History 270B: Historical Methods and Interpretations  
Fall 2008, Moravian College  
Tues-Thurs 2:20-3:30  
PPHAC 103

Please note that I reserve the right to revise this syllabus at anytime as needed during the course of this semester.

Dr. Francis Ryan  
Phone: 610-861-1402  
mefpr01@moravian.edu  
Office: Comenius 301  
Office Hours: Monday 3-5, Thursday 9-11 and by appointment

This course prompts history and historical-studies students to develop an understanding of the nature of historical research and writing by introducing them to the philosophies and methods of academic history. Students should become acquainted with the concepts of historiography, or the study of how historians interpret the past. Students should also become aware of how the research and writing of history has changed over time. In this process, students are encouraged to view the discipline of history as committed either to explaining the past solely in its own terms or to exploring continuity and change between past and present. Both are done by applying a particular interpretive framework to related primary evidence. By tracing changes in European and American historical thought and interpretive frameworks, the major historiographic schools will be reviewed.

Additionally, students should be aware that this is a writing intensive course, with several small assignments and a significant final project that are designed to further their research, interpretive and writing skills.

Course Objectives: This class is divided into two categories: historiographical and methodological.

In Historiography we will:
1) Think through how historical interpretations vary and change across time and place.  
2) Probe why history matters.  
3) Identify the main schools of historical thought.

In the methods section we will:
1) Explore what historians actually are doing when they are writing and researching history.  
2) Identify the main groups of historical data, primary sources (handwritten archival records, printed texts and oral interviews)  
3) Locate and use the most important tools of historical research, secondary sources (books and journals) by using both libraries and secondary sources.
4) Learn to use the writing conventions of history.
5) Learn to deliver an effective oral presentation.

**Required Texts:**


Please note that through the semester, supplemental readings will be given out in class. Further details will be provided in class.

You should also refer to *The Bedford Handbook* from your Writing 100 class at Moravian College.

**Grading and Evaluation:**
Journals: 24%
Research Paper: 30%
Final: 10%
Oral Presentation: 6%
Homework Assignments: 20%
Participation: 10%

(Details for evaluation will be provided in a separate handout.)

**Aug 26-Aug 28: Introductions.**

**Sept 2: What is History?**
Reading: John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, pp. 1-25, (handout); Rampolla, pp. 1-5, 25-29

Journal Entry #1 due at beginning of class.

**Sept 4: Historiography: How History was viewed prior to the nineteenth century.**
Gilderhus, “The Beginnings of Historical Consciousness” and “Historical Consciousness in the Modern Age.” (handout)

Journal Entry # 2 due.
Reading: Richard Marius & Melvin E. Page, *A Short Guide to Writing About History*, pp. 85-91. (Handout)

Hamden-Sydney College Speaking Center Online, http://people.hsc.edu/faculty-staff/cdeal/mainsections/student.html. Links on speaking anxiety, ethical speaking, and preparation and delivery of your presentation (under this last link, follow links on organizing and outlining your presentation and rehearsing and delivering your presentation.

Sept 11: Historiography: Ranke and the Rankeans
Reading: Iggers, Chapters 1-2

Journal Entry # 3 due

Sept 16: Writing Consultation and Preparation

Sept 18: Historiography: German and American Traditions
Reading: Iggers, Chapters 3-4.

Journal Entry # 4 due

Sept 23: Methods: Primary Sources and Archives.
Reading: Mary Jo. Pugh, *Providing Reference Services for Archives and Manuscripts*. (Handout)

For today’s class, we will meet at the Moravian College Archives with archivist Dr. Paul Peucker. Details will be given in class.

Sept 25: Historiography: Social and Economic Historians
Reading: Iggers, Chapter 7.

Journal Entry #5 due.

Sept 30: Methods: Locating and evaluating published primary sources
Reading: Rampolla, 6-7, 9-13

Oct 2: Historiography: The *Annales* School
Reading: Iggers, Chapter 5

Journal Entry #6 due.
Oct 7: Fall Break No Class

Oct 9: Methods: Locating and evaluating secondary sources (databases)
Readings: Rampolla, p. 6-9, 14-16

Oct 14: Writing Preparation: Introduction to Peer Review

Oct 16: Historiography: Writing historiographical essays
Reading: Rampolla, p. 36-38 and sample historiographical essays

Oct 21: Methods: Using the World Wide Web
Reading: Rampolla, 16-17

Reading: Iggers, Chapter 9

Journal Entry #7 due.

Oct 28: Methods: Note taking
Reading: Richard Marius and Melvin E. Page, A Short Guide to Writing About History, 115-24, Rampolla, 84-86.

Oct 30: Historiography: Historians of Race/Ethnicity

Journal Entry #8

Nov 4: Methods: Mechanics of writing
Reading: Rampolla, 43-68

Nov 6: Historiography: Historians of Gender
Reading: Joan Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category in Historical Analysis.”

Journal Entry # 9 due.

Nov 11: Methods: Professional Ethics
Reading: Rampolla, 88-137

Nov 13: Historiography: Global History

Journal Entry #10 due.

Nov 18: Writing Workshops: Peer Review. Be sure to bring one copy for me and two for others in your peer review group.

Nov 20: Historiography: The New Cultural History
Reading: To Be Announced

Journal Entry #11 due.

Nov 25: Methods: Citations and Footnoting
Reading: Rampolla, Chapter 7.

Nov 27: Thanksgiving Break. No Class

Dec 2: Methods: Oral History

Dec 4: Historiography: Where to now?
Reading: Iggers, Concluding Remarks and Epilogue.

Journal Entry #12 due.

Final Paper due at the beginning of class.

Dec 9: Professional Issues: What can you do with a history degree?
Reading: Peter Stearns, “Why Study History?” Available online at [http://www.historians.org/pubs/Free/WhyStudyHistory.htm](http://www.historians.org/pubs/Free/WhyStudyHistory.htm)

Dec 11: Conclusion and Review