

HITO 100 The Craft of History

Tuesday and Thursday 3:30-4:50 in RIWAC 935

Professor Matthew Vitz

Office Hours: Tuesdays 5:00-6:30pm on zoom or in RIWAC 926 on days we meet in person

Course Description

This course invites you into the world of historians and introduces you to the ways that historians uncover, analyze, and understand the past. We will explore a wide range of questions that are all fundamental to the craft of history.

- What is history?
- Why is history important and why are historical accounts so contentious?
- Where does history (as the study of the past) come from and how has history changed over time?
- What are the different kinds of historical evidence and how do historians use them to construct their narratives?
- How do historians know which sources are reliable and which are not?
- What is the relationship between power and the production of historical knowledge?
- How do historians find sources?
- Why do historians have different approaches to studying the past and what are some of these approaches?
- Why do historians disagree about the past?

In exploring these questions, you will gain the analytical tools and professional skills that not only allow you to evaluate the historical accounts and explanations of others but also that lay the basis for your ability to produce your own historical judgements and your own historical accounts.

Specific Course Objectives

Learn what history is and why it matters

Learn how to think historically

Learn how to find and evaluate an array of sources

Gain library and information literacy

Understand the different approaches to the study of the past and why historians disagree

Return to Learn and Coronavirus

We will hold 10 in-person sessions and 10 remote sessions (via zoom). See course schedule below for details. I expect everyone to attend all sessions, with some notable exceptions—especially for the in-person meetings:

- If you feel sick and have not received your Covid test result
- If you have been exposed and UCSD contact tracers have required you to not attend class
- If you have Covid
- If you are responsible for the care of someone who has tested positive for Covid

If you are in one of the situations listed above at any point during the quarter, **do not come** to in-person session. Use your own judgement about your health, in the case you are sick, to decide whether you will be able to participate on zoom. You must follow the health dictates in place at UCSD at all times. I will find ways for you to complete any outstanding work without penalty. All in-person and zoom sessions will be recorded and made available on Canvas.

In extraordinary circumstances, I may allow students to take this course mostly or entirely remotely (i.e., not attend in-person sessions). The following circumstances may warrant this:

- You are experiencing housing and transportation insecurity and cannot get to campus as regularly as you had expected
- You are experiencing visa issues and remain out of the country

However, you must provide a convincing justification for why you need to take this course this quarter. Note that HITO 100 will be offered one or more times every quarter of the academic year from this point on.

If you are experiencing housing or food insecurity, here are two resources available to you <https://basicneeds.ucsd.edu/> <https://mutualaiducsd.wordpress.com/>

Assignments

There will be 7 short written assignments, varying in length from 1-3 pages. The final 2 assignments are the most demanding assignments in terms of page length. Brief descriptions of these assignments can be found on the course schedule below. More detailed instructions will follow.

- Assignment 1 (5%)
- Assignment 2 (5%)
- Assignment 3 (5%)
- Assignment 4 (5%)
- Assignment 5 (10%)
- Assignment 6 (15%)
- Assignment 7 (15%)

Short Discussion Board Reading Responses, 7 total (15%)

Class Participation and Attendance (25%) There will be ample opportunities to participate in class, including asking questions during lecture, making a comment during reading discussions, and participating in small group activities.

Office Hours and Availability

If you cannot see me during office hours, please send me an email to arrange an alternative time. I want you to do well in this class, so please stay in touch with me throughout the quarter. If you are confused about the material or if you're having trouble keeping up in class, do not hesitate to reach out.

Academic Integrity

Integrity of scholarship is essential for an academic community. The University expects that both faculty and students will honor this principle and in so doing protect the validity of University intellectual work. For students, this means that all academic work will be done by the individual to whom it is assigned, without unauthorized aid of any kind. You may work in groups or consult with other classmates for assignments, but all work in the end must be your own.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. There are two kinds of plagiarism: copying the work of another person word for word (a sentence, part of a sentence or more) and the use of idea(s) that you do not attribute to its author with a citation). If I catch an act of plagiarism, I will consult with university authorities (The Academic Integrity Office). This could result in automatic failure of the class or the assignment, depending on the severity of the case, as well as additional administrative sanctions.

