COURSE NO. COURSE TITLE INSTRUCTOR
History 572 Undergrad. Seminar in European History: New MacDonald
Directions in Social History

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The most innovative and influential historians in this century have been scholars associated with the journal Annales, E.S.C. The French masters who established the Annales school, Febvre, Bloch, and more recently Braudel and Le Roy Ladurie, have called for a new kind of history, a total history of past societies that embraces every aspect of human experience. They and the writers who have been influenced by them have produced a magnificent series of works that are designed collectively to realize their ideal. The aim of this seminar will be to clarify the principles that characterize this new school of historical writing and to examine the practice of those principles in a representative selection of books by French, English, and American scholars. The course will begin with theoretical statements, then proceed to studies of whole regions and classes, and finally conclude with works about popular culture and thought. Throughout the course, the seminar as a group will consider how well each of the books we read embodies the theoretical prescriptions of the Annaalists and how valid the statements themselves seem to be when they have been tested in practice.

LECTURES

There will be no lectures. A seminar is a discussion course in which the success or failure of the class depends upon the willingness of each student to read the assigned books carefully, to develop strong and defensible opinions about them, and to articulate his or her views in discussion. Every effort will be made to create a stimulating and pleasant atmosphere in which everyone feels free to contribute, but indolence and sullenness will be rudely penalized.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS and EXAMINATIONS

Each student will be asked to write two short papers, based on the class readings. No other written work will be required.

GRADING SYSTEM

The final grade will be based largely on the quality of the student's contributions to class discussions. The papers will count for less than half of the final grade.

REQUIRED READINGS

Goubert, Louis XIV & Twenty Million Frenchmen
Le Roy Ladurie, Peasants of Languedoc
Stone, The Crisis of the Aristocracy
Burke, Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe
Davis, Society and Culture in Early Modern France
Le Roy Ladurie, Montaillou
Aries, Western Attitudes toward Death
Ginzburg, The Cheese and the Worms
Articles by Braudel, Le Roy Ladurie, Hexter, Le Coff, and Thompson