

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY



GRADUATE
COURSE
DESCRIPTIONS



FALL 2024

HIS 524 - GRADUARE CORE SEMINAR

THEORY AND PRACTICE

Professor Lori Flores

Wednesday - 3:30-6:20pm SBS N-318

This first half of a year-long course is an introduction to graduate study in history in general, and Stony Brook's program in particular. Featured readings are broad and varied—some address the discipline itself and explore important theoretical concepts and questions that inform historical thinking and writing. Other scholarship converges with the thematic strands of our program and our own faculty's work. Students will consistently practice incisive and accessible writing through weekly responses and preparatory assignments for their final Core paper and develop a stronger argumentative voice in seminar discussion. The second semester is devoted to researching and writing an original, primary source-based 25–35-page research paper of publishable quality. **For MA and PhD students only, advanced Academic Track MA students should consult advisor prior to enrolling.**

HIS 535 –THEME SEMINAR

“BODY POLITICS”

Professor Nancy Tomes

Tuesday - 6:30-9:20pm SBS N-318

This course will explore the diverse ways that medical knowledge about the human body has been deployed in the exercise of “biopower,” to use Foucault’s term. We will use his concept of biopower as starting point to explore the historical construction of categories such as natural/unnatural, normal/abnormal, able/disabled, and healthy/diseased. We will explore how those changing categories have aligned with the exercise of political and cultural power over gendered bodies and minds. Our goal is to understand the changing dynamics of medical authority in the past: how it was constituted, accepted, resisted, and subverted. Besides Foucault, we will sample the work of other theorists, including Judith Butler’s new book, *Who’s Afraid of Gender?* We will read in common five or six works of history, such as Melissa Stein, *Measuring Manhood: Race and the Science of Masculinity, 1830-1934*, Susan Burch and Hannah Joyner, *Unspeakable: the Story of Junius Wilson*, Susan Reverby, *Examining Tuskegee: the Infamous Syphilis Study and Its Legacy*, and Richard McKay, *Patient Zero and the Making of the AIDS Epidemic*. (I will revisit this list of common readings once I see who’s in the seminar.) In addition to the common readings, seminar members will be given the chance to explore and share readings relevant to their specific interests.

Although my own specialization is in U.S. medicine from 1800 onward, I am eager and willing to work with people interested in other localities and time periods. The main writing requirement consists of writing a review essay (7-10 pages) and an annotated bibliography on a topic of the participant’s choice. **Enrollment in History MA or PhD Program or Permission of Instructor.**

HIS 553 – THEME SEMINAR

“MEMORY & HISTORICAL PRODUCTION”

Professor Donna Rilling

Monday 5:00-7:50pm SBS N-318

This course melds two intersecting approaches: an exploration of memory, commemoration, and heritage; and an introduction to the methods, practice and intellectual foundations of public history. We will examine relationships between history and collective memory, current cultural and political controversies, and real-world issues surrounding monuments, memorials, exhibitions, digital projects and websites, and other forms of historical representation and interpretation, discerning ways that the study of the past is remembered and shaped by and into the present. In addition, we will consider how public history engages and influences its audiences and shapes public knowledge and interpretations. How do public historians—in contrast to academic historians? - communicate historical knowledge and interpretations to general audiences? What forms do these narratives take?

The field of Public History has been, until recently, principally a North American field. Many of our readings and topics, therefore, will focus on the U.S. and Canada. The relevance of such themes as slavery and indigeneity, however, stretch beyond North America; students interested in Africa, Latin America, former imperial European powers, or Pacific or Indian Ocean populations can explore memory and commemoration in those regions. Our chronological focus will range principally from the 1500s to the present. **Enrollment in History MA or PhD Program or Permission of Instructor.**

