History of Science 5970
Research, Criticism, and Analysis
Wednesdays 1:30-4:20

This course is designed to introduce graduate students to the discipline of history of science. Readings, assignments, and discussions will be organized in such a way as to give students a broad coverage of the main subfields in history of science, a history of the discipline itself and how it fits into the broader discipline of history, and very practical advice about the nature of research, methods of doing history, and how to meet expectations of scholars in the field.

Course books:

Below are the titles that you may consider purchasing for class. In addition to these books, you will be reading additional books and essays from various sources:

- *Telling the Truth About History* by Joyce Oldham Appleby, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacob (W. W. Norton, 1995)

Whether you decide to buy a book or not, you will be responsible making sure you have access to class source materials in sufficient time to read them ahead of each weekly meeting.

Week 1 (Aug 22)

Organizational meeting

Class activity: Basics of research: finding sources. Bibliographies, journals, information sources, etc. Finding your way around the library and the literature in our field.

Week 2 (Aug 31)

11:00am - 12:00: Class activity: Presentation by Steven Weldon, Isis Bibliographer, on the history and use of the *Isis Bibliography.*

1:30pm - 3:20: Thomas Kuhn and the history of science.


Week 3 (Sept 05)

Thinking like a historian

Assignment: Write a 1-2 page essay on the following topic: Compare the method of history with the method of one of the natural sciences or another field in the humanities such as philosophy. In your essay consider in particular the nature of historical facts, and working methods of historians compared to practitioners of the second field, and the stability or durability of the knowledge produced.

Ask one person in the class to review your essay. Make changes as suggested. Turn in the final copy with the reviewer’s marked copy.

Week 4 (Sept 12)
Practicing History, Then and Now


Writing assignment: What is relativism? How has it affected history as a discipline? How do Appleby, Hunt and Jacob respond to the relativist challenge? In your view, is their response effective (give brief reasons for or against)?

Ask one person in the class to review your essay. Make changes as suggested. Turn in the final copy with the reviewer’s marked copy.

Week 5 (Sept 19)
The history of the discipline of the history of science in the United States


Assignment: How have various institutions (universities, societies, journals) contributed to the growth and development of the history of science in the United States?

Week 6 (Sept 26)
The history of the discipline of the history of science in England.


**Assignment:** How did political ideology influence the rise of the history of science in Britain? When roles did historians and scientists play?

**Visitor:** Reink Vermij

**Additional resources:** Please make an extra effort to attend the workshop on strategies for bibliographic searching in digital databases, on Friday, September 28th in Bizzell 149-D, given by experts from Bizzell Library's staff.

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**Week 7 (Oct 03)**

Constructivism in history of science, part I  
**Visitor:** Hunter Heyck

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**Week 8 (Oct 10)**

Constructivism in history of science, part II  
**Reading:** Golinski, *Making Natural Knowledge*, chaps. 4-6, pp. 103-206.  
[Visitor: TBA]

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**Week 9 (Oct 17)** Microhistory  

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**Week 10 (Oct 24)** Gender  
**Reading:** Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis", *American Historical Review* 1986 (91:5), 1053-1075. (JSTOR).  
**Visitor #2:** Hanne Andersen, Editor, *Centaurus*

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**Week 11 (Oct 31)** History of Medicine  
Week 12 (Nov 07) History of Technology

Week 13 (Nov 14)
Regular class time: Nations and nationalism:
Reading: Patricia Fara, Newton: The Making of a Genius (Macmillan UK, 2004) parts;

Week 14 (Nov 21) Thanksgiving break

Week 15 (Nov 28)
Museums and the History of Science
Activity: Visit to the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History, with Deborah Kay, Collection development Specialist.

Week 16 (Dec 05)
Conclusion: Presentation and discussion of thesis proposals.