

**HST 803: Methods of Historical Research**  
**Fall 2018**  
**Wednesdays, 4:10-7pm**  
**255 Old Horticulture**

**Prof. Emily Conroy-Krutz**

**Email:** [conroyk5@msu.edu](mailto:conroyk5@msu.edu)

**Office Hours:** 306A Old Horticulture, Tuesdays 10:30am-12pm or by appointment

**Course Summary:**

This course is designed to introduce graduate students to the methods of the historian's craft. Over the course of the semester, we will explore different approaches to historical research and writing. The readings feature a mix of classics and new works from a range of fields of study that we will use to talk about sources, research questions, interpretation, argument, narrative, and historiography. The semester is divided into three units: What is History?, Approaches to Historical Writing, and Historians at Work. In the first unit, we will ask big questions about history as a field, the nature of facts and evidence, and the construction of and absences in the archives. During the second unit, we will be joined by several members of the MSU faculty who will share their work and discuss their methods and the historiographical conversations they were participating in. In the final unit, we will think about historians as public intellectuals and teachers, engaged in conversations not only with other scholars, but with the broader public and their students.

**Graded Components:**

Participation (40%)

Attendance, preparation, and participation are extremely important to the success of this course. Your presence at all class meetings is expected. If you will need to be absent, please get in touch with me as soon as possible. You should come to each class meeting having completed the assigned readings and ready to discuss. To aid you in your preparations, you will submit 1-2 potential discussion questions on the course D2L page by 10pm on the evening before our class meetings. All members of the course are expected to conduct themselves with professionalism and respect.

Unit One Paper, due 5pm Friday, Sept. 28 (10%)

At the conclusion of our first unit, you will write a brief (1000-1500 word) reflection on the questions about historical theory and method raised in our first three meetings. You will connect themes across multiple weeks and relate these questions to your own research. For example: how do different ideas about objectivity and truth shape your approach to the sources you use? What presences or absences do you need to be attuned to in the archives you utilize? How do different theoretical approaches to history shape the kinds of questions you want to ask of your sources?

Book Review, due 4:10pm on the date of discussion (10%)

In Unit Two, you will write a review of one of the book-length assigned readings (we will have a sign-up in class to avoid overlap). That review will be due by the start of class on the day we are discussing it. The review should emphasize argument and the strengths and weaknesses of

approach. We will discuss writing book reviews in class in more depth, but explore the reviews of journals like the *American Historical Review* or journals in your field for examples. In keeping with style guides for many journals, and as an exercise in conciseness, these reviews are capped at 1,000 words.

State of the Field Paper, due 5pm Friday, Dec. 14 (40%)

The final paper will be a historiographic state of the field study of a topic of your choosing. I encourage you to use this as an opportunity to familiarize yourself with the major recent texts in your chosen field, and to discuss possible texts with members of the faculty with whom you hope to work at MSU.

### **Required Texts:**

The following books will be read in full over the course of the semester. For many of these titles, used copies are plentiful. When MSU Library has an e-book copy, I have noted it below. I have ordered copies at the Student Book Store, but please do explore library and ILL options if you do not wish to purchase your own copy of all of these. Additional readings are available online.

- John Arnold, *History: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2000)
- John Demos, *The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from North America* (Vintage, 1994)
- Marisa J. Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* (Penn University Press, 2016)
- Richard P. Tucker, *Insatiable Appetite: The United States and the Ecological Degradation of the Tropical World*, Revised Edition (Rowman and Littlefield, 2007)—**E-book available via MSU Library**
- Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *The Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812* (Vintage, 1991)
- Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction* (Vintage, 1990. Original, 1976. First English edition, 1978)
- Rebecca Scott and J-M Hébard, *Freedom Papers: An Atlantic Odyssey in the Age of Emancipation* (Harvard University Press, 2012)—**E-book available via MSU Library**
- Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Harvard, 1983)
- Zara Anishanslin, *Portrait of a Woman in Silk: Hidden Histories of the British Atlantic World* (Yale, 2016)
- Paul A. Cohen, *History in Three Keys: the Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth* (Columbia University Press, 1998)—**E-book available via MSU Library**
- R. Marie Griffith, *Moral Combat: How Sex Divided American Christians and Fractured American Politics* (Basic Books, 2017)
- Sam Wineberg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts: Charting the Future of Teaching the Past* (Temple University Press, 2001)

### **Faculty Guests:**

During Unit 2, we will be joined for part of our class session by members of the MSU History Department faculty. As part of our ongoing interest in this course to think about how historians do the work that they do, these faculty will share a chapter of their work and come for a Q&A and discussion about their methods and how they saw themselves fitting the project into broader historiographic discussions.

