

# IS 289-1: History, Media, and Technology

Tuesdays, 1:30-5

GSE&IS Building 121

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 11-1 or by appointment

**Course Description:** Welcome to History, Media, and Technology! In this course we will explore the intersection of New Media and technology – which can include documentaries, virtual exhibitions and archives, open source encyclopedias, television, GIS technologies, videogaming and much more – with contemporary historical representation. Scholars are currently struggling to devise a working set of evaluative criteria for these representations that still accounts for traditional historiographic methodology. Too often the rush to incorporate new technology has the detrimental effect of overshadowing historical content, which may jeopardize the progress of scholarship and education.

Rather than jump from one historical period to another, the core of this course will focus on modern twentieth century history, in particular, the Holocaust and the Cold War. Both periods have become points of contention in historical representation, not only for their sensitive subject matter, but also for the unprecedented availability of archival source materials such as oral testimonies, video, and official records. The access (and at times critical restrictions) to this wealth of materials further complicates historical reconstruction.

This seminar will thus explore the intersection of scholastic, public, and digital histories as they appear in contemporary society. It will pay close attention to applying basic historiographic principles to the evaluation of history-based media and new information technologies, considering both their scholarship and pedagogical value.

## Course Requirements

This is a discussion-based seminar, and as such, participation is critical for its success. I have selected a set of readings that should provide a working understanding of the current historiographic issues and debates; I strongly recommend, however, if you feel you need further background that you come see me and I will suggest further readings.

**Class Participation: 20%.** This not only includes in-class discussion, but also periodic submissions to our Moodle site according to discussion topics.

**Assignments: 30%.**

The following assignments are intended to guide you through the process of composing a strong final paper, and to avoid drafting the paper at the last possible moment. Although it is not mandatory, I **strongly** recommend that you visit me during office hours to discuss your topic. This will provide me an opportunity to approve your project, offer any guidance in sources to obtain, and answer any questions you may have.

Assignment #1 (5%): Written proposal (at least 4 full pages), due Week 3 in class. In this paper, you will state the historical representation you wish to analyze, any background materials you

have already obtained, questions you would like to explore, as well as possible arguments or conclusions you intend to draw.

Assignment #2 (5%): Critique of U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum online exhibition (at least 3 full pages), due Week 5 in class. Select one exhibition (there are many to choose from!) and analyze its educational/informational value in relation to its design elements, similar to the expectations of your final paper.

Assignment #3 (10%): Annotated Bibliography, at **least** 10 sources, due in class in Week 8. For your final paper you are expected to become fluent in three specific areas: your historical representation, the specific historical period or question that it addresses, and the design or form elements that contribute to the representation's composition (for example, a specific documentary filmmaking technique or a new technology or program such as Google Earth). For each source, please provide a brief summary along with how the particular source will be used to support your thesis argument. Do you agree with the argument(s) presented in the source, or do you plan to refute all or part of it? Sources need not all be full monographs, but may include journal articles, (credible) websites, and other secondary **credible** materials – Wikipedia entries will not suffice! Your bibliography should be comprised accordingly:

- At least 4 secondary sources associated with your historical period. These works should represent the most recent literature on your topic, and cover multiple points of view. For example, if your representation covers the Auschwitz concentration camp, your secondary literature should reflect the historiographic arguments surrounding the camp. A general Holocaust reader in this case will probably not suffice; there are plenty of articles and monographs that delve specifically into all aspects of the camp. I would suggest beginning your search in electronic databases such as JSTOR, which will lead you to additional sources through the articles' footnotes and bibliographies.
- At least 4 secondary sources associated with your representation's form. If your representation is a documentary film, you may want to explore a particular film or editing technique that is employed by the film. If your film happens to be produced, for example, by CNN, you may want to explore the influence of CNN on communicating historical information. Be creative in your approach to your representation!
- Any sources directly linked to your representation. If there is literature or materials that directly reference your representation, you should include them in your analysis. This may include scholarly secondary literature, as well as news stories, user reviews/comments, or discussions by the authors or creators.

