

Philosophy of History: The Structure of Historical Explanation

Instructor: Robert J. Richards

Hist. 25000/35000

Philos. 20600/30600

HiPSS 27200, CHSS 37800

Course Assistant: P.-J. Benson

Tuesdays: 3:00-5:20

This lecture-discussion course will focus on the nature of historical explanation and the role of narrative in providing an understanding of historical events. The following books for the course will be found in the Seminary Cooperative Bookstore (5757 S. University). The photo-copies can be purchased in the Fishbein Center, Social Science Building, room 207.

I. Books for the course:

Collingwood, R. G., *The Idea of History*, revised edition, with Introduction by Jan van der Dussen (Oxford). A few copies available; this is also included in packet of photo-copies (see below)

Danto, Arthur, *Narration and Knowledge* (Columbia)

Selected Readings in Philosophy of History, packet of photo-copies

II. Course Requirements:

A. The selections for each class must be thoroughly read, and everyone should be prepared to discuss the material.

B. In the second half of each class, one or two students will present position papers on the reading material. These papers should develop some problem or central aspect of the reading and take a pro or con position in respect to the material developed. These should not be summaries of the reading, but the articulation of an important thesis contained therein and a critical stance in respect of that thesis. These papers must not be any longer than two pages. They should be sent to the instructor via the Chalk program on the Monday before class, by 12:00 p.m. The instructor will then send it out to the entire class. During the second half of the class the students will have about 5 minutes to summarize their papers, after which we will talk about the issues.

C. Four five-to-eight-page papers that deal with some problem in the reading. The papers should be turned into the secretary in the Fishbein Center (Social Sciences Research Building, room 205) on Mondays, according to the following schedule:

1. On the readings in sections II-III, due October 9th
2. On the readings in sections IV-V, due October 23rd
3. On the readings in sections VI-VII, due November 6th
4. On the readings in sections VIII-X, due November 27th

III. Office hours: TT, 1:30-3:00 p.m. (and by appointment), Social Science Research Building, room 205.

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I. Introduction: The Accomplishment of Gibbon.

II. Romantic Philosophy of History: External Law and Internal Freedom.

A. Immanuel Kant, "Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View" (1784). In *Selected Readings in Philosophy of History*.

B. Friedrich Schiller, "The Nature and Value of Universal History" (1788). In *Selected Readings in Philosophy of History*.

C. Wilhelm von Humboldt, "On the Historians Task" (1821). In *Selected Readings in Philosophy of History*.

D. R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (1946), pp. 86-105.

III. Historicism

A. Wilhelm Dilthey: "The Formation of the Historical World in the Human Studies" (1883). In *Selected Readings in Philosophy of History*.

B. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, pp. 165-176.

IV. The Concept of Historical Reality

A. Heinrich Rickert, "Concept Formation in History," in *The Limits of Concept Formation in Natural Science* (1902). In *Selected Readings in Philosophy of History*.

V. History as Rethinking the Thoughts behind Events:

A. R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, pp. 1-13; 205-302.

VI. History of *La longue durée*

A. F. Braudel, "Preface" to *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, from his *On History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980). In *Selected Readings in Philosophy of History*.

B. F. Furet, "From Narrative History to Problem-Oriented History," from his *In the Workshop of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984). In *Selected Readings in Philosophy of History*.

C. F. Braudel, "History and the Social Sciences," from *On History*. In *Selected Readings in Philosophy of History*.

D. W. Dray, "Narrative versus Analysis in History," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 15 (1985): 125-45. In *Selected Readings in Philosophy of History*.

VII. Natural Scientific and Historical Explanation

A. C. Hempel, "The Function of General Laws in History," *Journal of Philosophy* (1942). In *Selected Readings in Philosophy of History*.

B. J. H. Hexter, "The Rhetoric of History," *History and Theory* 6 (1967). In *Selected Readings in Philosophy of History*.

C. Robert J. Richards, "The Structure of Narrative Explanation in History and Biology," in *History and Evolution*, eds. M. Nitecki and D. Nitecki (SUNY, 1992).

VIII. Philosophic Analysis of Historical Explanation

A. Danto, *Narration and Knowledge*, pp. ix-33; 88-182; 201-56

IX. History as Narrative.

A. Lawrence Stone, "The Revival of Narrative," *Past and Present* (1979). In *Selected Readings in Philosophy of History*.

B. H. White, "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact," *Tropics of Discourse* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1978). In *Selected Readings in Philosophy of History*.

C. Carr, "Narrative and the Real World: An Argument for Continuity," *History and Theory* 15 (1986): 117-31. In *Selected Readings in Philosophy of History*.

X. The Contemporary Moment: Objectivity and Truth in History

A. Hayden White, "Historical Emplotment and the Problem of Truth in Historical Representation," in *Figural Realism* (Johns Hopkins Press, 1999).

B. Peter Novick, "The Center Will not Hold," *That Noble Dream* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). In *Selected Readings in Philosophy of History*.