This is an advanced course in how to read and write about how historians in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have approached the history of Europe. The course has a more or less chronological organization by author. We will spend the first half of the semester on the nineteenth century, the second half on the twentieth.

This course is based on the proposition that in one way or another, all history is narrative. In many respects, the course is about the rise and fall of "scientific" narratives of history. As more and more historians have questioned scientific narratives, they have raised the question of whether life remains in older narrative forms. We will be pondering the question of whether particularly nineteenth century approaches to history are really as "dated" as they might have seemed twenty or thirty years ago.

The reading for this course is exceptionally dense, and consequently the number of pages assigned for each week has been kept to a minimum. The material we will read is quite unforgiving in terms of historical context, which explains why the course has a prerequisite of History 102 or the equivalent. Even so, students should expect to spend a considerable amount of time reading about regimes, events, and people they don't understand very well. It is also important to keep in mind that the course is more about narrative approaches to history than about what is being narrated per se. Learning how to read in different ways for different purposes is one of the most useful skills one can acquire in college.

Requirements:

The format of the course is discussion. Regular and intensive participation by each member of the class is essential to the success of the enterprise. Though grading remains more an art than a science, approximately 50 percent of each student's final grade will depend on her or his ability to contribute to class discussion.

I. Readings:

The following books have been ordered for purchase.


All of the required books are also on reserve. A number of other readings will also be made available through photocopies or electronically.

II. Presentations:

Students should expect to make short (10-15 minute) presentations regularly over the course of the semester. The purpose of the presentations is to lay out the main issues of the assigned readings so as to
The purpose of the presentations is to lay out the main issues of the assigned readings so as to initiate discussion. Given the density of the texts, students should be more concerned with simply explaining them than with critiquing their approaches per se.

Exactly how often students will be presenting will depend on the number of students in the class, but ideally each student will present every 2-3 weeks. At least two and sometimes three students will present per week. If two students are presenting on the same book, they should of course collaborate as to the content of their presentations in order to avoid overlap.

III. Papers:

The writing component of the course comprises three short (4-5 page) essays. These may be drawn from students’ presentations, though this is not a requirement. As with the presentations, the purpose of the papers is to expound upon the narrative approach of the author, and to draw out what history meant to him or (by the end of the course) to her.

Essays must be submitted within the week following the class discussion of the readings considered. In other words, essays considering the readings from the March 2 meeting of the class must be submitted by the March 7 meeting of the class. Students must write at least one paper before Fall Break, and at least two before May 4.

Rewrites will be allowed for the first two papers if students are not satisfied with their grades. Rewrites are due one week after the original paper is handed back. The rewrite grade will be recorded as the final grade for the paper. Students who wish to rewrite their papers should have a conference with me to discuss problems with the original version.

Schedule of Classes and Readings:

February 9: Introduction: History, Genre and Metahistory

February 16: Thomas Carlyle and the "Great Man"

Readings:

White, *Metahistory*, Introduction, "The Poetics of History" (focus on pp.1-31); and pp.135-49 (on Carlyle and Romanticism)

Carlyle, "The Hero as Divinity, Odin, Paganism: Scandinavian Mythology" (Lecture delivered 4 May 1840)

February 23: Jules Michelet and "The People"

Readings:

White, *Metahistory*, Ch. 3, "Michelet: Historical Realism as Romance"


March 2: Leopold von Ranke and the History of Political Power

Readings:

Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century*, Ch. I, "Classical Historicism as a Model for Historical Scholarship"

White, *Metahistory*, Ch. 4, "Ranke: Historical Realism as Comedy"

Leopole von Ranke, "The Great Powers" (1833)

March 9: Alexis de Tocqueville the Pessimist

Readings:
March 16          Jacob Burkhardt the Paradoxical Pessimist

Readings:
White, *Metahistory*, Ch. 6
Jacob Burkhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860), Excerpt from Part I, "The State as a Work of Art"

March 23          Karl Marx the Optimist

Readings:
White, *Metahistory*, Ch. 3
Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto* (1848)

*Spring Break***!!!

April 6           British Political History: Louis Namier and A.J.P. Taylor

Readings:
Louis Namier, "King George III: A Study in Personality" (1953)
A.J.P. Taylor, "The Rise and Fall of 'Pure' Diplomatic History" (1956)

(NOTE: we will need to reschedule this meeting of the class because of an unavoidable external engagement.)

April 13          The *Annales* and French Social History

Readings:
Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century*, Ch. 5, "France: The *Annales*


April 20          *Alltagsgeschichte* and German Social History

Readings:
Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century*, Ch. 9, "From Macro- to Microhistory: The History of Everyday Life"

Alf Lüdtke, "What Happened to the 'Firey Red Glow'? Workers' Experience and German Fascism" (1989)

(NOTE: we will need to reschedule this meeting of the class because I will be out of town at a conference.)

April 27          The History of Popular Culture

Readings:
Iggers, Review Ch. 9

May 4
The Persistent Centrality of the Nation

**Readings:**

Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century*, Ch. 7, "Marxist Historical Science: From Historical Materialism to Critical Anthropology"


May 11
Gender History: The Specter of Culture

**Readings:**

Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century*, Ch. 10, "The 'Linguistic Turn': The End of History as a Scholarly Discipline?"


**Additional Ground Rules:**

1. Deadlines and page-limit requirements are to be taken most seriously. I am not in the business of persecuting students if a genuine problem exists, but in principle I strongly dislike giving extensions. Normally, I take off 1/3 of a letter grade for every 24 hours a paper is overdue.

   Three excuses for requesting extensions will never be acceptable: 1) a self-defined character flaw of procrastination; 2) extracurricular activities, including artistic performances and political activism; 3) work in other classes. Two possible exceptions exist for unacceptable excuse #3. I am prepared to exercise some indulgence concerning students doing Seniors Honors projects or, in the case of Conservatory students, Senior recitals. This is because of the "once-in-a-lifetime" character of these projects.

2. Papers must be double-spaced and have one-inch margins. They must also be word-processed with near letter quality resolution. I reserve the right to return any paper that is not legible.

3. All written work at Oberlin College is subject to the Honor Code. No paper will be graded until the Honor Code statement is signed: “I have adhered to the Honor Code in the writing of this exercises.”

4. All written work for the course must be completed in order to pass. That is to say, if two instead of three papers are turned in, a student will fail the entire course. Incompletes are governed by college rules; unofficial incompletes will not be given.