

## **MODERN HISTORIOGRAPHY**

What is history, and how do you write it? How can we know about the past, how can we represent or recreate it? Is one view of history 'better' than another? Why are there so many different 'schools'? Is there such a thing as objectivity? Are historians professionals rigorous in pursuit of historical truth, or are they really no more than propagandists or story-tellers? These are some of the questions confronting every student and writer of history. This course is an introduction to the ways history has been and can be written, examining some of the main issues, trends and controversies in the writing of history in the twentieth century, especially in the context of central and eastern Europe. Its aim is to encourage you to approach the writing of history critically, by assessing the many varieties of history and by analysing the intellectual and other presuppositions of the historians.

## **PRELIMINARY READING**

Stefan Berger, Mark Donovan, Kevin Passmore, eds. *Writing national histories : Western Europe since 1800*, London: Routledge 1999.  
Michel de Certeau, *The writing of history*, New York: Columbia University Press 1988.  
Anna Green, Kathleen Troup, eds., *The houses of history: a critical reader in 20<sup>th</sup> Century History and Theory*, Manchester: Manchester University Press 1999.  
Richard Evans, *In Defence of History*, London: Granta 2000.  
Juliet Gardiner, ed. *What is History Today?*, Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Jumanities Press International 1988.  
Bonnie G. Smith, *The gender of history: men, women, and historical practice*, Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press 2000.

**Title:** Modern Historiography  
**Course Code:** SEHI1002  
**Course-unit value:** 0.5  
**Level:** Level One

---

**Availability:** Yes to 2009-10  
**Open to:** Available only to V101 and SSEES Combined Studies first year undergraduates  
**Prerequisites:** There are no prerequisites

**Course leader:** Philipp Müller, Rm 541, SSEES Taviton Street  
**Other participants:**

---

**Aims:** To acquire a body of historical knowledge relating to the history of the historical discipline, together with an understanding of the main historiographical debates and turning points in the history of the historical discipline. This knowledge will relate not only to the facts of history but also to relevant concepts, heuristic tools and methods of research.

**Objectives: By the end of the course, you will have acquired:**

1. Enhanced ability to understand and to appreciate how the making of history developed and changed in the past in the context of the diversity of historical situations, events and intellectual outlooks.
  2. Enhanced ability to use and evaluate different scholarly view points both critically and empathetically, as well as appreciating the limits and challenges of the historical approach. The critical evaluation of texts should include an understanding of the questions which historians asked, and under which historically specific conditions they did.
  3. Enhanced ability to frame an argument in a sustained manner both orally and in writing. Arguments should be structured, coherent, relevant, and concise.
  4. Enhanced generic skills: these may be defined as –
    - (i) self-direction and self-discipline
    - (ii) independence of mind, and initiative
    - (iii) the ability to work with others and to have respect for the reasoned views of others
    - (iv) the ability to identify, gather, deploy and organize evidence, data and information; and familiarity with appropriate means of achieving this
    - (v) structure, clarity and fluency of expression, both written and oral
    - (vi) intellectual maturity and integrity
    - (vii) empathy and imaginative insight
    - (viii) ability to organize time, work and personal resources to optimal effect.
-

**Teaching & Learning Methods:**

**Number of Hours:**

Lectures

10 hours

Classes

5 hours

Private Study

approximately 135 hours (although this will vary

according to individual needs)

**Assessment:**

***Coursework:*** a book review of 1000 words about one historical monograph is to be handed in according to fixed deadline; a list of books to be considered for reviewing will be provided at the beginning of the course.

***Examination:*** a take-away paper of six questions, of which two must be answered; answers are to be handed in within one week (five working days).

**AFFILIATE STUDENTS:**

See regulations posted elsewhere.

**100% fulfilment of coursework is required for the successful completion of this course. If this requirement is not met by the final departmental deadline, it will normally lead to you being debarred from the exam and the course unit being marked as incomplete on your final degree transcript.**