Recent Approaches to Cultural and Social History

HIST 703: History & Theory
Spring 2016
Tues. 1:20AM - 3:15PM, Humanities 5257

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This course will provide an introduction to several important recent approaches to cultural and social history, including methodologies influenced by anthropology, feminism, gender theory, cultural geography, post-structuralism, post-colonialism, globalization theory, and combinations of these. We will read selected chapters and articles by “classic” cultural theorists (most of whom start with B), like Bhabha, Bourdieu, Butler, Appadurai, Geertz, and Foucault, and discuss their theoretical work in relation to recent historical works. The aim of the course is to think through how social and cultural historians are inspired by and use theory in conceptualizing historical change. Throughout the semester we will explore the following questions: how do theoretical perspectives inform and influence various historians’ writing? How are their methods and perspectives shaped, limited, and made possible by their training, their theoretical perspectives, and their epistemological assumptions? One goal of the course is to help you think about how to best theorize and conceptualize your own approach to history.

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 Friday, Feb. 19 and Wednesday, March 16. The final longer paper, due on Monday, May 9, 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:


Afsaneh Najmabadi. Women with Mustaches and Men without Beards: Gender and Sexual Anxieties of Iranian Modernity (Berkeley, Cal., 2005).


Books are available at Room of One’s Own Bookstore at 315 W. Gorham Street, or on Reserve at HC White.

Chapters, articles, and other readings: Will be available as a course packet from the Copy Center at 6120 Social Sciences. This way you can also make better and more extensive notes while you read 😊

January 19: INTRODUCTIONS

CULTURAL AND SOCIAL HISTORY


Optional supplementary readings:


TRANSNATIONAL CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS & SUBALTERN HISTORIES


Optional supplementary readings:


Feb 16: 1968 and Transnationalism


PRACTICE & STRUCTURING STRUCTURES


Pierre Bourdieu. “Structures, Habitus, Power: Basis for a Theory of Symbolic Power.” In Culture/Power/History: A Reader in Contemporary Social Theory,


**MICRO-HISTORY**


**SPRING BREAK**


**NEW INTELLECTUAL HISTORY: UW’S OWN EXAMPLE**


Series of short selections from these works by Nietzsche:


**DESIRE & SEXUALITY**


**April 19:** Afsaneh Najmabadi. *Women with Mustaches and Men without Beards: Gender and Sexual Anxieties of Iranian Modernity* (Berkeley, Cal., 2005), 1-96, 132-80, 207-244 (skim the rest)

**April 26:** Judith Butler. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), Preface (1990), 1-17.

Documentary about Judith Butler uploaded to learn@UW


**Optional supplementary readings:**


**May 3:** TBD