

University of Wisconsin-Madison
History 201: The Historian's Craft
BELIEF AND UNBELIEF IN MODERN EUROPE

Fall 2019
Wednesdays, 8:50-10:45 a.m., Education L151

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Office hours: Wednesdays, 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., and by appointment

Course Description

In the modern period—from about 1500 to the present—Europe saw the growth of new forms of religious belief and identity as well as the spread of alternatives to existing religious traditions, such as agnosticism and atheism. In this course we will explore the impact of these developments on a range of individuals and their relationships to Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions. Central questions we will ask include:

- What conditions or experiences have led people to transition from one set of religious or philosophical beliefs, allegiances, and identities to another?
- Are there common routes by which individuals have taken on a new religious identity and belief system (conversion), abandoned a set of beliefs and commitments (deconversion), or otherwise changed their relationship to a religious tradition?
- How has the experience of religious and philosophical pluralism—often seen as aspects of “modernity” and “secularity”—shaped the way in which individuals have held and expressed their most basic life commitments?
- What are some of the main ways in which people have narrated their spiritual and intellectual journeys? In particular, what functions has the genre of autobiography served?

Course Objectives

This is a Historian's Craft course, and so we will emphasize practicing foundational skills that historians employ to do their work. These skills include:

- asking interesting and significant historical questions that generate new research
- finding, evaluating, and interpreting primary and secondary sources
- constructing strong historical arguments based on evidence and careful reasoning
- communicating findings and arguments clearly and effectively in both written and oral form

To practice these skills, you will write a series of analyses of primary sources and of other historians' arguments, discuss your findings and insights in class, write an original research paper

on a topic of your choosing, and make oral presentations in class. In doing so, you will also meet UW-Madison's requirements for the Communications-B course.

Course Credit

This three-credit course meets as a group seminar for 115 minutes each week. You are also expected to spend an average of *at least* seven hours per week outside of class reading, writing, and preparing for discussions and oral presentations, for a total of 135 hours over the semester (or 45 hours per credit, according to UW-Madison's credit hour policy). Please plan to allot your time accordingly.

Requirements and Grading

1. Read all assigned texts and participate actively in class meetings. Since this is a discussion-based seminar, your learning experience and the success of the course depend on your coming to class prepared to engage the week's assignment. This means reading each text closely and thoughtfully—taking notes, identifying crucial passages and problems, noting questions, making connections—and coming to meetings ready to discuss your insights and to engage with those of your classmates. You must bring your own copy of the relevant texts to each class.

Because this course runs on discussion, you are required to attend all class sessions. I understand that on occasion an illness or emergency makes this impossible. If that is the case, please contact me as soon as possible so that we can arrange to get you caught up. Any unexcused absence will lower your final course grade. You will receive a class participation grade (on a ten-point scale) three times during the semester: on October 2, October 30, and December 11. Class participation determines 30% of your final grade.

2. Write six 300-350-word responses to assigned readings. Each week I will post several questions on Canvas about the assigned readings. Some of these will ask you to probe primary sources in specific ways, while others will ask you to identify and analyze historical arguments by other scholars. You may choose which six of these exercises you complete. Because the nature of these assignments varies some, I will use somewhat different criteria to assess them but the following questions always apply:

- (1) Does your paper reflect a close reading of the relevant text(s)?
- (2) Does your paper demonstrate thoughtful, independent analysis?
- (3) Is it written in clear and concise prose, polished for grammar and style?

To get credit for a response paper, you must submit it on Canvas before the start of class when the reading is due; the submission folder closes at 8:50 a.m. sharp. No late papers accepted: if you miss a week, go on to the next. Together the response papers count for 25% of your final grade.

3. Make two oral presentations in class. In the first presentation of about five minutes, you will reflect on the week's assigned reading and raise two or three questions for class discussion that day. In the second presentation of about ten minutes, you will present the findings of your

research paper. More details and a sign-up sheet will come during the second week of the course. The first presentation counts for 5% and the second for 10% of your course grade.

4. Write an original research paper of 10-12 pages. Your paper will be based on primary sources and will also incorporate scholarly writings related to the historical problem you explore. You will receive more detailed instructions for the project in mid-October, and over the semester we will discuss the components that go into writing a strong research paper. Your paper will be composed in several stages. A statement of your topic and your sources will be due on November 6. I will meet individually with you later that week to offer feedback on these. You will submit the first full draft of your paper on November 27, and the following week we will meet to discuss it. The revised version of your paper will be due on December 11. The paper counts for 30% of your final grade.

Grading Scale

All assignments and your final course grade will be calculated using the following scale:

93-100%=A	83-87%=B	70-77%=C	0-59%=F
88-92%=AB	78-82%=BC	60-70%=D	

Honors Credit

Students taking the course for honors credit should consult with me by the fourth week of the semester to discuss options for an honors project. These include expanding the research paper or doing another project involving art, media, or another form of public presentation, according to your interests.

Communication and Office Hours

I welcome meeting with students outside of class time. You are encouraged to come to office hours at any time during the semester, whether to discuss a question or problem you've encountered in the course, to get help on a paper, to explore an idea, or simply to chat. I hold regular office hours on Wednesdays, 11:00-1:00, but if you have a schedule conflict then, let me know and we can arrange another time to meet. The best way to reach me is by email (eric.carlsson@wisc.edu). I check email regularly and will try to respond within 24 hours. Often I can reply sooner than that, but on weekends response time may be up to 48 hours.

