

Syllabus

Office Hours: MW 3-4 and by appointment

Email: thomasbehr@earthlink.net (spam filter, put HIST 4395 in Subject Line)

Description: This class is “historiographical” in that we will be reading our selected historians from classical Greece and Rome mainly as practitioners of the historians craft, considered somewhat ahistorically and more philosophically. Aristotle held a pretty low opinion of historians—let’s see why!

Learning Outcomes: We have a double objective here: One, we will be looking to understand how various founders of the historical discipline considered the nature of their work: in the material, efficient, formal, and final senses. Two, we will be looking to see if those writings still have anything to tell us about ourselves or the world today.

Required Texts:

Cicero, *On the Commonwealth & On Laws* Cambridge University Press / 0-5214-5959-1

Eusebius, *The History of the Church* Penguin / 0-140-44535-8

Herodotus, *The History* University of Chicago Press / 0-226-32772-8

Livy, *Early History of Rome* 2nd pb Penguin Classics / 0-1404-4809-8 No

Plutarch, *Plutarch's Lives*, Vol. 1&2 Modern Library/ 0375756760 & 0375756779

Polybius, *The Rise of the Roman Empire* Penguin / 0-140-44362-2

Tacitus, *The Agricola and The Germani* Penguin / 0-140-44241-3

Tacitus, *The Annals* Hackett / 0-8722-0558-4

Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War: Landmark Edition* Free Press / 0684827905

Xenophon, *A History of My Times* Penguin / 0-140-44175-1

Useful:

R. Morkot, *Penguin Historical Atlas of Greece* Penguin / 0140513353

C. Scarre, *Penguin Historical Atlas of Rome* Penguin / 0140513299

Assessment:

Pre-views (10 out of 11) 70%

Discussion (prep & part) 10%

Final 20%

Pre-views: Writings on each of the assigned selections of readings, due in class on the day we are scheduled to discuss those selections. 3-5 pages, typed, double-spaced, 750 to 1250 words. Points to explicitly cover in each essay:

- 1) What is the author’s point? (i.e. why has he undertaken to write the thing? why has he chosen the subject he has? what does he want people to learn?) and
- 2) What are the author’s philosophical-religious assumptions (huh!?), and how are those manifested in the author’s methodology (in research *and* in presentation)? (i.e. what are his metaphysical, anthropological, and ethical/political assumptions, and how does his selection of events, explanation of causality, and narrative strategy connect with those?)

Reading Schedule:

- 1/17 Introductions
- 1/24 Herodotus I
- 1/31 Herodotus II
- 2/7 Thucydides I
- 2/14 Thucydides II
- 2/21 Xenophon
- 2/28 Polybius
- 3/7 Cicero
- 3/14 Otium! (<http://www.epicurus.net/en/otium.html>)**
- 3/21 Livy
- 3/28 Tacitus I
- 4/4 Tacitus II
- 4/11 Plutarch
- 4/18 Eusebius
- 4/25 Conclusions

Miscellany:

Students with disabilities need to present formal documentation from the Center for Students with Disabilities before the first assignments, further information available here -- <http://www.uh.edu/csd/documentation.htm>

Plagiarism or other cheating on the exams will be reported and penalized. For further information about Academic Honesty, the Academic Calendar, Religious Holy Days, and Disabilities, refer to -- http://www.uh.edu/provost/stu/stu_syllabsuppl.html