This course will provide an introduction to several important recent approaches to cultural history, including methodologies influenced by anthropology, feminism, gender theory, cultural geography, new historicism, post-structuralism, post-colonialism, and combinations of these. After a general overview of what historians have called the “cultural turn” in history, we will read selected chapters and articles by “classic” cultural theorists (most of whom start with B), like Bhabha, Bourdieu, Butler, Foucault, and Spivak, and discuss their theoretical work in relation to different recent works and fields of cultural history. The aim of the course is to think through how cultural historians are inspired by and use theory in their histories. Throughout the semester we will explore the following questions: how do theoretical perspectives shape the histories that (cultural) historians write? How are their methods and perspectives shaped, limited, made possible by their training, their theoretical perspectives, and their epistemological assumptions?

**Work:** You will all be responsible for leading two seminars together with another student. We will talk more about which seminar dates when we meet. You will write three papers: two short (5-7 pp.) and one not-too-long (14-16 pp.) The short papers will be due on Monday, Oct. 6 and Monday, Nov. 10. The final longer paper, due on Monday, Dec. 15, will be either an attempt to apply the theoretical perspectives we have discussed to your own work or an analysis of some other historian(s)’ use of these approaches.

**Readings:**

**Books:**


**Chapters, articles, and other readings:** Will be available on our learn@UW page. I would strongly prefer that we do not have any electronic devices in our seminar, and I therefore ask that you print our
readings and bring them to seminar. This way you can also make better and more extensive notes while you read 😊

**Week 1 (Sept 4.): Introduction: The Cultural Turn in History**


Please also skim the following two (they were important in getting me to think about cultural history – I will explain why when we meet):


**Optional supplementary readings:**


**Cultural encounters & subaltern histories**

**Week 2 (Sept. 11):**


**Optional supplementary readings:**


**Desire, sexuality & colonialism**

**Week 4 (Sept. 25):**


**Biography as micro-history**

**Week 6** (Oct. 9):


**Literary/discourse-analysis & New historicism**

**Week 8** (Oct. 23):


**Optional supplementary readings:**


**Practice & structuring structures**

**Week 9** (Oct. 30):


Gender & subjectivity

Week 11 (Nov. 13):
Documentary about Judith Butler uploaded to learn@UW

Optional supplementary readings:


Week 13 (Nov. 27): Thanksgiving

Week 14 (Dec. 4): Guest: Emily Callaci


Optional supplementary readings:


Week 15 (Dec. 11): Revisiting historiographical “turning” and cultural history