

HI2E1-15 Historiography I: Methods and Theories in their Historical Context, 1750-c.1990

20/21

Department

History

Level

Undergraduate Level 2

Module leader

Charles Walton

Credit value

15

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

The 15 CAT module introduces students to some of the central ideas about the purpose and practice of history writing since the 18th century to the 1990s. It is important to this module that such theories and methodologies did not float in 'empty' space but were expressions a specific wider socio-cultural and political context at a particular moment in time. The central message of this module is: methodologies and theories of academic history writing always reflects the values, morals and norms of the specific society in which it is written. They did not float in 'empty' space but were expressions of wider socio-cultural and political concerns.

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

This is a core module counting for one 15-CAT unit in the intermediate year. It is compulsory for all single-honours History students, optional for joint degree and other students. As a core module it complements teaching in specialised History modules, by providing a broad context for

understanding developments in the discipline of history from the Enlightenment to today. The overall aim is to introduce students to the important idea that the different methodologies and theories used in history writing to explain human individual and collective agency and historical change do not exist in 'empty space'. Since the Enlightenment they have been reflecting wider explanatory trends in a society and culture, its politics and economic structures, ethical values and morals. Powerful history is not simply written by clever women or men but requires a deep engagement with and sensitivity to the present, its possibilities and challenges. Since the Enlightenment, the past has been continuously 're-written' by historians to 'make meaning' of an every-changing present.

The module introduces students to these ongoing changes in which the past has been understood by exploring key theories and methodologies within their specific historical context from the Enlightenment to the present. Historiography, part I (Term I) concentrates on methods and theories which dominated history writing roughly between 1750-1990. (Part II (Term II) focusses on more recent and emerging trends in history writing since the 1990s in order to offer students a clear orientation as to what is at stake in history writing today, what is considered important in the world in which we live but also what is 'left out' or silenced. See form Historiography II). It asks students to consider what form of thinking and writing (what kind of human endeavour) 'history' is, and to relate the historiographical developments discussed during the course, to the works of history they study on Advanced Option and Special Subject modules. The more recent concepts and methods encountered in the module may be helpful in crafting dissertations. Historiography is also intended to develop students' abilities in study, research, and oral and written communication, through a programme of seminars, lectures and essay work.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Part I: History Writing in Modernity: Grand Narratives of Human Reason and the Progress of Civilisation

1. History Writing in the Enlightenment: Purpose and Practice
2. History Writing as an Art or a Science? Or Both? 19-Century Views in Germany and Britain
3. History as Class Struggle
4. Total History? The Annales School and the Rise of Social History
5. The Rise of the New Social History: Socialist Humanism and Feminist History of the 1960s and 1970
6. Reading Week

Part II: History Writing in Post-Modernity: Challenging History's 'Grand Narratives'

7. The Past as a 'Foreign Land': Microhistory and the 'Ethnographic Turn'
8. Literary Criticism and the 'Linguistic turn'
9. Power/Knowledge and the Human Subject in History: Michel Foucault
10. The Rise of Postcolonialism

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a detailed knowledge of the development of the academic study of history throughout the world since the mid-eighteenth century to the 1990s.
- Demonstrate an awareness of recent and contemporary debates in the theory and practice of historical writing, within and outside of the West.
- Analyse and evaluate the contributions made by existing scholarship.
- Communicate ideas and findings, adapting to a range of situations, audiences and degrees of complexity.
- Act with limited supervision and direction within defined guidelines, accepting responsibility for achieving deadlines.