Electronic Devices

Since face-to-face interaction is key to this seminar, you are strongly encouraged to take notes with a pen and paper rather than on a laptop. (There is also a solid body of research that suggests that students process information more thoughtfully and focus their attention more sharply when they take notes by hand rather than on a computer.) I'll make an exception to the no-computers guideline if you prefer to access electronic copies of readings posted on Canvas. If you do so, I ask that you turn off email and any notifications that might distract you from our discussions. Most weeks we will take a five-minute break after the first hour of class, so you can check messages then if necessary.

The History Lab

The History Lab is an excellent resource for undergraduates writing history papers. Trained Ph.D. students in history will help you regardless of your stage in the writing process—formulating a thesis, developing your argument, citing sources, revising your drafts, and more. The History Lab is located in 4255 Mosse Humanities Building. Sign up for a one-on-one consultation at <https://advising.wisc.edu/content/history-lab#info>.

Academic Integrity

By enrolling in this course, you agree to uphold the high academic standards of UW-Madison. No form of cheating, unauthorized collaboration, or plagiarism—representing somebody else’s work as your own—or helping others commit these acts will be tolerated. In your papers you must cite sources carefully, whether you repeat someone else’s exact words or paraphrase or draw on their ideas. If you have specific questions about plagiarism and how to avoid it, please speak with me or consult <https://writing.wisc.edu/handbook/assignments/quoting/sources/>. Penalties for academic misconduct range from failing an assignment or a course to being suspended from the university. For university policies on academic misconduct, see <https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/>.

Learning Accessibility

I am committed to making our classroom, our interactions, and our learning practices as inclusive as possible. If you have a particular instructional need that I should be aware of, please talk to me at the start of the semester and contact the McBurney Center if you haven’t yet done so. I will then work either directly with you or coordinate with the McBurney Center to provide reasonable accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student’s educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.

UW-Madison Statement on Diversity

Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. UW-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background—people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.

Course Texts

We will be reading the following three books, which are available as inexpensive paperbacks at local and online stores. Copies are also on reserve at College Library.

The Life of Saint Teresa of Ávila by Herself, trans. J. M. Cohen (Penguin Classics, 1957) [Note: Be sure to use this edition]

The Memoirs of Glückel of Hameln, trans. Marvin Lowenthal (Schocken Books, 1977)

Muhammad Asad, *The Road to Mecca* (Fons Vitae, 2000)

We will also be reading most of the two books listed below, which are available as e-books through UW Libraries and on reserve at College Library. If you wish you can also buy hard copies of them through local and online stores.

The Autobiography of Solomon Maimon, ed. Y. Y. Melamed & A. P. Socher, and trans. Paul Reitter (Princeton University Press, 2018) [Note: Be sure to use this edition]
David Hempton, *Evangelical Disenchantment: 9 Portraits of Faith and Doubt* (Yale University Press, 2013)

All other readings will be posted as PDFs on Canvas. There you will also find full bibliographical information for each text.

COURSE SCHEDULE

- Sep 4 Course Introduction
Dominic Erdozain, *The Soul of Doubt*, 1-9
- Sep 11 Secularization: Competing Stories
Brad S. Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation*, 74-128
Margaret C. Jacob, *The Secular Enlightenment*, 6-65
Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, 1-7
- Sep 18 Rethinking Belief and Unbelief
Dominic Erdozain, *The Soul of Doubt*, 10-33
Ethan H. Shagan, *The Birth of Modern Belief*, 1-30, 65-97, 166-206
Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, 8-25
- Sep 25 In the Fold of Faith
The Life of Saint Teresa of Ávila by Herself, 1-70, 162-73, 212-76, 306-14
Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, *Reading Autobiography*, 235-51
- Oct 2 A Jewish Life in a Gentile World
The Memoirs of Glückel of Hameln
- Oct 9 Conversion in an Evangelical Key
John Newton, *An Authentic Narrative of Some Remarkable Particulars*
August Hermann Francke, *Autobiography*
Bruce Hindmarsh, "Religious Conversion as Narrative and Autobiography"
- Oct 16 Enlightenment Creeds
Voltaire, selections from *Treatise on Tolerance* and *Philosophical Dictionary*
Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Profession of Faith of a Savoyard Vicar" from *Emile*
Dominic Erdozain, *The Soul of Doubt*, 118-72
Arthur M. Melzer, "The Origin of the Counter-Enlightenment: Rousseau and the Religion of Sincerity"

- Oct 23 A Jewish Life in an Enlightenment World
The Autobiography of Solomon Maimon, 1-61, 75-119, 192-7, 205-43
- Oct 30 Evangelical Disenchantment
 David Hempton, *Evangelical Disenchantment*, 1-70, 114-62
- Nov 6 Workshop: Writing a Research Paper
 Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, 52-103
 **Paper topic and primary sources due
 **Meetings this week to discuss paper topic
- Nov 13 Turning to Islam (I)
 Muhammad Asad, *The Road to Mecca*, 1-182
- Nov 20 Turning to Islam (II)
 Muhammad Asad, *The Road to Mecca*, 183-375
- Nov 27 Extended office hours this week
 **Full first draft of paper due
- Dec 4 Student presentations
 **Meet this week to discuss paper drafts
- Dec 11 Student presentations
 **Revised paper due