Assignment #4 (10%): Final Presentation, Week 10. This presentation should be **no more** than 10 minutes length. The presentation should include a summary of your final paper's thesis argument. You may want show a brief clip or portion of your representation to illustrate your points to the class. Otherwise, the presentation should not be a fancy set of bells and whistles.

**Final Paper: 50%.** The final paper, at least 20 full pages, will be an evaluation of an historical representation of your choice. The representation you select must pertain to either the Holocaust or the Cold War, although this still leaves plenty of room for creativity. For example, your selection will likely cover a sub-period/topic within either period, such as a single battle or event during the Vietnam War, or a particular concentration camp from the Holocaust. Please refer to the Paper Guidelines for details on the expectations for the paper. Ultimately, the paper should be an opportunity for you to explore an idea or topic that you find most interesting... and enjoyable!

## Course Materials

### Required Books (Available at the Luvalle book store except the course reader)

Geis, Deborah R., ed. *Considering Maus: Approaches to Art Spiegelman's "Survivor's Tale" Of the Holocaust*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003.

Spiegelman, Art. *The Complete Maus: A Survivor's Tale*: Pantheon, 1996.

Linenthal, Edward T. *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America's Holocaust Museum*. New York: Viking, 1995.

Weissman, Gary. *Fantasies of Witnessing: Postwar Efforts to Experience the Holocaust*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004.

Knowles, Anne Kelly, ed. *Placing History: How Maps, Spatial Data, and GIS Are Changing Historical Scholarship*. Redlands, CA: ESRI Press, 2008.

Stokes, Gale. *The Walls Came Tumbling Down: The Collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Course Reader: Available at Course Reader Material on Westwood Blvd.

## Class Schedule

### Week 1: Introduction: USHMM Google Earth

### Week 2: Historical Information Science

#### Historical Practice

Boonstra, Onno, Leen Breure, and Peter Doorn. "Past, Present and Future of Historical Information Science." (2004). This may be found online as a pdf.

#### Holocaust and Cold War Historiography (Course Reader)

Bauer, Yehuda. *Rethinking the Holocaust*, Chapters 1-2. 1-38. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001.

Gaddis, John Lewis. "On Starting All over Again: A Naive Approach to the Study of the Cold War." In *Reviewing the Cold War: Approaches, Interpretations, and Theory*, edited by Odd Arne Westad, 27-42. London: Frank Cass, 2000.

Ferguson, Yale, and Rey Koslowski. "Culture, International Relations Theory, and Cold War History." In *Reviewing the Cold War: Approaches, Interpretations, and Theory*, edited by Odd Arne Westad, 149-79. London: Frank Cass, 2000.

Leffler, Melvyn P. "Bringing It Together: The Parts and the Whole." In *Reviewing the Cold War: Approaches, Interpretations, and Theory*, edited by Odd Arne Westad, 43-63. London: Frank Cass, 2000.

### **Week 3: Oral Testimony and the Documentary: Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah***

Liebman, Stuart, ed. *Claude Lanzmann's Shoah: Key Essays*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. Selections: 3-50, 113-124, 135-148, 191-230. (Course Reader)

Weissman, Gary. *Fantasies of Witnessing: Postwar Efforts to Experience the Holocaust*. 140-244. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004.

VIEWING: Part I of *Shoah*

Assignment #1 due in class.

### **Week 4: Graphic (Nonfiction?) Storytelling: *Maus: A Survivor's Tale***

Geis, Deborah R., ed. *Considering Maus: Approaches to Art Spiegelman's "Survivor's Tale" Of the Holocaust*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003.

READING: Spiegelman, Art. *The Complete Maus: A Survivor's Tale*: Pantheon, 1996.

### **Week 5: Memorializing the Past: The U.S. Holocaust Museum**

Linenthal, Edward T. *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America's Holocaust Museum*. New York: Viking, 1995.

VIEWING: <http://www.ushmm.org/>

Assignment #2 due in class.