## **Course Policies:**

**Late work:** All late papers will be marked down 5 percent per 24 hours from the time that the paper was due. In case of illness or emergency, please be in touch with me as soon as possible so that we can work out a way for you to complete your work.

**Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty:** If you are found to have plagiarized all or portions of your work in this class, you will receive an automatic zero on that assignment. If you are found doing so a second time, you will receive an automatic zero in the course. In accordance with MSU policy, I will also file a report of the incident with the college. Please review MSU's definitions and policies regarding academic integrity here:

<https://www.msu.edu/~ombud/academic-integrity/index.html>

To avoid charges of plagiarism, it is essential that you cite your sources appropriately in your writing! A guide for annotation in the Chicago style can be found here:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/01/>

**Resources for Persons with Disabilities:** If you have a disability that will require accommodations in this class, I will be more than happy to help you. The process for this involves working through RCPD on campus and bringing me a VISA form. To make an appointment with a specialist, contact (517)353-9642. The website is

<http://MYProfile.rcpd.msu.edu>

**Office Hours:** I hold regular office hours every week on Tuesday mornings. If you would like to meet with me but have a conflict on Tuesday mornings, I am more than happy to schedule meetings at a different time. Simply email me or talk to me after class, and we can find a time that works with our schedules. Please do take advantage of office hours. I am here if you have any questions about the course, if you are having trouble with the readings, writing assignments, or classroom activities, or would like to learn more about related topics.

## **Class Schedule:**

**Week 1, Wednesday, August 29: No Class [MSU schedules first Wednesday as a Monday]**

### **UNIT ONE: What is History?**

**Week 2, Wednesday, Sept. 5: What is History?**

Reading:

John Arnold, *History: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2000)

\*David Armitage and Jo Guldi, *The History Manifesto* (Cambridge, 2017) (open access available here: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/the-history-manifesto/AC1A1EC711AE91A4F9004E7582D79AFD>)

\*Kerwin Lee Klein, "The Rise and Fall of Historiography," in *From History to Theory* (University of California, 2011), 17-34. Available as E-book via MSU Library

\*Karin Wulf, "Efficient Reading" at *Vast Early America* (Jan. 31, 2018)

<http://karinwulf.com/efficient-reading/>

\*"Fish Guts. Or, How to Read a Book, a Sentence, and a Page" at *Vast Early America* (Feb. 16, 2018) <http://karinwulf.com/fish-guts-or-how-to-read-a-book-a-sentence-and-a-page/>

### **Week 3, Wednesday, Sept. 12: Facts, Truth, Sources, and Imagination**

Reading:

John Demos, *The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from North America* (Vintage, 1994)

\*E.H. Carr, "The Historian and His Facts," in *What is History?* (Random House, 1961), 3-35

\*Richard J. Evans, "Historians and Their Facts" in *In Defense of History* (Norton, 1999), 65-88

Listening:

Ben Franklin's World: Doing History Episode 79: "James Horn, What is a Historical Source" <https://www.benfranklinsworld.com/episode-079-jamestown-historic-source-doing-history/>

### **Week 4, Wednesday, Sept. 19: Thinking about Archives**

Reading:

Marisa J. Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* (Penn University Press, 2016)

\*Frederick Cooper, "Memories of Colonization: Commemoration, Preservation, and Erasure in an African Archive" AND one additional essay of your choice in *Archives, Documentation, and Institutions of Social Memory: Essays from the Sawyer Seminar*, ed. Francis X. Blouin and William G. Rosenberg (University of Michigan Press, 2006), 257-266 and ?? Ebook available via MSU library.

Listening:

Ben Franklin's World: Doing History Episode 75 "Peter Drummey, How Archives Work" <https://www.benfranklinsworld.com/episode-075-peter-drummey-archives-work/>

## **UNIT TWO: Approaches to Historical Writing**

### **Week 5, Wednesday, Sept. 26:**

#### **Microhistory and Biography**

Reading:

Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *The Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812* (Vintage, 1991)

\*Jill Lepore, "Historians who Love Too Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography," *Journal of American History*, Vol. 88, No. 1 (June, 2001): 129-144

**Guest Faculty: Nwando Achebe:** "And She Became a Man": King Ahebi Ugbabe in the History of Enugu-Ezike, Northern Igboland, 1880-1948," in Stephan F. Miescher and Lisa A. Lindsay, eds. *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa* (Heinemann, 2003), 52-68

Unit One Paper due at 5pm on Friday, Sept. 28.

