***What is History?***

**H270, Spring 2019**

**Professor McGraw**

**Class: Swain East 245, Tues.-Thurs., 2:30-3:45 PM**

**Consultations: Tuesdays 9:00-10:00 am, Ballantine 615**

*What Is History?* delves into the ideas, practices, and joys of history common to the study of all places, time periods, and themes. Emphasis will be on developing the skills historians use in research and writing, including locating and interpreting sources, using scholarly resources, and arguing persuasively. We will engage with stories that offer a fascinating way to think about past worlds as well as our own. Along with short written and in-class assignments, students will develop a semester-long research project on a topic of their own choosing.

Books for Purchase and Assigned Readings (hard copies strongly recommended!):

Natalie Demon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1983)

Arissa Oh, *To Save the Children of Korea: The Cold War Origins of International Adoption* (Stanford, 2015)

There are various short assigned readings you must print out and bring to class so that we may refer to and discuss them. *Having copies of the readings in class on the day we will discuss them is required*.

Grading will be based on:

20%: Course attendance and participation. This means more than just coming to class regularly and on time, but also includes completing required readings, bringing them to class, and respectful and engaged listening to others as well as contributions to discussions. During class, your attention should be focused only on class itself. Attendance/participation also requires visits during class time to libraries, spending time using IU Library websites and databases, and attending all class presentations. Students will also have required appointments with librarians, archivists, experts, and me. Bring pen and paper to class for note taking. (See also “Absences” below.)

30%: Completion of three short writing responses based on course readings.

50%: Original research project. This project will be carried out over the entire semester and will include many distinct parts to be discussed in class, with different deadlines, and broken down this way:

* Provisional Research Topic—*no grade but required to pass course*
* Research Topic + Provisional Database + Book List—*20% of course grade*
* Week 9 Consultation—*no grade but required to pass course*
* Meeting with Expert—*no grade but required to pass course*
* Final Research Project Portfolio—*30% of course grade*

Absences: There will be a few self-directed (read: non-class) research days throughout the semester. For this reason, it is expected that you will come to class and be on the library tours on all other days. *Missing library tours, project presentations, and/or more than 20% of class time will adversely affect your grade*.

Academic Dishonesty: Turning in as your own something written by someone else may lead to a failing course grade and will be reported to the College. See <http://www.iu.edu/~code/> for details.

Late assignments will receive no comments and will be graded down. After 10 days past due, they may receive an “F,” but *you must still complete all assignments to receive a passing final grade*.

Nota Bene:

* By taking this course, you are agreeing to *check Canvas* *at least* *twice per week*.
* No early or make-up exams will be offered.
* We will have some “phone-or-laptop days” in class; other days will be *NO phones or laptops* in class.
* Syllabus subject to change with prior notification.

Learning Outcomes: A successful student will, by the end of the semester, demonstrate an:

* understanding of basic concepts in the study of history, such as place, time, contingency, continuity, change, and causation;
* ability to recognize and interpret primary historical sources;
* ability to develop a research question and bibliography;
* ability to evaluate historical interpretations, and to distinguish between evidence and argument;
* ability to use historical knowledge and historical methods to formulate questions about the material, and to develop arguments that can be developed with appropriate evidence.

Week 1. Introductions

Tue, 1/8: Syllabus and Introductions

Thu, 1/10: History of IU Students in 2019

James Grossman, “History Isn’t a ‘Useless’ Major. It Teaches Critical Thinking, Something America Needs Plenty More Of,” *Los Angeles Times*, 30 May 2016.

\*\*\*DUE THUR. 8/22: PRIMARY SOURCES FOR HISTORY OF STUDENT LIFE TODAY\*\*\*

Week 2. Creating Questions over Your Topic

Tue, 1/15: Reading History, Pt. 1

Thu, 1/17: IU Library Resources (Scott Libson)

Eric Hobsbawm, “History from Below”

Reading on Library Research TBD

Week 3. Thinking Historically

Tue, 1/22: Iron Laws of History

Thu, 1/24: Recovering the Distant Past

Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre*

\*\*\*DUE THURS. 1/24: PROVISIONAL RESEARCH TOPIC\*\*\*

Week 4. Archives

Tue, 1/29: Reading History Pt. 2: Assessing Martin Guerre

Thu, 1/31: What is an Archive?

Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre*

Reading on archives TBD

\*\*\*DUE SUNDAY 2/3: BOOK RESPONSE\*\*\*

Week 5. Historical Interpretation

Tue, 2/5: Reading History Pt. 3: The Scholarly Essay

Thu, 2/7: Interpretation vs. Evidence

Tyler Anbinder, “Moving beyond ‘Rags to Riches’: New York’s Irish Famine Immigrants and Their Surprising Savings Accounts,” *Journal of American History* (2012)

Mary Beth Norton, “Reflections of a Longtime Textbook Author; Or History Revised, Revised—and Revised Again,” *Journal of American History* (2005)

\*\*\*DUE SUNDAY 2/10: ESSAY RESPONSE\*\*\*

Week 6. Data-gathering: Finding Primary Sources

Tue, 2/12: Using Online Databases

Thu, 2/14: Primary Source Exercise

Readings on primary source databases TBD

\*\*\*DUE SUNDAY 2/17: RESEARCH TOPIC + PROVISIONAL DATABASE + BOOK LIST\*\*\*

Week 7. Note-taking

Tue, 2/19: Taking Notes on Books

Thu, 2/21: Reading Texts

Oh, *To Save the Children of Korea*

Week 8. Narrative History

Tue, 2/26: Assessing Historical Work

Thu, 2/28: Subdisciplines of History

Oh, *To Save the Children of Korea*

\*\*\*DUE SUNDAY 3/3: BOOK RESPONSE\*\*\*

Week 9. Updates

Tue, 3/5: Consultations/Updates on Projects

Thu, 3/7: Consultations/Updates on Projects

\*\*\*DUE THURSDAY 3/7: LIST OF FIVE BOOKS\*\*\*

**\*NO CLASS March 12-14\***

Week 10. Archives

Tue, 3/19: Research Project Components

Thu, 3/21: Class meets at IU Archives, Wells Library (Carrie Schwier, Wells Library E174)

Reading on locating primary sources TBD

Week 11. Non-textual Sources

Tue, 3/26: Class meets at the Lilly Library (Maureen Maryanski)

Thu, 3/28: History of the Senses

Readings on Non-textual Sources

Week 12. Careers

Tue, 4/2: History in Public

Thu, 4/4: Careers in History

Michael Grossberg, “Friends of the Court: A New Role for Historians”

Steve Pinker, “The Curse of Knowledge” plus readings TBD

Paul B. Sturtevant, “History Is Not a Useless Major: Fighting Myths with Data”

Week 13. Research in Progress

Tue, 4/9: Consultations/Visits to Archives/Experts

Thu, 4/11: Consultations/Visits to Archives/Experts

\*\*\*DUE SUNDAY 4/14: PROOF OF MEETING WITH EXPERT\*\*\*

Week 14. Research Projects

Tue, 4/16: Class Presentations on Research Projects

Thu, 4/18: Class Presentations on Research Projects

Week 15. Research Projects

Tue, 4/23: Class Presentations on Research Projects

Thu, 4/25:Class Presentations on Research Projects

\*\*\*DUE SUNDAY 4/28, 11:59 PM: FINAL RESEARCH PROJECT—ALL COMPONENTS\*\*\*

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Comic by Randall Munroe