

UNDERGRADUATE BULLETIN

2021 - 2022

CORE SEMINARS

VOLUME 8 | MARCH 22, 2021

WHAT IS A CORE SEMINAR?

Students in the Major and Medial degree plans in the Department of History enrol in a **core seminar** in the second year. In addition to the subject matter of the courses, the core seminars prepare students for the upper-year seminars by providing in-depth training in historical methods. Students learn techniques of reading different kinds of historical sources, using the library effectively to find primary and secondary sources, and various modes of writing historical essays. The core seminars engage students in discussions on methodology, critical thinking, schools of historiography, academic writing, and presentation skills. Students must secure a minimum of C+ in a core seminar to continue in a Major or Medial plan.

History **seminars** are small classes, limited to fewer than 25 students, and are only available to History Majors and Medials to encourage active discussion among student peers and with instructors. Students value the small learning environment where they can collectively debate and discuss the finer points of historical scholarship with their colleagues and strengthen their communication skills.

In 2021-22, you will select from 9 core seminars available to choose from on a variety of different topics. See the [History Department's Undergraduate Courses](#) web page to view all History courses available in the 2021-2022 year.



HIST 301

Medieval Societies

RICHARD GREENFIELD

The world of Byzantium – that of the ‘other’ Middle Ages of the Eastern Mediterranean – is a fabled and exotic one. If you’ve ever heard of Constantine or Theodora, of Constantinople or Trebizond, of the Hagia Sophia or the Hippodrome, of the Fourth Crusade, of iconoclasts, of eunuch courtiers or pillar saints, and if you’ve ever wondered who or what they really were, this is the course for you!

In the Fall Term, 301 runs concurrently with the lecture HIST 218 Byzantium where students will become generally familiar with key elements of Byzantine history, society and culture as well as its place in the broader medieval world and its relations with and attitudes towards the many diverse peoples, powers, and religions of the regions that surrounded it. In the Winter Term the seminar portion of the course will continue with a more focused study of ways in which Byzantine society helped to shape the world of Europe and the Mediterranean in the medieval period. As a core seminar, the course will have among its primary intended learning outcomes the development of research, analytical, writing and communication skills appropriate to students starting a concentration in History; assignments and practical activities will be directed specifically to this end while being based in exploration of Byzantine history, society and culture through original sources in translation.

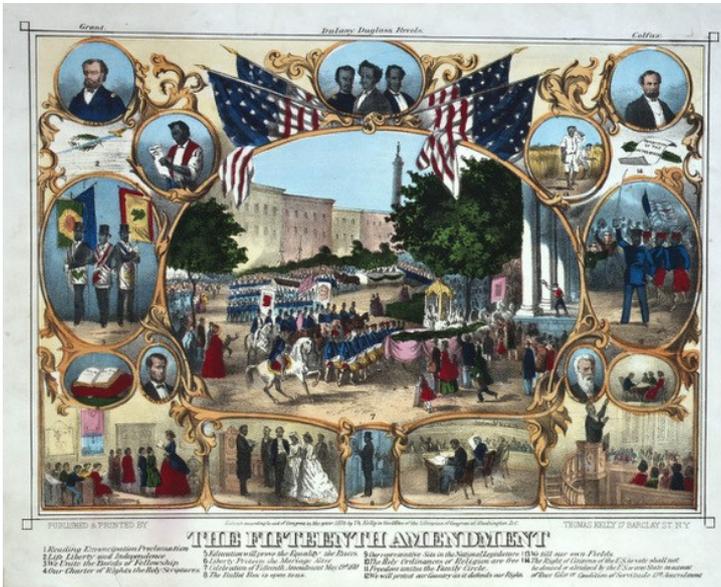
Among topics to be studied during the year will be Constantine and the emergence of a ‘Christian’ empire, the evolution of orthodoxy, Justinian, the coming of Islam and the end of the ancient world, iconoclasm, interaction with the Crusades and the medieval West, the conception and practice of imperial and military power and of justice, the development of Constantinople and the decline of the ancient city, gender construction (masculine, feminine and eunuch), the lives of ‘ordinary’ people, education, health and healing, the construction of sanctity, the practice of monasticism, belief in angels and demons, the place of icons, relics and amulets in religious behavior, and the practice of magic and sorcery.

[Visit the course page on our website to hear Dr. Richard Greenfield tell you more about what you can expect in HIST 301: Medieval Societies](#)



HIST 304 The Civil War and the Making of America

ROSANNE CURRARINO



This seminar examines causes, events and consequences of the Civil War in the United States. It focuses on slavery, antebellum social and political divisions, the experiences of soldiers and civilians during the war itself, Reconstruction's efforts to remake the nation, and the place of the Civil War in American culture since 1877. It also introduces second-year students to the historian's craft, with particular emphasis on analyzing primary documents and examining historiographic debates.

[Visit the course page for HIST 304](#)

HIST 306 Holocaust: Problems & Interpretations

GORDON DUECK

The first half of this course is a lecture that gives a broad overview of the Holocaust, and the second half is a seminar in which the main themes of Holocaust historiography are examined.

Subjects to be covered: the difference between anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism, the origins of the "Jewish problem", European nationalism in the inter-war era, Nazi racial policies before WWII, the rise of the police state, the organization of the concentration camps and death camps, and the victims, perpetrators, and by-standers of the Holocaust.

