



**Historiography and Theory  
Hist 590.01E and Hist 590.1SE (80537 and 80979)  
Course Syllabus: Fall 2024**

**INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

Professor: Dr. Cynthia Ross (I go by Dr. Ross or Professor Ross)  
Class Time: M 4:30pm – 7:10pm  
Class Location: Ferguson SS 310  
Office Location: Ferguson SS 104  
Office Hours: MTWRF 2:00pm – 3:00pm  
Instructor Email: [cynthia.ross@tamuc.edu](mailto:cynthia.ross@tamuc.edu)  
Response Time: Within 24 hours, excluding weekends

Email is the best way to reach me outside of class. I typically respond to email during regular business hours, within one day during the week; emails sent after 5:00pm on Friday may not get a response until Monday morning.

**COURSE INFORMATION**

**Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings**

Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised Edition (New York: Verso, 2016). ISBN: 978-1784786755

W. Jeffrey Bolster, *Fishing the Atlantic in the Age of Sail*. (Belknap Press, 2014) ISBN: 978-0674283961

Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth Century Miller*. Reprint (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013). ISBN: 978-1421409887

Green and Troup, eds., *The Houses of History: A Critical Reader in Twentieth-Century History and Theory*. Second Edition (Manchester University Press, 2016). ISBN: 978-0719096211

Karen Harvey, *The Imposteress Rabbit Breeder: Mary Toft and Eighteenth Century England*. Illustrated Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.) ISBN: 978-0198734888

Anjali Fatima Raza Kolb, *Epidemic Empire: Colonialism, Contagion, and Terror, 1817–2020*. First Edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021). ISBN: 978-0226739359

Sarah Maza, *Thinking About History*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017). ISBN: 978-0226109336

Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The “Objectivity Question” and the American Historical Profession*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999). ISBN: 978-0521357456

Susan Whitfield, *Silk, Slaves, and Stupas: Material Culture of the Silk Road*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2018) ISBN: 978-0520281783

Kate L. Turabian, *Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. Ninth Edition (University of Chicago Press, 2018). ISBN: 978-0226430577 (Optional; Strongly recommended)

### **Course Description**

Historiography is the study of the discipline of history. Over the course of this semester, we will learn how historians have studied and written about the past focusing mostly on the late nineteenth century through the twenty-first century. We will read some of the most engaging, innovative, challenging, and creative historical thinkers in the academy. We might not agree with all of them, but we need to understand how and why each of them has shaped our field of study. We will develop analytical skills to examine how historians have reconstructed the past, determined the reliability of various forms of evidence, and weighed their ethical and professional responsibilities both as academics and as human beings. Each week we will read and discuss how historians’ questions, methods, and evidence had changed over time. We will examine historians’ arguments and understand the methodological, theoretical, and philosophical assumptions upon which they rest.

This course is not just about studying historians. It is also critical for graduate students to become professional historians themselves. It is designed to help graduate students learn to place themselves, and their research, within the theoretical and methodological debates of the field. It will thereby help graduate students understand their research and teaching fields within the context of the larger discipline of history. It is perhaps the most important course in your graduate program.

We will meet once a week at the designated class time for an engaging and active discussion. Each week, prior to class, students will complete a common core of assigned readings and a related short writing assignment. Once this semester, each student will be responsible for leading discussion, in collaboration with a classmate. Sign up for leading discussion will occur on the first class day. Students will also complete two significant historiography papers.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

1. Students will be able to research and write an essay about one major approach to the discipline of history.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### **Minimal Technical Skills Needed**

You must be able to use MyLeo Online (D2L), Zoom (hybrid students), and Microsoft Word. All materials submitted through D2L must be uploaded as a .doc or .docx file.

### **Instructional Methods**

The course will require reading, writing, listening, presenting, and group work.

### **Class Meeting Agenda**

The class meeting begins promptly at 4:30pm. Please try not to come in late: entering into a graduate seminar already in progress is disruptive. On selected weeks, student pairs will lead discussion for the first hour of class. We will take one 15 minute break midway through the class. Please return promptly from the break.

### **Learning Activities and Assessments**

#### **1. Participation**

You should come to class prepared to discuss the reading. Have your book with you. Have reading notes in whatever form you take them. You are encouraged to ask questions and it is helpful to prepare them ahead of time. Unprepared attendance may be treated as an absence. Students are expected to create and sustain an open intellectual classroom environment, which fosters discussion - you should listen to each other's comments and questions with an open mind and respect viewpoints other than your own.

Students must also be open to understanding why people of the past did what they did, and should not dismiss these actors' views because they might be perceived as "wrong."

Your participation grade will be based on the following criteria:

A = Student is always prepared; makes frequent voluntary contributions to classroom discussion

B = Student is generally prepared; makes occasional voluntary contributions to discussion or participates only when called on

C = Student is usually prepared but rarely voluntarily speaks

D = Student is generally unprepared and does not contribute to discussion

F = Student is unprepared and appears disinterested in contributing to discussion

Graduate students should not skip classes. Students are expected to attend every class session; attendance will be taken. Each unexcused absence beyond two (2) instances will result in a 10% reduction in the participation grade; excessive unexcused absences (more than 4) may be cause for a failing grade in this course, at the professor's discretion.

#### **2. Book Summaries**

Each week you will complete a book summary prior to class on Monday. This should be a two-page, double spaced Word document uploaded to D2L by Sunday at 11:59pm that includes: the scope of the book, main research question(s) / purpose, thesis / argument, evaluation of the use of available sources, organizational structure of the book, presentation of material, the extent to which the author achieved their overall purpose, and the broader significance of the work. This is intended to be a very short, to the point, assignment; be brief and focused.

### **3. Leading a Discussion**

During selected weeks, there will be two assigned discussion leaders who will be responsible for summarizing the assigned book and for guiding the overall discussion for the first hour of class. Prepare to spend about twenty to twenty-five minutes summarizing the book and thirty to thirty-five minutes leading discussion. The two leaders must work together.

Focus on (1) the interpretive or theoretical school (if any) to which the book belongs; (2) its thesis; (3) its use of sources; and (4) an evaluation of the success or failure of the book considered as an example of its type. Discussion leaders must have a note sheet with scripted questions.

It is acceptable to use book reviews to prepare, but if used in any way in class, they must be presented as the work of the reviewer, not as your own. Follow up assessments from book reviews with your own reasoned assessment of the reviewer's remarks.

All students are expected to complete the weekly reading assignments and to participate actively in class discussion even when student-led.

### **4. Historiography Papers**

Historiography is the study of how historical interpretations have changed over time. For example, think about how the American Civil War might have been interpreted in the first couple of decades after Reconstruction; then again after the spread of segregation out of the south in the 1910s; after the Double V campaign during World War II; later, in the wake of the Civil Rights movement; and perhaps even as it is changing now during Black Lives Matter. In another case, consider how Cold War historians thought about their topic a few years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, as democracy seemed to be within reach, and then post-2000, with the rise of a once again authoritarian Russia. The work of historians intersects with changes in the discipline, the times they are living in, and the world around them.

Historiography is also about the dialog between historians. In effect, all the historical works on a given topic are in a conversation with each other, challenging or supporting theories, refuting or supporting evidence, arriving at different or similar conclusions. All of the books in this course discuss historiography to some extent but Maza, Green and Troup, and Novick are the best for understanding what this means.

You will craft two 10 page historiography papers. Each of these papers will be structured around a book you will choose from a distributed list that interests you. The first paper will be due in Week 8. This paper will explore the selected book and 3 books that influenced it. The second paper will be due in Week 15 and explore 3 books that were influenced by your chosen selection. Using Google Scholar to search indexes will be useful for both papers; learning how to use Google Scholar searches will be discussed in class. At the end of the semester, you will give

a brief talk on the dialog, the way the books speak to each other, you have found among the books in your papers.

Your papers will explore how historians have approached this topic and thus, shaped the way we understand it over time. First, begin with a brief summary of the topic and the particular historiographical debate you are engaging. What sort of questions shaped their research process? Were particular historical approaches (say, an environmental approach) or theories (for example, gender theory, historical materialism, structuralism, or post-structuralism) shaping their analysis? What types of methods and sources are they using? What sort of causative explanations do they give? What sort of periodization or time scales are they using? How do works respond to each other on the topic (that dialog I mentioned above)? How did each work reflect the particular concerns of the time? Can you identify particular strengths and weaknesses when comparing all the works in your paper? Developing papers that respond to these questions results in creating a historiography.

These papers will require going to the stacks (physically or electronically), requesting secondary sources through Inter Library Loan, or obtaining them in the method of your choice, a significant amount of careful reading, and writing annotated bibs for each book before you even begin writing the paper. This is not a paper of original research. You should have no primary resources, only a total of 7 secondary sources across both papers, that is research and analysis conducted by historians.

Turabian full note/bibliography style must be used for the footnotes and bibliography. Do not use parenthetical notes. Remember that all information taken from another source must be cited, whether or not it is quoted. Failure to cite constitutes plagiarism.

Exact quotations must be brief and few. Do not use any exact quotes longer than two lines.

The paper must use one-inch margins, a 12-point font, and be double-spaced.

The pages must be numbered, except the cover page. Page numbers must be on the bottom of the page. No headers are permitted.

The paper must be submitted in a single .doc or .docx (MS Word) file through D2L. Failure to submit in the proper file format may result in a failing grade.

The bibliography must consist only of the chosen course text(s) and three books for each paper; No primary sources. Remember, this is not a research paper.

Late papers will be accepted only in very unusual cases. Requests for extensions will be considered, if made by email prior to the due date.

A = Follows all instructions; follows the format; accurate; insightful; well-organized paragraphs; generally correct mechanics.

B = Follows all instructions; follows the format; few errors regarding accuracy; well-expressed; some organizational weaknesses; generally correct mechanics.

C = Follows all instructions; some mistakes in following format; few errors regarding accuracy; some organizational weaknesses; some errors in mechanics.

D = Does not follow all instructions; several errors in regard to format; or is weak regarding accuracy, organization, or mechanics.

F = Does not follow all instructions; several errors in regard to format; not required length; errors in accuracy; poor organization; several errors in mechanics; quotes or paraphrases

### **Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course**

Please read the syllabus and adhere to the schedule. Attend class. It is imperative that you complete the assigned readings; the texts will drive classroom discussion, a crucial course requirement. You are responsible for all the material contained in the readings; if you do not read them, you will have a difficult semester. Professional and polite interactions with everyone in the class is expected.

### **GRADING**

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

900-1000 = A

800-899 = B

700-799 = C

600-699 = D

599 or less = F

**THIS COURSE USES A POINT-BASED SYSTEM**

Participation (preparedness, discussion, attendance)	300
Leading a Discussion	100
Book Summaries (10 @ 10 points each; Green and Troup have two)	100
Historiographical Paper #1	200
Historiographical Paper #2	200
Elevator Speech Presentation	100
Total:	1000 points

### **D2L TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS**

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

[https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser\\_support.htm](https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm)

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:

<https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements>

### **ACCESS AND NAVIGATION**

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or [helpdesk@tamuc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamuc.edu).

**Note:** Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

## COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your professor.

### **Technical Support**

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

### **Interaction with Instructor Statement:**

Students are encouraged to email the professor with questions, concerns, or comments. Students must provide a valid return email address for replies. I typically respond to email during regular business hours, within one day during the week; emails sent after 5:00pm on Friday may not get a response until Monday morning.

When sending an email always do the following:

- 1) Use a subject line. This tells me what the topic is and prevents your message from ending up in my junk mail.
- 2) Include your class and section (or class time). I need to know exactly which of my courses you are in.
- 3) End the email with your name, that is “sign” your message. I also need to know who you are.

## COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

### **Citation Style:**

Turabian or Chicago (17<sup>th</sup> edition) required; footnotes with bibliography. For a Turabian style guide visit <https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/turabian/turabian-notes-and-bibliography-citation-quick-guide.html>

### **Reference Manager (Highly Recommended, Not Required):**

Zotero is free and will save your life, at least when it comes to storing and citing references for papers. It also blends seamlessly with Word and digital sources. For instructions and downloads

visit <https://www.zotero.org/>. I will also be offering a class on Zotero during the Fall semester if you prefer hands on instruction.

### **Late Work:**

Papers may be granted extensions. Please email me to let me know what is going on and request an extension **before the due date**. Without an extension, late papers will not be accepted except in the event of a major catastrophe, such as unexpected emergency hospitalization or regional catastrophe.

Students who miss their assigned slot to be discussion leader will be reassigned, if possible. Please be advised that rescheduling may not be possible.

### **Plagiarism Policy:**

In all courses, I expect that all work that you turn in is your own. It is the policy of the University, the History Department, and me that no form of plagiarism, cheating, collusion or any other form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated. Academic dishonesty may result in a grade of zero for the assignment or in a failing grade for the entire course. Plagiarism is defined as taking the words or ideas of someone else and passing them off as your own. Cheating is obtaining unauthorized assistance on any assignment. Collusion is the selling or sharing of academic products with the intention that they be submitted to satisfy an academic requirement.

### **AI Use in Course:**

Texas A&M University-Commerce acknowledges there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course. Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

No AI use is allowed in this course. Students should not use any text generated by AI in any graded assignments. Use of AI to write any part of an assignment and present it as the student's work is prohibited. This applies to this course only (Hist 590).

Students should be aware of the requirements in all their classes and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed. In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

13.99.99.R0.10 Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty

### **Extra Credit:**

There is no extra credit.

### **Expectations for Out-of-Class Study:**



Beyond the time required to attend each class meeting, students enrolled in this course should expect to spend at least an additional 9-12 hours per week of their own time in course-related activities, including reading required materials, completing assignments, etc.

