

## History 667: Problems in Cultural History

University of Delaware  
David Suisman  
Office: Munroe 118  
Email: dsuisman@udel.edu  
Office hours: Thurs. 11-12 and 3-4, and by appointment

Department of History  
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Tues. 7-10pm  
Munroe 203

In the last three decades “the new cultural history” has moved to the center of the historical discipline, presenting a host of new possibilities as well as new challenges. It has brought pressure to bear on older historical methodologies and opened up exciting new avenues of research and analysis. And it has stimulated heated controversy among historians about its methods and results.

This seminar will explore cultural history from a variety of angles, considering it in both its “old” and “new” varieties, and with special attention to the relationship between its Americanist and Europeanist iterations.

### Books

The following books are available through the UD Bookstore. They are all also available on reserve at Morris Library.

- Peter Burke, *What Is Cultural History?*, 2nd ed. (Polity, 2008).
- David M. Potter, *People of Plenty: Economic Abundance and the American Character* (University Of Chicago Press, 1958).
- Warren Susman, *Culture as History*, 2nd ed. (Smithsonian, 2003).
- Lawrence Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Harvard University Press, 1990).
- Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (University Of Chicago Press, 1992).
- Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (University Of Chicago Press, 1996).
- Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents: Dime Novels and Working Class Culture in America*, 2nd ed. (Verso, 1998).
- Mary A. Renda, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915-1940* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2001).
- Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double-Consciousness* (Harvard University Press, 1993).
- Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, (Columbia University Press, 1996).
- Jean-Christophe Agnew, *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theater in Anglo-American Thought, 1550-1750* (Cambridge University Press, 1988).
- Alain Corbin, *The Foul and the Fragrant: Odor and the French Social Imagination* (Harvard University Press, 1988).

- Barry Shank, *A Token of My Affection: Greeting Cards and American Business Culture* (Columbia University Press, 2004).
- Geoff Eley, *A Crooked Line: From Cultural History to the History of Society* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005).

Other readings will be available via Sakai, JSTOR, or History Cooperative. These are indicated on the syllabus *S*, *J*, and *HC*, respectively.

### **Requirements and Assignments**

1. *Attendance and Participation.* You will be expected to attend all class sessions and to participate actively. This will require you to have completed all reading assignments and to have thought about them before class. (40%)
2. *Discussion Questions.* Twice during the semester you will be asked to prepare discussion questions for the class. There is no fixed or expected number, but something in the range of six to eight questions might be appropriate. Please circulate these questions via email not less than twenty-four hours before class. The first time you do this, you will collaborate with a partner; the second time you will be on your own.
3. *Critical Response papers.* You will be asked to write six two-page critical response paper. In these papers it is expected that you will react and comment on the week's readings, i.e., not merely summarize them or recapitulate their arguments. You should be thinking about the major issues (historiographical, methodological, theoretical) that the week's readings raise and how they relate to major themes of the course. These papers are *ungraded* but required. ¶ You can choose which weeks you would like to submit your response papers. The only stipulation is that three papers must be completed before spring break, and three must come after spring break.
4. *Mid-term Paper.* This paper shall be a critical analysis of one week's readings (of your choosing) in the first half of the course, framed in terms of that week's designated topic. In order not to sacrifice depth for breadth, you may limit your focus to three readings if a given week's assignment includes more than that. Six to eight pages. Due: Tuesday, Mar. 23. (20%)
5. *Historiographic essay.* Your final paper for the course shall be a historiographic essay, either on a given topic or on a major cultural theorist (Hall, Bakhtin, Gramsci, Adorno, etc.). Topics should be approved by the instructor. Length: 3,500-5,000 words, i.e. 14-20 pages. One-page description of topic with preliminary bibliography: due Tuesday, April 20, in class. