LEARNING GOALS
This seminar, meant to familiarize students with the professional study of history, is conceived as an introduction to historical research and writing. Each first year PhD student in History is expected to write a research-based article-length paper by the end of the Spring semester. The goal of this Fall course is to help students conceive this project and make continued progress towards it. Over the course of the semester, each student will

- identify and formulate a research topic
- explore primary and secondary sources
- produce a bibliography
- compose a historiographical essay

By the end of the semester, students are expected to craft a substantial research proposal (12-15 pages), which will be presented and workshopped in peer review sessions at the end of the semester. First-year History PhD students focusing on all fields will work together for these final presentations and discussions.

In addition to strategies and assignments to craft a cogent and successful proposal, we will read a variety of approaches to historical analysis and discuss questions of methodology, historiography, and theory. You will take virtual tours of the GC library and of the NYPL, learn about available electronic databases and archives, and be introduced to professional associations. The course is open to first-year, first-semester PhD students specializing in European and non-US history.

REQUIREMENTS and GRADE BREAKDOWN:

Regular attendance and participation: 15%
Self-reflection assignment: 5%
Assessment of online archives and resources (1-2 pages): ungraded
Oral presentation on professional associations: ungraded
Analysis on primary source use (2-3 pages): 10%
Preliminary annotated bibliography of secondary sources (min. 20 sources): 15%
Historiographic essay (6-8 pages): 20%
Final prospectus (12-15 pages): 35%
NB: All written assignments must be submitted on time. Points will be deducted for late submissions.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

You will need an internet connection and a computer with a camera to take this course.

We will Zoom to connect during our weekly synchronous meetings. You do not need a Zoom account to attend the meetings. Simply click on the class Zoom link (see page 1) a few minutes prior to each meeting. If your Zoom connection becomes unstable during our meeting, you are allowed to switch off your camera. If this happens, I will check periodically that you are still zoomed in.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is mandatory at all online meetings. It is expected that everyone will regularly arrive prepared to discuss the readings assigned for class discussion, and that discussion will be carried out in a collegial and respectful manner in order to promote productive intellectual exchange.

REQUIRED BOOKS (available on the GC online bookstore or from your favorite online bookseller):


Recommended reference tools

Kate Pickering Antonova, *The Essential Guide to Writing History Essays* (Oxford University Press, 2020). It is geared to upper level undergraduates, but it is a helpful resource to conceive a number of history-writing projects. We will not discuss this in class.

Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Although we will not discuss this in class, Turabian’s book and other pages at [https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html](https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html) will be your go-to guide for
bibliography and note styles. All your work should be prepared according to the Chicago Style.

Course schedule:
This schedule is subject to change. Students will be notified in writing of such changes. For the most up-to-date information and activities, always refer to this document and the course site.

WEEK 1 - September 1
Introduction and virtual Mina Rees library tour with Stephen Klein (tour starts at 11:30am)

WEEK 2 - September 8
Genealogies


WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT
Due in class. Self-reflection and genealogies: after reading Eley’s book, elaborate on your decision to become a professional historian (500 words). Why do you want to be a historian, and what led you to this decision? Was there a historian or book that influenced and inspired you? If possible, comment also on the broader context – historical and/or historiographical – of your decision.

WEEK 3: September 15
NYPL virtual tour with Paul Friedman and Tal Nadal (tour starts at 10:30am)

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT
Due by *Friday September 18* at 10:30am. It’s time to start thinking about your primary sources. Identifying your primary sources will take a while, so it is wise to consider the question early on. Begin by familiarizing yourself with online archives and electronic resources. Describe and assess the archives and resources that you think will be especially useful for your work this year (1-2 pages). As you begin thinking about your primary sources, make sure to pay attention also to possible absences, silences, and impossibilities.

WEEK 4 - September 22
Power and Narrative


**ORAL PRESENTATION**
For this in-class presentation you will be assigned two distinct professional associations in advance. After researching them, prepare a short oral report on 1) their stated mission and scope; 2) their activities, as publicized on the association’s website (i.e., conferences, workshops, opportunities for professionalization, etc.); 3) their journals, paying attention to topics addressed in articles published over the past two years, and/or special issues.

**WEEK 5 - September 29: NO CLASS (Monday schedule)**

**WEEK 6 - October 6**
**Historical Subjects or Objects of History?**


**WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT**
Due in class. Preliminary annotated bibliography of secondary sources (at least 20 sources). Entries should follow the Chicago Style, and each entry should include a brief annotation to explain the relevance of the source to your project.

**WEEK 7 - October 13**
**Reconstruction and Invention**


AHR Forum: “The Return of Martin Guerre”


**ASSIGNMENT**: Start analyzing the nature and use of primary sources in a monograph central to your project, in preparation for next week’s written assignment.

**WEEK 8** - October 20

**Against the Grain**


**WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT**

Due in class. Analyze the nature and use of primary sources (2-3 pages) in a monograph central to your project.

**WEEK 9** - October 27

**The Artfully Crafted Essay: Analysis**


**WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT**
Due in class. Historiographic essay (6-8 pp.). Building on your annotated bibliography, this essay shows that you have clearly formulated your research question and understand the major historiographic questions and debates around your chosen topic. While the essay will focus primarily on 3-4 key works, it should also try to create connections with other scholarship in the field. Title and bibliography should be included.

**The final portion of the course will focus on workshopping your prospectuses. Class will be divided into 5 groups (2 students per group). Students in Group 1 must circulate by e-mail a draft of their prospectus to Profs. Bregoli and Robertson (arobertson@gc.cuny.edu) and the class no later than 8pm on Friday, October 30. Everyone must read each other’s drafts and be prepared to discuss them in class (please insert comments electronically and make sure to pass these on to the author at the end of discussion).**

Your draft prospectus should include a title; a contestable, specific, and substantive research question; a discussion of the ways in which your topic is in dialogue with and contributes to previous scholarship; and a bibliography of primary and secondary sources.

**WEEK 10 - November 3**
Peer review and discussion – group 1

**Group 2 prospectuses due by 8pm on Friday, November 6**

**WEEK 11 - November 10**
Peer review and discussion – group 2

**Group 3 prospectuses due by 8pm on Friday, November 13**

**WEEK 12 - November 16**
Peer review and discussion – group 3

**Group 4 prospectuses due by 8pm on Friday, November 20**

**WEEK 13 - November 24**
Peer review and discussion – group 4

**Group 5 prospectuses due by 8pm on Monday November 23**

**WEEK 14 - December 1**
Peer review and discussion – group 5
FINAL PROSPECTUS DUE
Due in class. Your final prospectus should include a title; a contestable, specific, and substantive research question; a discussion of the ways in which your chosen topic arises from, is in dialogue with, and contributes to previous scholarship; and a bibliography of primary and secondary sources.