Accessibility

Students with disabilities enrolled in the course and who may need disability-related classroom accommodations are encouraged to make an appointment to see me before the end of the second week of the term. All discussions will remain confidential, unless university assistance is needed to implement a requested accommodation.

Required Books

Many readings will be made available to you either on Canvas or directly on the syllabus. Others are available online using the library search and your university log-in credentials.

There is one book that you will need to purchase or rent. It is:

Sarah Maza, *Thinking about History* (University of Chicago Press, 2017). It is available to rent or purchase on UCSD's redshelf -- <https://ucsandiegobookstore.redshelf.com/>

Course Schedule (subject to change due to Covid or faculty discretion) **Note:** all readings are due the date under which they are listed. Some dates there will be no readings assigned

Another Important Note: **Green means we meet in person**

Thursday, September 23: Course Introduction

- syllabus review
- discussion about pandemic and Return to Learn
- What is history?
- survey

Tuesday, September 28: What Is History and Why Is it Important?

- What is history? (continued)
- What makes history important, or why study it?
- The history of history

Reading: John H Arnold, *History: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford Univ Press, 2010): Chapter 1 "Questions about Murder and History" (Available on UC Library Search engine)
Discussion board 1

Thursday, September 30: Thinking about Change over Time

- theorizing change over time
- causality
- structure and agency
- determinism and contingency
- historical periods and periodization

Reading: Sarah Maza *Thinking about History* (University of Chicago Press, 2017): Ch. 6
Discussion board 2

Tuesday, October 5: An Introduction to Primary Sources I:

- Primary Sources and Historical Thinking
- Primary Sources and Historical Questions

Reading: Maza, *Thinking about History*, Ch. 5

Assignment #1 (Due Wednesday, October 6 by 5pm): what draws you to learn history? List 3 historical topics that most interest you. They must be specific enough to study, located in specific time and place. Discuss what you know about these topics and what you want to know more about. Justify why it's important to learn more about them.

Thursday, October 7: An Introduction to Primary Sources II: Challenges, Opportunities, and Limitations

- authorship
- context
- anachronism
- teleology
- primary source exercise

Tuesday, October 12: An Introduction to Primary Sources III: Reading Discussion

Readings: Sam Wineburg, *Why Learn History When It's Already on Your Phone* (University of Chicago Press, 2018), Ch. 4 (PDF); and Arnold, *History: A Very Short Introduction*, Ch. 4
Discussion board 3

Thursday, October 14: An Introduction to Primary Sources IV: Challenges, Opportunities, and Limitations

- who what, when, where, why
- beyond written documents—oral history, paintings, songs, etc
- in-class activity

Reading: "Oral History" in Anna Green and Kathleen Troup, *The Houses of History: A Critical Reader in History and Theory* (NYU Press, 1999) (PDF); and primary source documents (to be determined)

Tuesday, October 19: Who Owns History: Power and Silences in and out of the Archive I

- archives and knowledge
- history and power

Reading: Primary Sources to be determined

Assignment #2 (Due Tuesday, October 19 by 9pm): Primary Source Analysis

Thursday, October 21: Who Owns History: Power and Silences in and out of the Archive II

- Reading Discussion

Readings: Michel Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Beacon, 1995): Ch. 3 “An Unthinkable History” (Available online through UC Library Search); and Ranajit Guha, “The Prose of Counterinsurgency” in *Selected Subaltern Studies* eds. Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Spivak (Oxford, 1988), 45-85 (PDF)

Discussion board 4

Tuesday, October 26: Into the Archive!: Visit to Geisel Library Special Collections

Assignment #3 (due Tuesday, October 26 by 9pm): Non-textual primary source analysis

Thursday, October 28: An Introduction to Secondary Sources I

- historians and their histories
- reliability of secondary sources
- the debates over U.S. history (1619 project and the 1776 Commission)

Readings: William Bauer, “ ‘Everybody Worked Back Then’: Oral History, Memory, and Indian Economies in Northern California.” In *Oral History, Community, and Work in the American West*, ed. Jessie L. Embry (University of Arizona Press, 2013), 61–81.

