

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY



**GRADUATE
COURSE
DESCRIPTIONS**



SPRING 2024

FIELD SEMINAR
HIS 501 - MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN EUROPE

Professor Mohamad Ballan

M 2:30-5:20PM – SBS N-318

This seminar will introduce you to important issues and approaches in medieval and early modern European history. We will proceed both chronologically and topically, focusing on dominant themes and significant historiographical questions, including the transformations of late antiquity, the vexed question of “feudalism,” varieties of medieval religious experience, the rise of urbanism and bureaucratic monarchies, overseas expansion and contact with non-European peoples, Renaissance and Reformation, Inquisition and repression, ideologies and practices of absolutism, and the Scientific Revolution. We will read select primary sources as well as a variety of scholarly perspectives, including both traditional and revisionist works of cultural, intellectual, political, and religious history.

Prerequisite: Enrollment in History Graduate Program or permission of instructor for graduate students outside of History.

HIST 516 - THEME SEMINAR

“PUTTING THE WORLD TO WORK: GLOBAL LABOR HISTORY IN THE LONGUE DURÉE”

Professor Tamara Fernando

Thursday 5:30 – 8:30PM SBS N-303

As America sees a historic boom in labor and collective organizing and AI generates new anxieties around the future of work, it is an incredibly exciting time to ask new questions and to revisit the basic assumptions of labor history. The course begins in the nineteenth century and concludes in the present neo-liberal moment. Students will leave the course able to take a world-historical approach to the question of work and labor; to enhance their critical reading skills and to refine the craft of writing. This theme seminar has three core tenets. First, we will prioritize historical case studies over theory – so we will read less of Marx, and more of fully-fleshed out secondary scholarship, grounded in places and people. Second, this course is global in range and scope. The books we will read range from histories of the mines of South Africa to the jute mills of Bombay, to the striking cabbies of Cairo or the plantation workers of Malaya. We will look beyond the factory and the urban, to include the household, the ship, and the plantation. Students should come prepared to read extensively, as well as to be open to learning from other geographic contexts and actors. Finally, in terms of sources, we will be emphatically unruly and ill-disciplined about what constitutes the “stuff” of labor history – so although we will learn to close-read the factory worksheet or labor contract, class content will extend to film, song, oral history, as well as select interviews with labor organizers. Course assignments include one creative “ethnography” from a site of work, oral presentations, peer-review of writing samples, as well as the opportunity to pitch a more “public facing” piece to a magazine on a current issue in labor history/the history of work. **Prerequisite: Enrollment in a History Graduate program.**

GRADUATE CORE SEMINAR

History Theory and Practice

HIS 524/526

Professor Shobana Shankar

Tuesday 4:00-6:50pm SBS N-318

This is the second half of a year-long course that is your introduction to graduate study in history in general, and Stony Brook's Graduate Program in History in particular. Core is designed to introduce new graduate students to prominent concepts, theoretical underpinnings, and shifts in historical scholarship over the last few decades; to examine influential texts from the thematic areas of our graduate program; and to explore some techniques and resources that are key to historical research and writing. The culmination of your work in the Fall semester was the drafting of a proposal for a paper you want to write. In the second half of Core, we concentrate on turning proposal into reality: a substantial paper (at least 25-30 pages) that uses primary sources and makes an original contribution to the secondary literature on your chosen topic. The paper will be written in stages; at each stage, you will receive feedback and support from the course instructor and your fellow students. Required readings will be minimal and focus on basic skills of research and writing. Course meetings will be primarily devoted to workshopping papers as they are developed. **Only those HIS MA (Academic Track) & HIS PhD students currently enrolled in HIS 524 may take this course.**

HIS 557 SPECIAL SEMINAR

“Oral History: Ethics and Craft”

**Theme Seminar or Research Seminar with
joint discussion & permission of instructor and Grad Director**

Professor Lori Flores

Wednesday 5:30-8:20 SBS N-303

In this seminar, students will read and discuss oral history theory, debates, and developments, as well as academic and crossover scholarship that relies heavily on oral history as a methodology and/or source base. We will explore the questions: How do we treat oral histories critically as a source and method? What are the ethics and legalities of good oral history gathering, practice, and preservation? How do we deal with issues of subjectivity, memory that shifts with age and time, and our personal relationships with our interviewees? What are the advantages of different formats of recording and archiving an oral history (textual, audio, and audiovisual)? And finally, how do we craft powerful historical writing that integrates oral interviews smoothly? Seminar participants, depending on MA or PhD level, will choose a final project of either a 15-30 page research paper related to their field of interest that integrates an oral history (or histories) they have conducted themselves; or a 20-30 minute high-quality podcast with accompanying website page and transcription featuring at least one oral history subject. **Prerequisite: enrollment in a History graduate program, or with permission of instructor for graduate students outside of History.**

HIS 582 - TEACHING PRACTICUM

Professor Jennifer Anderson

Thursday 2:30-5:20 – SBS N-318

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 educational theories, methods, and best practices geared towards meeting the needs of diverse students, fostering engaging and inclusive classroom environments, and achieving positive learning outcomes. Topics will include how to develop course syllabi, assignments, document-based lessons, and assessments. We will also discuss innovative pedagogical approaches, effective classroom management, applications for 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 lesson plan, and teaching a practice class.

History PhD students only.

RESEARCH SEMINAR

HIS-601 - Sources & Interpretations in Cultural History

Professor Alix Cooper

Monday 4:00-6:50 SBS N-318

This seminar aims to further advance the research and writing skills of graduate students who have already taken the Core Seminar. The main purpose of the seminar will be to provide a setting in which these advanced graduate students can focus on researching, writing, and revising a graduate-level research paper of at least 20 pages on a topic of their choice, for example, trying out a possible dissertation topic. During the first six weeks of the semester, common readings on advanced historical methods will be assigned, and individual meetings will be held to discuss possible seminar paper topics; the remainder of the semester will be devoted to the actual writing process, with specific stages in which work will be handed in. The goal of the seminar will be, in addition to helping graduate students fulfill their Research Seminar requirement, to help guide them towards producing a research paper of potentially publishable quality. **Prerequisite: Enrollment in a History Graduate Program.**

HIS 695: DISSERTATION PROSPECTUS WORKSHOP

Professor April Masten

Tuesday 4:00-6:50 SBS S-326

This workshop is for advanced Ph.D. students who are ready to begin working on their dissertations. Over the course of the semester, each student will research and write up a full-scale plan for a book-length manuscript that contributes original historical scholarship to their field. The course will be broken up into assignments, presentations, and discussions through which students will hone their initial ideas into a statement that clarifies the central questions they are posing and how they will go about answering those questions. A prospectus is an explanation of the research problem under investigation; a summary of relevant secondary literature and a positioning of the topic within that literature; a statement of hypothesis; a description of the theories and methods that will be employed; and an outline of research sources (especially primary materials and archives). In the end, each student will produce a full-length dissertation research project prospectus (approx. 15 pages) and a one-page abstract that meets the standards of the instructor of this workshop and the student's primary Ph.D. advisor (and committee members). Workshop participants will also prepare an 8-10 minute oral presentation of their project to deliver in public. This course is graded S/U; a satisfactory grade is required for advancement to candidacy. **Prerequisite: For History PhD students only; in their final year of coursework prior to advancing to candidacy.**