

Frank Costigliola**History 5101****Fall 2018****Introduction to Graduate Study in History:
Approaches, Theories and Practices**

Office Hours: Monday 4-5:00 *and by appointment*
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This course introduces incoming graduate students to various approaches to interpreting, researching, and writing history. We will start off with an exercise in close reading: examining the implicit and explicit beliefs and ideas in the inaugural addresses of Barack Obama and of Donald Trump. [Print and bring to class on Monday, 10 September <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/the-inaugural-address/> and <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2009/01/21/president-barack-obamas-inaugural-address>]

Over the course of the semester we will close read in class documents that each of you have found intriguing in your own research.

Close reading means analyzing the metaphors and other rhetorical strategies in the text; the “common-sense” notions assumed by the writer; the emotions being expressed, veiled, or evoked; and the areas of emphasis as well as silences. What are the implicit and explicit assumptions of the author? What seems to be the perspectives of the author? How does she or he categorize things? What kind of system is shaped or implied by these categories? What is the explicit and/or implicit agenda operating in this text? What are the larger implications of this piece of analysis?

We will read the presidential addresses of five former heads of the American Historical Association. Writing a presidential address spurred each of these leading historians to reflect on the practices and the conceptualizations of history in their own day – and to ponder how their understanding of history compared to what previous AHA presidents had argued. These talks provide, therefore, a running commentary on changes over time in both the historiography and the larger world. Each student will pick one of these presidential addresses and report on it to the class. Research the background of the AHA president and what was distinctive about her or his background, writings, and teaching. How in your own work might you steer toward, or away from, the ideas and methodologies discussed and exemplified in these addresses?

We will then examine some theoretical ideas that have influenced historical scholarship. We will spend a week each on feminism, Marxism, theories of development, historicism and cultural studies, postcolonial and race studies, and reader response. As you read through these essays, ask yourself how relevant and useful are these approaches and sets of ideas to your own research projects and to your education as a historian. How can you stretch your own assumptions and perspectives to incorporate these theories? Or, how and why do you find these theories to be largely irrelevant? Remember that new ideas can be confusing and always present a challenge.

During the course of the semester we will discuss such practical topics as, what is a journal article? How does one write and submit an essay to a historical journal? What

should a conference paper try to do? What should be your strategy in a grant proposal? How do you turn your dissertation into a book? What is the tenure process like? What kinds of career opportunities exist outside of academia? *Feel free* to pose similar questions as we meet each week.

The production of written history depends on doing research in archives as well as interpreting what we have found. What sources are usually preserved in archives and which tend to be lost or downplayed as unimportant? To help answer these questions we will read Michel-Rolph Trouillot's *Silencing the Past*.

The course recognizes that people with PhDs in history can pursue various careers with their degree. Mike Neagle, a recent PhD graduate from U Conn and a tenure track assistant professor at Nichols College, will discuss with us his experiences in writing a dissertation, getting his book accepted by Cambridge University Press, and getting a job. University of Connecticut professor and Connecticut State Historian Walt Woodward will review with us the opportunities in public history.

The final element of the course is drafting a proposal for your research paper in History 5102 next semester. The proposals are due on December 3, and we will discuss them in class that day. In this ten-page essay, pose the historical question or problem you intend to pursue, and give a rationale for this inquiry in light of the existing historiography. What are the areas of historiography in which you aspire to make a contribution? How will your proposed study contribute to these particular fields? Will you be addressing gaps in current understanding, correcting flaws in leading interpretations, exploring topics pertinent to your chosen fields but little investigated, examining untapped sources, or introducing fresh perspectives? If you succeed in your undertaking, what will we understand differently about the subjects you are taking up?

This proposal requires you to address concretely the bodies of historical scholarship pertinent to your study and to consider the audiences and communities in which your study seeks a place. Insofar as you have identified the primary sources you intend to explore, can you explain how these materials will bear upon the interpretive issues central to the study? Apply to your essay pertinent aspects of what we have read and learned this semester.

Posts at HUSKY CT site for History 5101

By 6 pm on the Sunday before each meeting of our class, post 2-3 paragraphs on the reading or assignment due for Monday's class. The purpose of these posts is to give you and me a heads-up as to your reactions to the reading and the assignment. Think of the posts as a pre-discussion that can enhance our in-class discussion. You are encouraged to comment on other students' posts and, if you wish, to comment again briefly after your own first post. The posts should be analytical and reflective rather than just summations of the readings.

Introductions of Class Readings

Each of our readings will be introduced by class members. If more than one person is introducing a reading, they should collaborate on their presentations. Presentations should place the reading in context by supplying background on the author(s) and suggesting connections between this reading and others in the course. Presenters should also propose a few questions for class discussion. Feel free to bring in handouts for the class to illustrate the points in your presentation. These presentations should not be pro

forma efforts – put your intelligence and energy to work to help launch a stimulating class discussion.