### **Week 6: The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Museum and Archive: The Wende Museum**

Stokes, Gale. *The Walls Came Tumbling Down: The Collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

TRIP TO WENDE MUSEUM

### **Week 7: Holiday (We will schedule a make-up session that will be an opportunity to return to issues, representations, topics that you would like to discuss).**

### **Week 8: Web 2.0 Historical Education: *Making the History of 1989* (Articles below are available either in the Course Reader or online)**

Barlow, Jeffrey G. "Historical Research and Electronic Evidence: Problems and Promises." In *Writing, Teaching, and Researching History in the Electronic Age: Historians and Computers*, edited by Dennis A. Trinkle, 194-223. Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1998.

Staley, David J. "From Writing to Associative Assemblages: "History" In an Electronic Culture." In *Writing, Teaching, and Researching History in the Electronic Age: Historians and Computers*, edited by Dennis A. Trinkle, 5-13. Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1998.

Kelly, T. Mills. "Using New Media to Teach East European History." *Nationalities Papers* 29, no. 3 (2001). <http://chnm.gmu.edu/resources/essays/d/16>.

Rosenzweig, Roy. "Can History Be Open Source? Wikipedia and the Future of the Past." *The Journal of American History* 93, no. 1 (2006): 117-46.

<http://chnm.gmu.edu/resources/essays/d/42>.

Rosenzweig, Roy. "Digital Archives Are a Gift of Wisdom to Be Used Wisely." *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 51, no. 42 (2005). <http://chnm.gmu.edu/resources/essays/d/32>.

Cohen, Daniel. "The Future of Preserving the Past." *The Journal of Heritage Stewardship* 2, no. 2 (2005). <http://chnm.gmu.edu/resources/essays/d/39>.

VIEWING: *Making the History of 1989*. <http://chnm.gmu.edu/1989/>.

### **Week 9: GIS and Geotemporal Reconstructions: The UCLA Experiential Technologies Center**

Knowles, Anne Kelly, ed. *Placing History: How Maps, Spatial Data, and GIS Are Changing Historical Scholarship*. Redlands, CA: ESRI Press, 2008.

TRIP: UCLA Experiential Technologies Center

### **Week 10: Student Presentations**

## Final Paper Guidelines

The following is a series of guidelines for composing your final paper. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to come talk to me.

- You must include a title page that is separate from the final page count of your paper. The title should reflect your paper's thesis argument and it should grab the reader's attention. "Final Paper: IS 289" is unacceptable!
- Your paper should be at least 20 full pages, double-spaced, 1" margins all-around, Times Roman, 12 pt font.
- You should include page numbers in the header.
- Your introduction should grab the reader's attention. There are a number of techniques to do this: you may begin with an anecdote or passage from your representation, or even a single quote. The introductory paragraph(s) should not conclude with a thesis statement.
- You must conclude the introductory section with a thesis paragraph. This paragraph will contain the argument you will prove in the rest of the paper. A thesis argument is not a statement of fact, your opinion, or simply a summary of your historical representation. A thesis argument is provable with evidence that you acquired from your bibliographic sources.
- Your paper should be clearly marked with sections. Each section should in some way support your thesis argument. Section headings should be clearly marked in bold and should introduce the topic of the section.
- \*\*Your paper should not spend a copious amount of space summarizing or describing your representation. This is not a satisfactory analysis. You should only summarize/describe those elements or aspects that go towards proving your larger argument.
- Your conclusion section should do more than simply restate your argument, it should also offer something new in terms of future analysis of the historical topic, representation, media form, or some combination of the three.
- All references should be cited as footnotes. You may use either MLA or Chicago style. All resources used must also be included in a bibliography (also not part of the final page count).
- Finally, your paper should give equal weight to both the historical issue and form elements relevant to your representation. The key to the paper, and the purpose of the course overall is to evaluate how historical information interacts with contemporary representational forms. This relationship should guide every aspect of your project from choosing a representation rich with analytical possibilities to the final framework of your paper and class presentation.

The more specific and focused you choose to make your argument, the better your paper will be. You may choose to analyze a single passage or element of your representation rather than cover the entire representation. This will enable you to select more specific bibliographic references which in turn will tighten and strengthen your overall thesis argument.