

**University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Department of History**

**History 701. History in a Global Perspective:  
“Comparison in History”**

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Office Hours: Monday 1-3

History 701 has three broad goals. First, to encourage you to think about history and about your work from a global perspective. Second, to introduce you to faculty outside your area of study and incite you to work with a spectrum of historians during your studies. And finally, to promote a greater sense of intellectual and personal community among graduate students and foster links among students in different fields.

This year the seminar will focus on comparison in history. Comparison is essential to place your own work (and the research of others) in a global perspective. Why and how does one compare, and to what end? What is to be gained by comparison and what are the problems associated with it? How does comparing help historians in a wide variety of temporal and thematic fields think about their materials in fresh and novel ways? Historians have often called for more comparing and more comparative history, with modest results. Why is this so?

While most of you will not become comparative historians the vast majority of you will practice comparison in order to situate and define your work. The seminar will introduce you to how history department faculty approach about the process of comparison, and evaluate its problems and pitfalls.

Given the size of the class (20 + students) and the limited time at our disposal (50 minutes per week) our discussions will be suggestive and illustrative rather than comprehensive. The goal is to help all students think about new questions and approaches. Like every course you will take while in Madison, what you get out of the seminar is dependent on the investment you make in it.

**Requirements and class mechanics:**

We meet on Thursdays from 12:05 to 12:55 in the Curti Lounge. Please arrive a few minutes early so that we may begin on time. Most seminars will be led by a faculty member who will discuss a topic or methodology related to comparing. Readings consist of one or two articles chosen by the visiting faculty, and will be posted on the class Learn@UW page one week in advance. Guests will speak for approximately 15 minutes and we will then open up the floor to questions and debate. Your participation is essential. The requirements for this course are modest. Do the readings and come to seminar prepared with questions. In addition, you should:

- Write up a 2 page research proposal that is comparative in nature (due December 19. )
- Write short reflections about the readings or about the faculty presentation and seminar. Your comments can take the form of a short critique, a series of questions, or an evaluation of the texts. I'm looking for no more than one paragraph (7-10 lines). Your comments should be posted on the class "discussion" site by the Friday following our seminar. Please post comments for 8 of the 12 weeks of readings and presentations.

**Grading** is based on attendance (please notify me if you will be absent; an unreasonable number of absences will be noted), contributions to discussion (both written and oral), and your research proposal.

**History 701 website:** *Go to your Learn@UW → locate your class list and click History 701 → then click on "content" (for the readings) or "Discussion" (to post your comments) in the upper left hand corner.*

September 8. Laird Boswell. Introduction. Should Historians Compare and to What End?

Peter Baldwin, "Comparing and Generalizing: Why all History is Comparative, Yet No History is Sociology" in Deborah Cohen and Maura O'Connor eds., *Comparison and History: Europe in Cross-National Perspective* (Routledge, 2004), 1-22, 41-56.

September 15. Leonora Neville. Comparing Religions

Jonathan Z. Smith, *Drugery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (University of Chicago Press, 1990), 36-53, 85-115.

September 22. Louise Young. Comparing Empires: the Japanese Case

Mark R. Peattie, "introduction" to Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie, *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895-1945*, 3-51.

September 29. David McDonald. Comparing Empires--Russian vs. "European" Colonialism in the Nineteenth Century

"Forum: Colonialism and Technocracy at the End of the Tsarist Era," *Slavic Review* (Spring 2010): 120-188. The forum is comprised of four articles. Prof.

McDonald suggest you pay attention to the articles in following order of emphasis: Sunderland, Geraci comment, Holquist, and his comment.

October 6. Steve Stern. Human Rights History: The Dilemma of Coordinating Comparative and Global Analysis

Steve Stern, *Reckoning with Pinochet: The Memory Question in Democratic Chile, 1898-2006* (Duke University Press, 2010), 357-386; and afterword to Chapter 2, 99-105.

October 13. Lee Palmer Wandel. Ways of Knowing

Greg Downey, "Seeing with a 'Sideways Glance': Visuomotor 'Knowing' and the Plasticity of Perception," in Mark Harris ed., *Ways of Knowing: Anthropological Approaches to Crafting Experience and Knowledge* (Berghahn Books, 2007): 222-241.

October 20. Leslie Abadie and Christine Lamberson: Managing time to degree and crafting a CV as an emerging scholar

October 27. Suzanne Desan. Comparisons in the Age of Revolutions.

Jeremy Adelman, "An Age of Imperial Revolutions," *American Historical Review* 113 (2008): 319-340; Maya Jasanoff, "Revolutionary Exiles: The American Loyalist and French Emigré Diasporas," in David Armitage and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, eds., *The Age of Revolutions in Global Context, c. 1760-1840* (Palgrave-Macmillan, 2010), 37-58.

November 3. Colleen Dunlavy. How not to Compare Apples and Oranges

Readings TBA

November 10. Sana Aiyar. Anticolonial Resistance and the Making of Nations: Connection and Comparison in Colonial History.

Frederick Cooper "Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History" *American Historical Review* (December 1994)

November 17. Laird Boswell. Comparing Genocide

Round Table on The Nazi Holocaust and the Rwandan Genocide: William F. S. Miles, "The Politics of Comparison," and Catherine Newbury and David Newbury, "The Genocide in Rwanda and the Holocaust in Germany: Parallels and Pitfalls," *Journal of Genocide Research* no. 5 (2003): 131-154; Scott Straus, "The Promise and Limits of Comparison: The Holocaust and the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda," in Alan S. Rosenbaum, ed., *Is the Holocaust Unique? Perspectives on Comparative Genocide* (Westview Press, 2009), 245-257; Review Forum on

Mark Levene, *Genocide in the Age of the Nation State*, in *Journal of Genocide Research* no. 9 (2007), 113-118.

November 24. Thanksgiving

December 1. Steve Kantrowitz. The 'Race Relations' Paradigm and U.S.-South Africa Comparisons

Colin Bundy, "Comparatively Speaking: Kas Maine and South African Agrarian History," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 23, no. 2 (1997): 363-370.

December 8. Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen. Worldviews and the World of Ideas.

Daniel Immerwahr, "Caste or Colony? Indianizing Race in the United States," *Modern Intellectual History* 4:2 (2007), 275-301.

December 15. Joe Dennis. Comparing the History of Chinese and European Print Cultures

Readings TBA