History 5118
Themes in Canadian History
Tuesdays 3-5PM

Trent University
Department of History
Winter 2013

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Overview

This course provides an overview of the major trends in the writing of Canadian history since the professionalization of historical writing in the early 20th century. Each week covers a major trend in historical thought and writing, often combining key early works with articles that either contextualize those trends and/or provide recent examples of the way current scholars are redeveloping these earlier ways of thinking. We move largely chronologically, and the last several weeks focus on recent trends. The course is not comprehensive, especially of the diverse and fragmented current scholarship, but it does give a relatively thorough overview of many of the major schools of thought influencing the writing of Canadian history in the past and today.

Course Requirements and Grading

Participation 20%
Reading Commentaries 30% due: weekly, night before seminar
Historiographical Essay 50% due: 2 April, in class

Reading Commentaries

The Reading Commentaries are short essays/reviews of the weekly readings (approximately 3-4 pages in length) that should be submitted to me by email the night before class. They should discuss and review the main ideas and arguments presented in the weekly readings, especially where appropriate, thinking about
the common themes that emerge between different readings. They aren’t meant to be finished essays with footnotes. I’m expecting that the ideas you’ll be expressing will be roughly outlined. One of the ways that we learn is by writing about what we’ve read. That is the purpose of this assignment. We can then use the commentaries, in part, to guide discussion in seminar.

Historiographical Essay

You will write an original 25 page historiographical paper on a subject connected to one of the weekly themes addressed in the course. The goal of the paper is to take a much more in-depth look at the particular historiographical issue/debate/theory that we focus on. Ideally the paper will explain how this particular issue has been addressed in the Canadian historiography, including debates within and outside the field, changes over time in how it has been addressed, the significance of particular historians in pushing this issue and also problematic aspects and criticism.

If possible, you should try to connect the paper to your thesis/MRP, perhaps reading on some of the historiographical background that can help you to intellectually contextualize the topic and academic literature you will be addressing in the thesis/MRP. You should choose a topic in consultation with me, and you should do so no later than our meeting on 22 January.

The paper should draw on 20 academic books and/or articles that represent (arguably) the key contributions to this particular field under review. All notations should follow Chicago style (available most easily via the History Department website’s Online History Skills Workbook). I don’t need a bibliography.

Please do meet with me throughout the semester to talk about your paper.

Come see me

Come to talk to me about any aspect of the class. I’m available often before and after class, in my office hour or at other times.

Academic Integrity Policy

Academic dishonesty, which includes plagiarism and cheating, is an extremely serious academic offence and carries penalties varying from a 0 grade on an assignment to expulsion from the University. Definitions, penalties, and procedures for dealing with plagiarism and cheating are set out in Trent University’s Academic Integrity Policy. You have a responsibility to educate yourself – unfamiliarity with the policy is not an excuse. You are strongly encouraged to visit Trent’s Academic Integrity website to learn more: www.trentu.ca/academicintegrity
Weekly Schedule

Week 1 (8 January) – History Wars


Week 2 (15 January) – Canada and Liberty (senate)


Week 3 (22 January) – Staples, Nature and Economy, Take 1


Week 4 (29 January) – The Art of History (Making Canada, take 1)


Week 5 (5 February) History from West to East


Week 6 (12 February) History from the bottom up (senate)


Recent:


Reading Break
Week 7 (26 February) The Cultural Turn: Gender
Joy Parr, 'Gender History and Historical Practice,' *Canadian Historical Review* 76:3 (September 1995): 354-376.

Week 8 (5 March) The Liberal Order Framework

Week 9 (12 March) Nature, Take 2 (senate)

Week 10 (19 March) The Making of Canada (or Creighton, Take 2)

Week 11 (26 March)
Week off for essay research/writing

Week 12 (2 April)
Essays Due