HIST 338
History and Theory
(revised to reflect what we actually did summer 2015)

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PAC 205

This seminar will explore the contemporary theory and philosophy of history. The idea is normally to read one paper or article or chapter per session in order to give it close attention. There are a number of other themes that we might take up and some of these are listed at the end of the syllabus of topics and we might substitute or change our direction based on interest or how the course develops. For a starter, an introductory section "Part One" provides some works to guide us forward without taking an overly historical or intellectual historical approach. Then we proceed to read papers, grouped, sometimes somewhat lightly by themes. Semantic and interpretation, narrative and text, ontology, experience, actions, and the posture of the historian are some of the current themes.

Part One: From Historiography to the Theories of History

January 22 Introduction: History & Theory, Historiography, Philosophy
January 29 R G Collingwood, "Historical Evidence," 249-82.
February 5 R G Collingwood, "History as Re-enactment of Past Experience" 282-302.
February 10 Walter Benjamin, "Ten Theses on the Philosophy of History," 253-64
February 12th class is cancelled: will be made up

**February 17**
Louis Mink, "The Autonomy of Historical Understanding"

**Part Two: Meaning and Interpretation**

**February 19**
Quentin Skinner, "Motives, Intentions, and Interpretations"

**February 24**
Quentin Skinner, "Interpretation, Rationality, and Belief"

**February 26**
Hayden White, "Interpretation in History"

**Part Three: Narration and Language**

**March 3**
Reinhart Koselleck, "Begriffsgeschichte and Social History"

**March 5**
Nancy Partner, "Historicity in an Age of Reality Fictions"

**March 24**
David Carr, "Narrative and the Real World: An Argument for Continuity"

**March 26**
Ann Rigney, "When the Monograph is No Longer the Medium: Historical Narrative in the Online Age"

**March 31**
Kalle Pihlainen, "Realist Histories? When form clashes with functions"
Dawn Spring, "Gaming History: Computer and video Games as Historical Scholarship"
Janice Leidl, "Tales of future past: science fiction as a historical genre"

**Part Four: Pasts Became, say experience, testimony, presence**

**April 2**
Jonas Grethein, "Experientiality and 'Narrative Reference,' with thanks to Thucydides"

**April 7**
Veronica Tozzi, "The epistemic and moral role of testimony"

**April 9**
Susan A. Crane, "Memory, Distortion, and History in the Museum"

**April 14**
Eelco Runia, "Presence"

**April 16**
Anita Kasabova, "Memory, Memorials, and Commemoration"

*Part Five: became genealogies or the construction of the past*
April 21  Bruno Latour, “On the Partial Existence of Existing and Non-Existing Objects

April 23  Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History"

**Part Six: Responsibility, Ethics, the character of the historian**

April 28  Antoon de Baets, "A Declaration of the Responsibilities of Present Generations toward Past Generations"

April 30  Keith Jenkins, "Ethical Responsibility, and the Historian"

May 3  Herman Paul, "What is a Scholarly Persona? Ten theses on Virtues, skills, and Desires"

Makeup  James Cracraft, "History as Philosophy"

**Additional or substitute Themes:**

- Experience
- Emotions
- The Historian
- Agency and Responsibility
- Sociological Theory for History: Giddens, Luhmann, Bourdieu, for example.
- Counterfactual History
- Gender
- Historical Understanding
- Memory
- Comparative and Entangled History
Periods and periodization

Big History, Deep History

Neo-realism

Individual Figures are Possible: White, Ankersmit

**Assignments:**

The core of the course is intense and careful reading and discussion of the articles. This will include the sending of two questions reacting to the piece by 1 PM each class day.

Class participation, including attendance and the discussion questions, will be worth 30%.

First paper of about 3000 words will be due by the start of the March break. 30%

Second paper of about 4-5000 words will be due by the end of the final exam period. 40%

The paper topics will be developed in conversation with the professor and will be able to pursue topics, historical developments within issues, individual writers or completely new topics, including from any omitted fields. Simple.