

General Description

HSTR 500 explores some of the political, theoretical, and methodological issues of the discipline. Major goals include:

1. To understand where the study of history comes from. Individuals have been memorializing the past for thousands of years in a written form. Why do we write history the way we do?
2. To explore the varieties of history. Since the 1950s and especially post-1970, the historical discipline has vastly expanded its scope. Topics that had not been systematically explored before such as race, gender, and transnational/postcolonial identities have been opened to inquiry. A second aim of the course is to understand the range of ways that historians have studied the past and to consider how historians today can frame their research projects. Or, am I social historian, a military historian or something else entirely?
3. To confront fundamental questions in the philosophy of history. Historians have always asked fundamental questions about evidence, truth, accuracy and usefulness. The line between history as fiction versus history as science are issues that each generation of historians addresses in different ways. Or, is discovering the truth about the past part of what historians do?

Marking Scheme

Class participation	30%
Four short analytical essays	35%
Final essay	35%