History Department
Spring 2012
Graduate Course Descriptions

State University of New York at Buffalo
GRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS, SPRING 2012

12841  T  4:00 – 6:40  CAHN
503    AMERICAN HISTORY CORE 2  532 PARK

This course will examine some of the central issues and problems in U.S. history from Reconstruction to the present. Concentrating predominantly on the 20th century, we will read books and articles in order to examine major debates, different methodologies, changing interpretations, and current directions in the field we call "American History." Rather than a comprehensive knowledge of U.S. history, class members can expect to come away with an overview of some of the major questions, subfields, debates, and methods in the practice of U.S. history. The focus will be on critical reading, thinking and writing, as well as wide open discussions about what history is, what historians do, and how to develop your own skills and perspectives as a historian. In addition to readings and participation in class discussion, the course requires regular short writing assignments, one class presentation, and a 12-15 page final paper.

13088  M  4:00 – 6:40  MAZON
505    MODERN EUROPEAN CORE  532 PARK

This class will provide an overview of the historiography of modern Europe, defined as the historical period following the French Revolution. There will be several short writing assignments and a final longer paper, as well as at least one presentation. For questions, please contact the instructor at mazon@buffalo.edu.

13193  TH  4:00 – 6:40  SEEMAN
506    NORTH AND SOUTH ATLANTIC CORE SEMINAR  532 PARK

This course will introduce students to the rapidly growing field of the Atlantic world. Within the historical profession, the term “Atlantic World” is often applied to the North Atlantic in the early modern period. This course will engage with that material while also expanding the concept to include the South Atlantic and the post-colonial era. Students will gain an understanding of how the field has been defined, how the field has changed over time, and how the field might evolve in the future. This course is required for those History Ph.D. students who wish to offer the “North and South Atlantic” for the major field of their oral examinations. It is highly recommended for those who wish to offer a minor oral examination field in the Atlantic World, and for anyone who wishes to employ transnational or comparative perspectives on the past.

Because this field covers so much geographical and chronological ground, collaboration is essential. Students will read important collections of essays, including one that emerged from a conference held at UB: The Atlantic in Global History, 1500-2000. Students will also collaborate on their own edited collection, contributing essays to a volume that will be compiled and bound at the end of the semester. Assignments include a five-page analysis of a required book, a ten-page introduction to the edited collection, and a twenty-page historiographical essay on a topic of the student’s choosing.
Although political history was essentially synonymous with American history until the 1960s, a variety of factors pushed the field out of the limelight for some years. The main energy in the profession shifted toward studies of the life experiences and consciousness of so-called ordinary people. Recently, however, political history has re-emerged as a lively arena of historical inquiry. Historians have linked the techniques and topics of social and cultural history with the traditional concerns of political history to investigate ways that institutional structures have created barriers and opportunities for Americans, as well as to understand how ordinary people have sometimes been able to affect these structures through social movements. At the same time, political history has been rejuvenated by new developments outside the discipline, especially theoretical insights and research by political scientists and sociologists. This seminar is designed to introduce graduate students to the history of the field of political history, in addition to issues that have sparked recent debates.

This class will familiarize graduate students with the major issues and problems in the history of the American Civil War and Reconstruction. The primary objectives of the course are twofold: to aid American history students in preparation for the general field exams and provide an opportunity to identify possible research topics. (Interested students are encouraged to enroll in History 6?? (Spring 2011), an advanced research seminar on the Civil War.) Additionally, the readings will expose students to the varieties of methodologies and narrative strategies that writers of history use and that might serve as models for their own work. Topics to be covered include: memory and memorialization, the role of slavery in the coming of the war, military history and the relationship between the battlefield and the home front, emancipation and postwar black politics, and the reconstruction of American nationalism.