HIS 554 - Theme Seminar

Decolonizing Imperial Histories: Arguments, Methodologies, Research

Professor Kathleen Wilson

Tuesday 3:30-6:20pm SBS N-318

Is it possible to separate History from the imperial matrices and racial capitalism that have for so long produced it? Can we discover ways to decolonize our categories (such as, but not limited to, gender, race and class, identity, and alterity, north and south, center and periphery and other time/space grids of geopolitics) and our modes of knowledge while continuing to write history 'as we know it'? Should we try to adopt a 'view from the south,' which has come to connote the perspective of dispossessed actors across cultures of the current world order? This theme seminar will examine strategies for using decolonial and anti-colonial methodologies, archives and temporal strategies that promote more complex and attentive understandings of our entangled pasts and doing something with history other than tag the majority of the world as 'behind'. We will also be considering the ethics and praxis of anti-colonial practices and ideas in settler colonial nations and the types of critical and historical activism that can be seen to encourage more 'pluriversal' narratives and projected futures. Students should expect to do 50-150 pages of reading per week as part of the **course requirements**, to wit:

Reading, attendance, discussion, critical engagement (20% of grade)

Two short response papers (40% total) to the reading of a week of your choosing, due Sept 24 and Nov 5

Two short praxis assignments, the results to be presented in class (20% total), Sept 10 and Oct 22

One longer paper or project due a week after the last class (I'm open about what form this final paper or project takes) (20%). **Enrollment in History MA or PhD Program or Permission of Instructor.**

HIS 563/CEG 536 – FIELD SEMINAR

INTRODUCTION TO SOUTH ASIAN HISTORY

Professor Eric Beverley

Thursday 3:30-6:20pm SBS N-318

This course provides an advanced introduction to South Asian history and historiography from the early modern period to the present. We cover major works on key themes, including precolonial cultural relations, colonialism and imperialism, the politics of religious community, anti-colonialism and nationalism, decolonization and partition, and postcolonial developments. While we focus on the South Asia subcontinent, the course situates the region in a comparative and connective framework. Classic works and recent scholarship in the field will be supplemented with selections from relevant primary sources. This is not a survey course and does not attempt to provide comprehensive coverage. No prior knowledge of the field is prerequisite, and the course will begin with a rapid thematic survey of South Asian history. This course is jointly designed for PhD and MA students in History and related disciplines for whose research and teaching a knowledge of South Asian history will be useful, and for MAT students who intend to teach South Asian and world history at the advanced secondary level. Requirements include regular reading, attendance, and participation; in-class presentations; a series of short responses; and a topical historiographic essay on a topic of the student's choice determined in consultation with the instructor.

Enrollment in History MA or PhD Program or Permission of Instructor.

HIS 582 - TEACHING PRACTICUM

Professor Alix Cooper

Monday – 3:30-6:30pm SBS N-303

This course is designed for those preparing to teach students—especially at the post-secondary level—about the past and its contemporary relevance. We'll explore a wide range of issues related to pedagogy, and important professional and personal skills for today's educators in an ever-changing political and digital landscape. Topics will include teaching strategies for lectures and seminars; grading; effective classroom management; innovative pedagogical approaches; new educational technologies; and resources to support students' learning and well-being. In addition, we'll reflect on some of the opportunities and challenges in teaching history for today's educators. Course requirements include mandatory attendance, required readings, active participation in class discussions, short writing assignments, developing a sample syllabus and teaching statement (as part of a teaching portfolio), and teaching a practice class. **History PhD students only.**

HIS 601- RESEARCH SEMINAR

GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

Professor Shobana Shankar

Wednesday 3:30-6:20pm SBS S-326

The goal of the course is to develop and practice research and writing skills and produce a publishable quality research article of 30-35 pages. In the first part of the course, we will use the study of global/transregional connections as common ground for our discussions of how scholars have employed different methodologies and theoretical frameworks for situating original research, advancing fresh arguments, and taking the field in new directions. In the second part of the semester, we will break down the research and writing process into steps, including conducting research, developing an argument, literature/historiography review, editing, and submitting to a journal/responding to peer review. **Enrollment in History PhD Program or Permission of Instructor.**