FALL 2012
HIRG 200A:
HISTORY AND THEORY

Instructor: Frank Biess
Section 1: Wed 1pm-3.50pm, HSS 5086 (Section 1)
Section 2: Wed 5pm-7.50pm, HSS 6008 (Section 2)

Course Description:
This course provides an introduction to major theoretical approaches in the historical profession during the last several decades. The seminar is organized around a series of analytical concepts that have informed critical debates in historiography. We will analyze a particular concept each week, but then also consider how these analytical categories interacted. The readings consist of classical texts by major thinkers (Marx, Freud, Geertz, Foucault) as well as practical historiographical applications of these theoretical ideas. One goal of the seminar is to assess ongoing relevance of these theoretical concepts for historians in the present and in the future (that is, for you!).

Course Requirements.
This will be a small, reading based course. Attendance and active participation are crucial. Each student will be responsible for introducing one set of readings. This presentation should not only entail a summary of the readings’ main arguments but also offer a critical evaluation of their strengths and weaknesses as well as pose some questions for the discussion. Writing assignments consists of weekly response papers (starting in Week 2) that include a brief summary of one the weekly readings (250-300 words) plus three discussion questions that emerge from the readings (also 250-300 words). These discussion questions should be fairly substantial, draw on all of the texts discussed in each week, and reflect a deep engagement with the issues raised in the readings. The reading questions should be posted on the course website by Tuesday evening, 8 pm. The final assignment consists of a review essay of 3-4 books, which were informed by one (or several) of the theoretical approaches discussed in the class. You should discuss the selection of these books with me but you can also consult with your advisors in your field. The essay should be 12-15 pages long, and should be sent to me via e-mail by Dec. 11, 4 pm.

Course Readings:
Students should purchase a copy of the following books. I ordered them for the UCSD bookstore, but they are also readily available on Amazon.com (sometimes also used for considerably less money). They will also be on reserve at Geisel Library. Additional readings will be available on e-reserve (password: “fb200”)

Geoff Eley, A Crooked Line. From Cultural History to the History of Society
Sigmund Freud, The Future of an Illusion
Ruth Harris, Lourdes. Body and Spirit in the Secular Age
Dipesh Chakraparty, Provincializing Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference
Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction
Ann Stoler, Race and the Education of Desire. Foucault’s History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things
Michel-Rolph Trouillot, Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History
Carolyn Steedman, Landscape of a Good Woman. A Story of Two Lives
Lynn Hunt, Inventing Human Rights: A History
Samuel Moyn, The Last Utopia. Human Rights in History

Schedule:

Week 1 (Oct 3): Introduction


Week 2 (October 10): Class


Week 3 (October 17): Culture


**Week 4 (October 24): Religion**

Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*

Dipesh Chakraperty, * Provincializing Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, pp.47-113


**Week 5 (October 31): Gender**


Joan Scott, “The Tip of the Volcano,” *ibid.*, 438-44

Laura Lee Downs, “Reply to Joan Scott,” *ibid.*, 444-51


**Week 6 (November 7) Sexuality**
Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, An Introduction. Vol.1*


**Week 7 (November 14): Race**

Ann Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire. Foucault’s History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things*


**Week 8 (November 21): Emotions**

Carolyn Kay Steedman, *Landscape for a Good Woman. A Story of Two Lives*


**Week 9: (November 28): (Post)colonialism**

Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, pp. 1-108


Partha Chatterjee, “The Nation and its Peasants,” in *ibid.*, 8-23


**Week 10: (December 5): Rights**