This course examines the changing nature of intellectual and cultural life and authority in America from the seventeenth through the twentieth centuries. We will consider the social conditions and cultural assumptions that have shaped the very definition and character of intellectual and cultural life as well as the role and significance it has been granted in the larger culture. We will consider what sorts of people participated in intellectual and cultural activity at any particular time; the media, genres, and institutional forms such activities took; the changing relationships between popular and elite cultures; shifts in the locus of intellectual authority; and the obstacles, practical and ideological, intellectual life in America faced. Expect a wide variety of subject matter, including for example, colonial sermons and chapbooks, literary salons and newspaper offices, female academies and mechanics institutes, art museums and professional associations, the Book-of-the-Month Club, the Library of Congress’s folklife projects, and the Kindle.
This course is intended to provide the graduate student with the opportunity to develop, with a faculty member, an intensive reading program in a specialized subject. Courses may be taken more than once; be mindful that it is not in your best interest to have more than 25% of your total credits in independent study—see the director of Graduate Studies for guidance. Variable credit to be recommended by instructor.

This course is an introduction to the field of disability history. It is a chronological survey of disability history from antiquity to the present and as such offers students a broad overview of relevant texts in the field. It places disability in historical context, exploring changes and continuities in the ways in which people in different times and locations have thought about both concepts in law and policy, in scientific, medical, political, and social discourse, and in popular and high culture. A critical analysis of the lived experience of those individuals perceived to be disabled, as well as the intersection of disability with race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, age, class, gender, and sexuality are central to this course.

A department requirement is the completion of a special project by each person wishing to complete the MA program. This requirement consists of a written essay of graduate-level quality, representing the equivalent of the work of a one-semester course (3 credits). This essay may be a project based on primary source materials. The project affords the student an opportunity to read and write extensively on a narrowed topic of special interest to him/her. The essay will be written under the supervision and with the approval of an advisor appointed by the Director of Graduate studies. This project may be carried out in a 600-level seminar, with the consent of the instructor, but often it will be done independently under the number 598 or 612, with the guidance of the assigned advisor.

Please see Director of Graduate Studies for information.

REGISTER IN PARK 543 WITH GRADUATE PROGRAM ASSISTANT
VARIES ARR ARR
600 GENERAL EXAM READINGS ARR

This course is intended to prepare graduate students to take their Ph.D. qualifying/general exams. This is an intensive reading program in a specialized subject with a faculty member. Variable credit to be recommended by instructor; may be taken more than once.

PERMISSION OF INSTRUCTOR REQUIRED.

NOTE: HIS 600 CAN ONLY BE TAKEN BY Ph.D. students who have completed all course work and are preparing for qualifying/general exams—this replaces the use of HIS 552 only in this instance.

VARIES ARR ARR
612 ADVANCED RESEARCH ARR STAFF

This course is designed to allow a graduate student to receive training in advanced research in history under the tutelage of a member of the History Department. See the Director of Graduate Studies for guidance. Variable credit to be recommended by instructor.

PERMISSION OF INSTRUCTOR REQUIRED.

24358 W 7:00 – 9:40 DAUM
637 PROBLEMS IN EUROPEAN HISTORY 1 532 PARK

This is an advanced research seminar in European history without a preconceived topic. In collaboration with the instructor, students will choose individually a topic anchored in European history, developing over the course of the semester an original research paper of approximately 25 pages. The first portion of the semester will be devoted to exploring methods of historical research; among others, we will deal with the diverse ways in which historians define and interpret sources, and we will ask how their research stimulates and adds to historiographical debates. In the second portion of the semester, students will present their research in progress to the seminar and explore writing strategies; the other participants are expected to come to class prepared to comment, discuss, and provide suggestions. The final weeks of the semester will be spent on the students’ formal presentations of their completed projects.

VARIES ARR ARR
700 THESIS GUIDANCE ARR STAFF

Writing and submission of dissertation chapters under the supervision of your major professor/committee chairperson. Variable credit. YOU MUST BE A.B.D. TO REGISTER.

PERMISSION OF INSTRUCTOR REQUIRED.