Metacognitive Journal

You are expected to keep a “metacognitive” journal for the course. We will whenever possible set aside class time for you to write an entry in this journal. “Metacognitive” here means thinking about your thinking. These metacognitive entries are more personal than your online posts or your papers. In each metacognitive entry you should reflect on how the week’s reading and discussion affected (or did not affect) your thinking about various approaches to writing, reading, researching and interpreting history. Specify what, if anything, has affected your thinking.

Papers There are 3 papers in the course.

1. **Due Friday, October 5:** 4-5 page paper based on your comparison and evaluation of the AHA Presidential Addresses as well as the reading on feminism, Marxism, and theories of world systems and of development. Which of these approaches to history do you find more useful or significant, and why? How would you compare and contrast these various thinkers and practitioners? Regarding the AHA Addresses, see also the questions on p. 1 above.
2. **Due Friday, November 2:** 4-5 page paper based on your reflections on, and findings from the readings on historicism and cultural studies, postcolonial and race studies, Trouillot, and reader response. Consider again the questions posed above for the first paper. If pertinent, bring in readings from earlier in the semester.
3. **Due Monday, December 3:** 10 page proposal for your History 5102 paper. See description on the previous page.

Books

1. Robert Dale Parker (ed.), *Critical Theory* (Oxford)
 2. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past* (Beacon)
- Additional reading is online at the HUSKY CT site for the course under the pertinent week.

Course and Reading Schedule

August 27 Attend the Graduate Student Conference and the subsequent lecture in the Class of 1947 room in the library.

Closely observe the presentations by the paper-givers, the commentators, and the guest lecture by Professor Michael Donoghue. To the extent possible, try to discern the assumptions, perspectives, categories, agenda, and implications of the various speakers. We will devote part of our class on Monday, September 10 discussing what you have observed.

September 3 Labor Day, no class

September 10 Discussion of August 27 Graduate Student Conference, AHA presidential addresses, and a close reading of the ideological grounding of the inaugural addresses of Presidents Obama and Trump (Bring this material to class.)

AHA Presidential Addresses How did these presidents of the AHA approach the ritual of their presidential address? How did each conceptualize his (until recently, nearly all AHA presidents were men) opportunity and responsibility? How were these historians responding to the challenges of their time? What are the recurring themes, issues, and problems with which historians have wrestled? In what ways does present-day, postmodern-era scholarship differ from the historical writing of earlier decades? How have things changed – and stayed largely the same? What can we say about the backgrounds and the careers of the scholars who attained the presidency of the AHA? Presidential addresses are available at <http://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/presidential-addresses>

1. (1931) Carl L. Becker, “Everyman His Own Historian”
2. (1961) Samuel Bemis, “Amer. Foreign Policy and the Blessings of Liberty”
3. (1997) Joyce Appleby, “The Power of History”
4. (2012) William Cronon, “Storytelling”
5. (2018) Tyler Stovall, “White Freedom and the Lady of Liberty”

September 17 Feminism pp.231-282 in Parker, *Critical Theory*

September 24 Marxism pp. 379-476 in Parker, *Critical Theory*

October 1 World Systems theory: <https://thebasebk.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/The-Modern-World-System.pdf>

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Development theory: Hodge, Joseph Morgan. “Writing the History of Development (Part 1: The First Wave).” *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 6, no. 3 (2015): 429–63. <https://doi.org/10.1353/hum.2015.0026>.

———. “Writing the History of Development (Part 2: Longer, Deeper, Wider).” *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 7, no. 1 (2016): 125–74. <https://doi.org/10.1353/hum.2016.0004>.

Friday, October 5 Due: Paper #1 (see above) Please email your paper to frank.costigliola@uconn.edu

October 8 Historicism and Cultural Studies pp. 477-626 in Parker, *Critical Theory*

October 15 Postcolonial and Race Studies pp. 627-800 in Parker, *Critical Theory*

October 22 Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, all

October 29 Reader Response pp. 801-866

November 5 Innovative scholarship and discussion by Professor Mike Neagle on how to survive grad school, publish your revised dissertation, and get a job. *Modern American History*, vol. 1, issue 1 (March 2018): pp. 67-150

November 12 Public History and careers outside academia – see articles on HuskyCT site. Visit by Professor Walt Woodward

November 26 No class meeting; work on your 5102 proposals

December 3 Presentations of 5102 proposals

December 3 Due: 10-page History 5102 Paper Proposal

Grades

1/3 Class participation in class discussion, online posts, and presentation of readings

1/3 Papers 1 and 2

1/3 Proposal for History 5102 paper