### **Week 6, Wednesday, Oct. 3:**

#### **History, Narrative, and Memory**

Reading:

Paul A. Cohen, *History in Three Keys: the Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth* (Columbia University Press, 1998)

\*Kerwin Lee Klein, "On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse," in *From History to Theory* (University of California, 2011), 112-137. Available as E-book via MSU Library

**Guest Faculty: LaShawn Harris**, "Madame Queen of Policy: Stephanie St. Clair, Harlem's Numbers Racket, and Community Advocacy," in *Sex Workers, Psychics, and Numbers Runners: Black Women in New York City's Underground Economy* (University of Illinois, 2016), 54-93

**Week 7, Wednesday, Oct. 10: No Class Meeting**

**Week 8, Wednesday, Oct. 17:**

**History and Theory**

Reading:

Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction* (Vintage, 1990. Original, 1976. First English edition, 1978)

\*Ann Laura Stoler, "A Colonial Reading of Foucault: Bourgeois Bodies and Racial Selves" in *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (University of California, 2002), 140-161

**Guest Faculty: Aminda Smith**, Article TBD

**Week 9, Wednesday, Oct. 24**

**Material Culture**

Zara Anishanslin, *Portrait of a Woman in Silk: Hidden Histories of the British Atlantic World* (Yale, 2016)

\*Leora Auslander, Amy Bentley, Leor Halevi, H. Otto Sibum, Christopher Witmore, "AHR Conversation: Historians and the Study of Material Culture," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 114, No. 5 (Dec. 2009), 1354-1404

**Guest Faculty: Helen Veit**, "Eating Cotton: Cottonseed, Crisco, and Consumer Ignorance," *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* (forthcoming, 2019)

**Week 10, Wednesday, Oct. 31:**

**Environmental History**

Richard P. Tucker, *Insatiable Appetite: The United States and the Ecological Degradation of the Tropical World*, Revised Edition (Rowman and Littlefield, 2007)

\*Ted Steinberg, "Down to Earth: Nature, Agency, and Power in History," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 107, No. 3 (June 2002), 798-820

**Guest Faculty: Lisa Fine**, "Rights of Men, Rights of Passage: Hunting and Masculinity at Reo Motors of Lansing, Michigan, 1945-1975," *Journal of Social History* Vol. 33, No. 4 (Summer 2000)

**Week 11, Wednesday, Nov. 7:**

**Global, Transnational, Comparative History**

Reading:

Rebecca Scott and J-M Hébard, *Freedom Papers: An Atlantic Odyssey in the Age of Emancipation* (Harvard University Press, 2012)

\*Sven Beckert, "Emancipation and Empire: Reconstructing the Worldwide Web of Cotton Production in the Age of the American Civil War," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 109, No. 5 (Dec. 2004): 1405-1438

**Guest Faculty: Charles Keith**, "Vietnamese Collaborationism in Vichy France," *The Journal of Asian Studies* Vol. 76, No. 4 (November 2017), 987-1008

**Week 12, Wednesday, Nov. 14:**

**Cultural History**

Reading:

Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Harvard, 1983)

\*Robert Darnton, "Workers Revolt: The Great Cat Massacre of the Rue Saint-Séverin," in *The Great Cat Massacre: And Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (Basic Books, 2009), 75-106 E-book available via MSU Library.

\*Lawrence Levine, "William Shakespeare and the American People: A Study in Culture Transformation," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 89, No. 1 (Feb. 1984): 34-66

**Guest Faculty: Laura Fair**, "Drive in Socialism: Debating Modernities and Development in Dar es Salaam" in *Reel Pleasures: Cinema Audiences and Entrepreneurs in Twentieth-Century Urban Tanzania* (Ohio University Press, 2018), 221-247

**Week 13, Wednesday, Nov. 21: Happy Thanksgiving!**

No Class Meeting

**UNIT THREE: Historians at Work**

**Week 14, Wednesday, Nov. 28: Historians and Public Life**

Reading:

R. Marie Griffith, *Moral Combat: How Sex Divided American Christians and Fractured American Politics* (Basic Books, 2017)

\*Chad Williams and Kidada Williams, and Keisha Blain, "Introduction," *Charleston Syllabus: Readings on Race, Racism, and Racial Violence* (University of Georgia, 2016)

\*Eric Foner, "Who Is An American: The Imagined Community in American History" in *Who Owns History?: Rethinking the Past in a Changing World* (Hill and Wang, 2003) or *The Centennial Review*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (Fall 1997), 425-438

**Week 15, Wednesday, Dec. 5: Teaching, Learning, and Thinking Like Historians**

Reading:

Sam Wineberg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts: Charting the Future of Teaching the Past* (Temple University Press, 2001)