 2.

Elisabeth Labrousse, "Reading Pierre Bayle in Paris" in *Anticipations of Enlightenment*, ed. Alan Kors.

Optional extra: Fri Oct 16, 2-6pm workshop on paper and paperwork (in the French Revolution and the digital age), Sheer Room, Fay House, Radcliffe Institute

Week VIII (Oct 22): close reading

Assignment: choose a passage from your primary source and write a 2-3-page close reading

Reading: Montaigne, *Essays* [any edition or translation is fine] To the reader, I, 1 (par diverses fins...), I, 31 (cannibals); II, 33 (Story of Spurina--for Garavini), III, 9 (of vanity--for Hoffmann), III, 11 (of the lame)

George Hoffmann, "The Montaigne Monopoly: Revising the Essais under the French Privilege System," *PMLA* (1993): 308-319 [on-line].

George Hoffmann, *Montaigne's Career*, ch. 2

Fausta Garavini, "Montaigne et le Theatrum Humanae Vitae" *Montaigne et l'Europe* (1992) [in French; skip it if you don't read French]

[For a general introduction to Montaigne, see *Montaigne: Essays in honor of Richard Sayce*, ed., I.D. McFarlane and Ian Maclean.]

Week IX (Oct 29): interacting with the new world

Assignment: the prospectus should include a presentation of the historical and historiographical questions you are investigating and an explanation of their significance, a description of the primary source(s) you are using and a bibliography of primary and secondary sources

Reading: John Elliott, "Final reflections: the *Old World and the New* revisited," in *America in European Consciousness 1493-1750*, ed. Kupperman (1995).

Walter Mignolo, "On the Colonization of Amerindian Languages and Memories: Renaissance Theories of Writing and the Discontinuity of the Classical Tradition," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 34 (1992), 301-30 (on-line)

Anthony Grafton, "The Rest versus the West," *New York Review of Books*, 10 April 1997, pp. 57-64 [not on-line]--review essay of recent works on this theme, including Mignolo and mention of Elliott. Reprinted in Grafton, *Bring Out Your Dead*, pp. 77-93.

Week X (Nov 5): oral presentations in class

Weeks XI-XII (Nov 12, 19, 26): NO CLASS (prof away at conferences + Thanksgiving)
Work on your drafts!

Monday Nov 30: precirculate your drafts to the class

Week XIII (Dec 3): discussion of drafts in class

Reading: the drafts of all the students in the class

FINAL PAPERS DUE Friday Dec 18, noon.