Indicative reading list

- Bentley, Michael. *Modern Historiography: An Introduction* (1999). Focuses on broad trends in largely European history-writing from the Enlightenment period onwards.
- Bentley, Michael. *A Companion to Historiography* (2002).
- Berger, Stefan, H. Feldner and K. Passmore (eds), *Writing History: Theory and Practice* (2003).
- Brown, Callum, *Postmodernism for Historians* (2005), explains it very well and has a super useful glossary of key terms!
- Burrow, John, *A History of Histories. Epics, Chronicles, Romances and Inquiries from Herodotus ... to the Twentieth Century* (2007).
- Carr, E.H., *What is History?* (1961). A core text that you should read in full at the start of the year.
- Claus, Peter and John Marriott, *History: An Introduction to Theory, Method and Practice* (2012)
- Collingwood, R.G., *The Idea of History* (1946). A classic!
- Duara, Prasenjit (ed.), *A Companion to Global Historical Thought* (2014).
- Ermath, Elizabeth Deeds, *History in the Discursive Condition: Reconsidering the Tools of Thought* (2011). Examines the state of history-writing in the light of the postmodern challenge.
- Green, Anna and Kathleen Troup (eds), *The Houses of History: A Critical Reader in Twentieth-century History and Theory* (1999). This is particularly useful for the way it introduces a theoretical and methodological vocabulary for studying twentieth-century historiography.
- Hughes-Warrington, Marnie, *Fifty Key Thinkers on History* (2008). Provides short essays on fifty mainly European and US historians, historiographers, and thinkers who have had an impact on history-writing.
- Hunt, Lynn. *Writing History in the Global Era* (2014)
- Iggers, George G. and Q. Edward Wang, *A Global History of Modern Historiography* (2008). Examines history-writing as a global phenomenon, getting away from the Eurocentricity of much of the existing literature on historiography. Focuses on the period covered in this module (in contrast to Woolf, below).
- Lambert, Peter and Schofield, Peter, *Making History* (2004). (very clear introduction to the topic)
- Maza, Sarah. *Thinking about History* (2017).

- Munslow, A., The Routledge Companion to the Historical Studies (London, 2006) (library electronic resource)
- Poster, Mark, Cultural History and Postmodernity: Disciplinary Readings and Challenges (1997) (library electronic resources).
- Rochona, Majumdar, Writing Postcolonial History (2010).
- Smith, B. The Gender of History: Men, Women and Historical Practice (1998). Provides a particularly useful account of nineteenth-century developments in historical thinking and writing, and the professionalization of the discipline.
- Shryock, Andrew/Smail, D.L., Deep History: The Architecture of Past and Present (2001).
- Southgate, Beverley, History: What and Why: Ancient, Modern, and Postmodern Perspectives (1996).
- Stunkel, Kenneth R., Fifty Key Works of History and Historiography (2011). Provides short introductions to key writings of fifty historians and thinkers who have had an impact on history-writing, from all over the world.
- Walker, Garthine (ed.), Writing Early Modern History (2005). Provides a really helpful discussion relevant to all historians, not just early modernists.
- Woolf, Daniel, A Global History of History (2011). Takes a broad sweep, with chapters on the different historical epochs of the past three millennia.

[View reading list on Talis Aspire](#)

Subject specific skills

See learning outcomes.

Transferable skills

See learning outcomes.

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Seminars	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Tutorials	1 session of 1 hour (1%)
Other activity	4 hours (3%)
Private study	127 hours (85%)
Total	150 hours

Private study description

History modules require students to undertake extensive independent research and reading to prepare for seminars and assessments. As a rough guide, students will be expected to read and prepare to comment on three substantial texts (articles or book chapters) for each seminar taking approximately 3 hours. Each assessment requires independent research, reading around 6-10 texts and writing and presenting the outcomes of this preparation in an essay, review, presentation or other related task.

Other activity description

2 essay writing workshops each term (term 1; term 2)

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A2

	Weighting	Study time
Seminar contribution	10%	
1500 word essay	30%	
3000 word essay	60%	

Feedback on assessment

Written feedback will be delivered through Tabula. Feedback on assessments will be given in tutorials.

Availability

Courses

This module is Core for:

- UHIA-V100 Undergraduate History
 - Year 2 of V100 History
 - Year 2 of V100 History

This module is Core optional for:

- UHIA-V100 Undergraduate History
 - Year 2 of V100 History
 - Year 2 of V100 History

This module is Optional for:

- Year 2 of UENA-VQ32 Undergraduate English and History

This module is Option list A for:

- Year 2 of UHIA-V1V5 Undergraduate History and Philosophy

This module is Option list B for:

- UHIA-VM11 Undergraduate History and Politics
 - Year 2 of VM11 History and Politics
 - Year 2 of VM11 History and Politics
 - Year 2 of VM11 History and Politics

This module is Option list C for:

- Year 2 of UHIA-VL13 Undergraduate History and Sociology