Falling in love with history often centers around an encounter with primary sources. This is not a course about those. It is, instead, devoted to reading the love letters other historians have already written so as to gain a better understanding of the obsession we share: bringing the past, blinking, into the light. You have undoubtedly already read your share of secondary material as undergraduates. Some of you liked it. Many of you did not. I hope this class will sway some of you doubters into the former category. Because reading historiography as a graduate student—and later, as a faculty member—is not solely about learning the scope and topography of a field, but is instead a means of understanding how other people write, how books come together, how arguments are won—and sometimes lost—in the scope of a single chapter.

For this term, you will of course be improving your knowledge of historiographic approaches and developing an educated sense of the major questions, themes, and problems in premodern history. This will form the basis of your first exam, to be offered at the end of the course, and will provide an important foundation for your oral examinations. But you will also be entering the whirl of voices currently contributing to the field of premodern history and figuring out how new and interesting books emerge from conversations that have been going on for decades. Our field is constantly changing, and I look forward to helping you puzzle out how you too will change it.

A few pieces of advice for the course: do the reading, take notes on the reading, use the notes to inform your participation in class discussions, and then use them again when you write your short papers. Keep the notes. Make sure you head every single entry on a book with the full bibliographic citation. (It will save a lot of time later.) Email me for help when you’re anxious, not when you’re terrified. Do not miss due dates. Remember that this could be fun.

**Weekly short summaries of readings: 30%**

**Presentations: 20%**

**4 Papers: 50%**

**Week One: 8/30**

Mechanics and introductions
Week Two: 9/6


Week Three 9/13 (we will divide the class and each read 1)


Week Four: 9/20 (we will divide the class and each read 1)


Week Five: 9/27 (we will divide the class and each read 1)


**Paper one due over email by 11:59 (covers weeks 1-4)**

Week Six: 10/4


Week Seven: 10/11 (the first book is a survey, but it is exceptionally useful and well done. Keep it for when you are teaching. It is not as important for this class, but I wanted you to have the reference. It is also helpful if you are lack any background in the history of this period. It is not required reading for this class and we will not discuss it.) We will divide the class between Adams and Rose.


**Week Eight: 10/18**


**Week Nine: 10/25** (we will divide the class in half and each read 1)


**Paper Two Due Over Email by 11:59 (covers weeks 5-8)**

**Week Ten: 11/1** (we will divide the class and each read 1)


**Week Eleven: 11/8** (we will divide the class in half and each read one)


**Paper Three Due over Email by 11:59 (covers weeks 6-10)**

**Week Twelve: 11/15** (we will divide the class in half and each read one)


**Week Thirteen: 11/22**

**THANKSGIVING!!**

**Week Fourteen: 11/29** (we will divide the class in half and each read one)


**Week Fifteen: 12/6**

**Conclusions and discussion about the exam**

**Paper 4 due over email by 11:59, covers weeks 11-14**