Students are encouraged to take advantage of the resources of the Online Writing Center for assistance with drafting their papers. The Writing Center is a resource for you. The tutors will not write your paper; they will help you improve your writing skills. If you use the Writing Center, please plan ahead. They can only help you if you see them in advance and have time to incorporate their suggestions into the final paper.

## **Syllabus Change Policy**

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events may make it necessary for the professor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced as soon as possible.

## **University Specific Procedures**

### **Student Conduct**

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the Student Guidebook.

<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

### **TAMUC Attendance**

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the Attendance webpage and Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01.

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

### **Academic Integrity**

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10GraduateStudentAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

## **Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

### **Office of Student Disability Resources and Services**

Texas A&M University-Commerce  
Gee Library- Room 162  
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835  
Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: [studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu](mailto:studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu)

Website: Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

### **Nondiscrimination Notice**

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

### **Campus Concealed Carry Statement**

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1. 12

### **Statement on Student Grievances**

Students who have questions or concerns about the Instructor's course policies or the conduct either of the Instructor or a classmate should first consult with the Instructor. In the event of a lack of resolution or satisfaction on the matter, the student may bring their concerns to the head of the History Department, Sharon Kowalsky ([Sharon.Kowalsky@tamuc.edu](mailto:Sharon.Kowalsky@tamuc.edu)). If this does not result in a satisfactory conclusion to the matter, students may bring the issue to the attention of the Associate Dean of Students per procedures outlined on pp. 15-19 of the Student Guide Book.

### **A&M-Commerce Supports Students' Mental Health**

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit [www.tamuc.edu/counsel](http://www.tamuc.edu/counsel).

### **COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR**

#### **WEEK ONE** August 26

Review syllabus, introduce course, assign books to discussion leaders, expectations

#### **WEEK TWO** September 2

No Class, Labor Day

“Intellectual darkness is essential to industrial slavery.” ~ Eugene V. Debs

#### **WEEK THREE** September 9

Sarah Maza, *Thinking About History*.

**Book summary due Sunday by midnight**

**Select book(s) for historiography papers**

#### **WEEK FOUR** September 16

Green and Troup, eds., *The Houses of History: A Critical Reader in Twentieth-Century History and Theory*. Chapter 1 - 8

**Book summary due Sunday by midnight**

#### **WEEK FIVE** September 23

Green and Troup, eds., *The Houses of History: A Critical Reader in Twentieth-Century History and Theory*. Chapter 8 – 16

**Book summary due Sunday by midnight**

#### **WEEK SIX** September 30

Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms*

**Discussion Leaders:**

**Book summary due Sunday by midnight**

#### **WEEK SEVEN** October 7

Novick, *That Noble Dream*. Chapter 1-8

**Discussion Leaders:**

**Book summary due Sunday by midnight**

**WEEK EIGHT** October 14

Novick, *That Noble Dream*. Chapter 9 - 16

**Discussion Leaders:**

**Book summary due Sunday by midnight**

**Historiography Paper #1 Due**

**WEEK NINE** October 21

Anderson, *Imagined Communities*

**Discussion Leaders:**

**Book summary due Sunday by midnight**

**WEEK TEN** October 28

W. Jeffrey Bolster, *Fishing the Atlantic in the Age of Sail*. Preface – Chapter 3

**Discussion Leaders:**

**Book summary due Sunday by midnight**

**WEEK ELEVEN** November 4

W. Jeffrey Bolster, *Fishing the Atlantic in the Age of Sail*. Chapter 4 - Epilogue

**Discussion Leaders:**

**Book summary due Sunday by midnight**

**WEEK TWELVE** November 11

Susan Whitfield, *Silk, Slaves, and Stupas: Material Culture of the Silk Road*.

**Discussion Leaders:**

**Book summary due Sunday by midnight**

**WEEK THIRTEEN** November 18

Karen Harvey, *The Imposteress Rabbit Breeder: Mary Toft and Eighteenth Century England*.

**Discussion Leaders:**

**Book summary due Sunday by midnight**

**WEEK FOURTEEN** November 25

Anjuli Fatima Raza Kolb, *Epidemic Empire: Colonialism, Contagion, and Terror, 1817–2020*.

Introduction – Chapter 3

**Discussion Leaders:**

**Book summary due Sunday by midnight**

**WEEK FIFTEEN** December 2

Anjuli Fatima Raza Kolb, *Epidemic Empire: Colonialism, Contagion, and Terror, 1817–2020*.

Chapter 4 - 7

**Discussion Leaders:**

**Book summary due Sunday by midnight**

**FINAL EXAM WEEK** December 9  
Presentations; Historical Navel Gazing; Wrap Up