Learning Objectives: This is the first semester of the year-long seminar that will culminate in the production of a substantial, research-based first-year paper, as required by the History program. In this course we will discuss methodology and prepare a research topic. This will include:

- formulation of a research topic
- preparation of a bibliography of secondary works
- writing of a historiographical essay
- preparation of a detailed research prospectus by semester’s end [see attached guidelines]

To assist you in this process, we will discuss various examples of and approaches to historical writing, as well as the past and current state of history as a discipline. We will also visit several research libraries. Finally, we will workshop as a group each of your research prospectuses. The first-year paper is a key requirement of the History program - helping you craft it is a main goal of this course.

A note about attendance and grades: Weeks when we do not meet are not to be considered a break from work – on the contrary, they are designed to give you blocks of time to devote to research and writing. Use them wisely. Since we do not meet every week, I expect you to be present the weeks that we do, barring medical or family emergency. Written assignments must be submitted on time – points will be deducted for lateness and non-submission counts as a zero. Failure to submit a prospectus draft in November is not acceptable. Your grade for the course will be determined by:

- regular attendance and participation in class (15%)
- short assignments (5% each = 20%): essays on Goldhagen, Eley, Williams; preliminary bibliography
- historiographic essay (25%) this 10 pg. paper is the first step in preparing your first-year research paper. It must contain a working title, description of research question, discussion of the historiography on your topic, and a preliminary bibliography. It must show that you understand the key debates around your topic and the major literature; you may focus on 3-4 works, though you should also relate these to other works in the field.
- final prospectus (40%): c. 15 pg. prospectus detailing the research plan for your first-year paper to be undertaken next Spring. Must have a working title, detailed description of research question, discussion of key secondary works on the topic, detailed discussion of primary sources to be used, and bibliography.

The following books are required:
* Other materials will be on Reserve or available through GC Library databases as noted.

**PROPOSED COURSE SCHEDULE:**

Aug. 25  Introduction & Library Session I (Mina Rees Library)

Sept. 1  Why Historians become Historians
READING: Eley, *A Crooked Line*
ASSIGNMENT: a 500-word essay reflecting on Eley’s motivations for becoming a historian as compared with your own. **Due in class**

Sept. 8  Library Session II – New York Public Library: meet 4:00 in South Court classrooms on first floor (from Fifth Ave. entrance go straight and slightly to the left; classrooms are in the glass & chrome addition)

Sept. 15 The Stakes of Writing History: The Goldhagen Debate
READING: Shandley, *Unwilling Germans*.
ASSIGNMENT: a 750-1000 word essay summarizing the Goldhagen debate and its broader implications for the writing of history. You must draw on at least 3 different essays in Shandley. **Due in class**.

Sept. 22 Historiography & the Nature of the Discipline
READING: Richard Evans, *In Defense of History* ch. 1; Joan Wallach Scott, “History-Writing as Critique,” in Keith Jenkins (eds.), *Manifestos for History*
* Preliminary bibliography of at least 20 secondary works for your final project due*

Sept. 29 NO CLASS (I’ll be at the German Studies Assn. conference)

Oct. 6  NO CLASS – CUNY is on a Tuesday schedule

Oct. 13 **Historiographic essay due in class**

Oct. 20 Coming to Terms: What Are We Talking About?
READING: Raymond Williams, *Keywords* (esp. entries on Bourgeois, Class, Culture, Family, Hegemony, History, Imperialism, Liberal, Modern, Popular, Progressive, Sex, Society, Western); E.P. Thompson, “Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism”; Alf Lüdtke, “What is the History of Everyday Life & Who are its Practitioners?”
ASSIGNMENT: select 3 of Williams’ keywords and discuss in a 500-word essay how each fits into your research project. **Due in class.**
Oct. 27  Analysis of a Carefully Crafted Article

Nov. 3  Some Key Concepts in Current History Writing: Gender, Post-Colonialism, Consumption, Citizenship

** The final segment of the course will focus on workshopping your prospectuses. Class will be divided into 3 groups. Students in Group 1 must circulate by e-mail a draft of their prospectus to Prof. Sneeringer and the class no later than 8pm on Sunday, Nov. 6. Everyone must read each other’s drafts and be prepared to discuss them in class (mark up the draft with comments either on paper or electronically; pass these on to the author at the end of discussion). **

Nov. 10  Discussion of Prospectuses – Group 1

** Group 2 prospectuses due by 8pm, Sunday Nov. 13 **

Nov. 17  Discussion of Prospectuses – Group 2

Nov. 24  NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING

** Group 3 prospectuses due by 8pm, Sunday Nov. 27 **

Dec. 1  Discussion of Prospectuses – Group 3

Dec. 8  NO CLASS – individual conferences as necessary

Dec. 15  FINAL PROSPECTUS DUE
GUIDELINES FOR THE PROSPECTUS

This is a rough guide to the prospectus you will write this semester in preparation for next semester’s research paper. (It can also serve as a model for your dissertation proposal down the road.) Keep in mind that not all provisions will apply to all projects. Remember too that prospectuses change as your research progresses. Your prospectus should be 3-15 pages in length, and include citations and a bibliography in Chicago Manual format (see Kate Turabian’s Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations if you are not familiar with this format; models also exist online).

1. Title: Devise a title that is both accurate and memorable. A typical title might consist of a unique phrase from a cited source, followed by a descriptive phrase after the colon.

2. Statement of the question you are going to answer: Describe up front in a paragraph (or more) the historical phenomenon you are investigating – an unexplored event, an issue of (re)interpretation, whatever. Sometimes a new crop of primary sources will drive your project (see #6 below).

3. Relevant background: Contextualize the problem. What does the reader need to know in order to understand the question you have posed? Assume an educated reader who knows a fair amount of history but is not a specialist in the area in which you’re working.

4. Brief outline: What will be the main sections of your paper? In addition to an introduction and conclusion, a 30-page paper might have 3-5 sections that may or may not have subheadings. Breaks and section headings keep your material from becoming unwieldy. Also think carefully about the order in which you’ll present your material.

5. Historiographical analysis: Your paper must address the key historiographical debates surrounding your topic: what are the main ways historians have framed your topic in the past? What are the competing schools of thought, and how does your work stand in relation to them? If your topic has been ignored, you must still show what has been written so far about your topic in the broadest sense. E.g., how has the topic been handled for groups other than those you’re studying, or in other national contexts?

6. Primary sources: What sources have you found to help illuminate the question you’ve posed? Or perhaps you’ve found a new batch of unexplored sources that will generate a historical question. What are the limitations inherent in your sources and how to you propose to work around them?

7. Bibliography of works consulted: Err on the side of including all works consulted, even if they aren’t quoted in the text (except for basic textbooks or reference works). Divide your bibliography into primary and secondary sources, in that order. You may subdivide these headings if you have a lot of material. For example: (1) Primary Sources: (a) Newspapers and Periodicals, (b) Archival Collections, (c) Interviews/Oral Histories.