Course Title: Historical Ideas and Methods
Course Code: HST2101
No. of Credits/Term: 3
Mode of Tuition: Sectional
Class Contact Hours: 3
Category in Major Program: Required
Prerequisites/co-requisites: None
Exclusions: None

Brief Course Description
The course focuses on historiography, at the same time introducing students to the basic technical aspects of research and writing. The course is part of a two-semester required sequence for History majors (HST 101 and 103, the first focusing on secondary sources for the study of history, the second on primary sources). The course will acquaint students with a range of historical approaches and methodologies, while at the same time laying the necessary foundation in organization and composition to succeed at more advanced courses.

Indicative Content
The course is divided into three sections:
(1) The first section provides students with the basic research skills with secondary sources.

(2) The second section is an introduction to historical methodologies and, at the same time, an overview of History’s sub-disciplines (cultural history, environmental history, etc.), with a special focus on the evolution of historical practices over the last two centuries. This overview of the history of modern historiography is complemented with an introduction to the most influential concepts and models used by historians and social scientists.

(3) The third section of the course will enable students to put into practice the knowledge, ability and skills learned in the first two sections, through the close reading a monograph and discussing it with the instructor.

Learning Outcomes
Section 1: Basic Research Skills with Secondary Sources. At the end of this section students will be able to
(1a) recognize different kinds of sources for historical research;
(1b) find secondary source materials in libraries and in online databases, and effectively assess their usefulness for their current research;
(1c) produce a scholarly apparatus in their text (a bibliography and footnotes referencing their
sources, written according to the main styles used in historical scholarly literature);

(1d) avoid plagiarism in academic writing;

Section 2: History of Modern Historiography. At the end of this section students will be able to

(2a) explain the evolution of modern historiography and some of the main social theory concepts used by historians;
(2b) place a work of history in the evolution of historiography;
(2c) situate a work of history among history’s sub-disciplines;
(2d) compare and contrast history’s main methodological issues and challenges;
(2e) use in their writings some of the main social theory concepts used by historians;

Section 3: Close Reading of a Monograph

At the end of this section students will be able to

(3a) explain how historical arguments are constructed, the relations between texts written by historians and their primary and secondary sources, and how to distinguish the historian’s “voice” from those of other historian he/she quotes, summarizes or paraphrases, and from those of his/her primary sources;
(3b) engage critically with different secondary sources on the same topic, based not only on their arguments, but also on the different primary and secondary sources historians use to make their arguments;
(3c) summarize the main historical issues at the centre of the chosen monograph.

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

Students will

Task 1. Undertake two quizzes or “reading checks” aimed to measure students’ command of information from lectures and readings; this will help the instructor to calibrate the teaching process. The quizzes will be focused on the historiographical section of the course (assessing LOs: 2a, 2d);

Task 2. Undertake exercises in order to assess command of proper style conventions in bibliographies and footnotes (assessing LOs: 1a, 1c);

Task 3. Undertake exercises in order to assess command of proper citation techniques and of how to paraphrase, summarize and properly quote a secondary source (assessing LO: 1d);

Task 4. Actively participate in instructor-led discussions about the required readings; this will
measure appreciation of historical methodology, and the students’ critical interpretive skills (assessing LOs: 2b, 2c, 2d, 3a, 3b);

Task 5. Independently research new readings to be presented orally (see Task 6 below). The chosen texts allow them to put into context, historically and within the historiography, the topic of a specific chapter of the monograph read during the course (assessing LOs: 1a, 1b);

Task 6. Present orally in the classroom, summarizing the argument of the chosen texts (see Task 5 above), and explain why and how it can be used to better understand, contextualize, or contrast the monograph author’s argument (assessing LOs: 3a, 3b);

Task 7. Submit a term paper at the end of the course to measure analytical and writing skills. The paper will focus of one of the topics touched in the monograph, and should put it into context of one of the different historiographical approaches presented by the instructor throughout the course. The basic bibliography for the final paper will be provided by the 16-17 (depending on the number of students in the class) journal articles chosen, presented and discussed by the students during the course (assessing LOs: 2b, 2c, 2d, 2e, 3a, 3b, 3c).

Assessment
The course is 100% continuous assessment.

Indicatively, the following is the relative weight of the different assessment methods:

**Exercises**  \(\text{(Tasks no. 2 and 3)}\)  10%

**Oral presentation**  \(\text{(Tasks no. 5 and 6)}\)  15%

**In-class discussion participation**  \(\text{(Task no. 4)}\)  15%

**Quizzes**  \(\text{(Task no. 1)}\)  20%

**Term paper**  \(\text{(Task no. 7)}\)  40%
**Required Readings**

An historical monograph, which varies over the years.


**Reference works**


**Optional Readings**