[Visit the course page for HIST 306](#)



HIST 312

Canadian Social History

LISA PASOLLI

This course provides an introduction to the themes pursued and approaches used by Canadian social historians. In Fall, the course will focus on pre-Confederation history; in Winter, we'll focus the post-Confederation years. We will proceed roughly chronologically, but don't expect a neat and tidy narrative of the Canadian past. Instead, we will be exploring the complexity of histories of race, gender, class, colonialism and sexuality. You can expect to learn about key moments in Canada's past, as well as the tools, methods, and debates that comprise the study of history. In other words, we will explore what we "know" about the social history of Canada, and, just as importantly, how and why we "know" it.



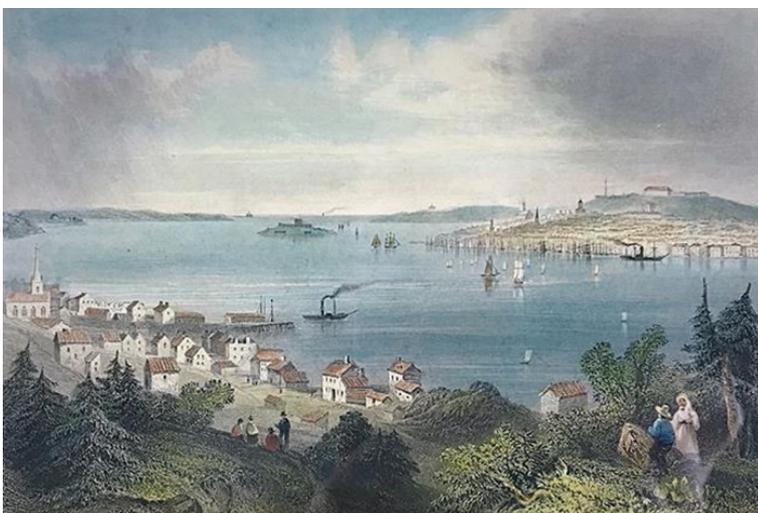
[Visit the course page to hear Dr. Lisa Pasolli tell you more about what you can expect in HIST 312: Canadian Social History](#)

HIST 313 BRITISH NORTH AMERICA

1759-1867

MARTINA HARDWICK

This core seminar in early Canadian history introduces students to a range of topics and scholarship on the British colonies and their diverse populations from roughly the "conquests" of Nova Scotia and Quebec in the mid-eighteenth century to 1870. It has two basic goals. First, it seeks to develop the skills required of history students as readers, researchers, discussants, and writers.



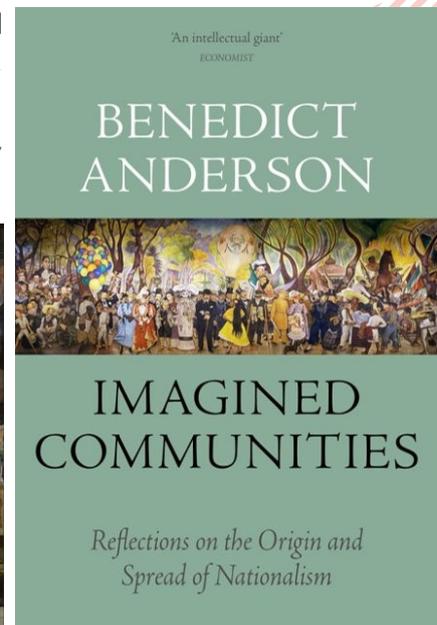
Most weeks involve working with and reading about the different types of evidence (primary sources) that historians use to understand the past. Second, it seeks to introduce students to how narratives about the past are constructed and disseminated in the present. Thus, the relationship between "history" as academic discipline, public commemoration and representation, and the past is explored.

[Visit the course page for HIST 313](#)

HIST 323 EUROPEAN THOUGHT AND CULTURE

ANA SILJAK

An examination of selected themes in the cultural and intellectual history of Europe from 1750 to the present. Literature, poetry, art, and philosophy will be considered in order to discuss the historical origins of themes relevant in the present day: nationalism, liberty, equality, individualism, class, gender, and race.



[Visit the course page for HIST 323](#)

HIST 330 INTRODUCTION TO HISTORIOGRAPHY

DANIEL WOOLF

This seminar is designed to introduce history students to the idea of historiography, taken as both the writing of history and the study and analysis of that writing. Topics include:



- The different meanings of the term historiography
- The history of the practices of researching and writing history both in the Western world and globally
- Seminal ideas about historical processes
- How present-day issues and concerns affect the writing of history
- The work of select prominent historians from antiquity to the twentieth century
- Key concepts in historical thinking
- Historical errors and fallacies
- The use of counterfactual thinking
- How historical works come into existence
- Alternative approaches to the past

The course will include what may be described as practical elements, and discussions of how the historical “discipline” or profession is organized institutionally. Students will learn how to develop a bibliography, search for sources, evaluate and criticize a historical article, differentiate among historical arguments and positions, write a book review, use an archive, the limitations of course, and the process of peer review. **[Visit the course page to hear Dr. Daniel Woolf tell you more about what you can expect in HIST 330 Introduction to Historiography](#)**