Check out this website “Race and Oral History Project” at UCSD:

<https://knit.ucsd.edu/roh/>

Wineburg, *Why Learn History When It's Already on Your Phone*, 1-10 (PDF)

Tuesday, November 2: An Introduction to Secondary Sources II: Historical Arguments

-retelling the story, debunking myths, submerged stories, and change over time narratives

Assignment 4 (due Tuesday, November 2 by 9pm): take assignment 1 topics or choose another topic you’re interested in and explore and assess how you think power—colonially, capitalism, racism, and/or patriarchy—shape what you know about your topic and what kinds of questions you might ask. Are there voices or experiences that might be submerged. Are there other questions that might be possible to ask based on what you’ve learned about power in and out of the archive.

Thursday, November 4: An Introduction to Secondary Sources II: Historical Arguments

-retelling the story, debunking myths, submerged stories, and change over time narratives

Readings: Matthew Restall, *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest* (Oxford University Press, 2004), Introduction, Ch. 3, and Ch. 7 (PDF); Rebecca Jo Plant, “Debunking Mother Love: American Mothers and the Momism Critique in the Mid Twentieth Century.” In *Raising*

Citizens in the Century of the Child: The United States and German Central Europe in Comparative Perspective (Berghahn Books, 2010), 122–140 (available online via UC Library Search)

Discussion board 5

Tuesday, November 9: Why and How Historians Disagree I

- historical approaches
- methods and sources
- theories and emphases
- implications of historical debates

Assignment 5 (due Tuesday, November 9 by 9pm): Secondary source analysis—pick one of the three secondary source research readings we have done so far and assess the method and argument of the article. What questions drive the historian? Why does the historian use the primary sources she does?

Thursday, November 11: Why and How Historians Disagree II

- slavery and capitalism
- Mexican Revolution

Reading: Arnold, Chapter 5 “Journeys of a Thousand Miles”

Discussion board 6

Tuesday, November 16: Why and How Historians Disagree III

- nature and history
- the Dust Bowl

Readings on slavery and capitalism debates: 1.

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/slavery-capitalism.html> 2.

<https://jacobinmag.com/2019/08/how-slavery-shaped-american-capitalism> 3

<https://economic-historian.com/2020/09/a-few-random-thoughts-on-capitalism-and-slavery/> 4. <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/how-slavery-made-modern-world/>

Discussion board 7

Thursday, November 18: Information Literacy (online and library research and bibliographic styles)

- librarian class visit
- discuss assignment #6

Tuesday, November 23: Past and Present

- presentism in historical research
- discuss assignment 6
- reading discussion

Reading: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/18/nyregion/nyc-smallpox-vaccine.html>

Assignment 6 (due Tuesday, November 23 by 3:30pm): Researching 1918 “Spanish” Flu Pandemic. Answer the following questions by finding and analyzing at least 3 online sources: What caused the 1918 flu pandemic? Did it start in Spain? Why did the flu virus outbreak become a global pandemic? What were the key public health measures taken to keep people safe? Make a short bibliography of your 3 or more sources and rank them based on how reliable you think they are.

Tuesday, November 30: Individual Meetings for “choose your own adventure” assignment

Thursday, December 2: Wrap up

- discussion and reflections of course material
- discuss “choose your own adventure” assignment

Final Assignment 7, “Choose your own adventure.” Reassess your topics and interests from Assignment 1. Choose one. Find two secondary sources (articles or chapters) on that topic and read them. What are the arguments? What sources does the historian use to make their respective arguments? How do those sources lead the historian to make the arguments/claims she does? How do the articles change your view of the topic you chose? Review the bibliographies—list 3-4 other secondary sources from the bibliographies you would turn to next to learn about your selected topic. **Due on Monday, December 6 by 6pm.**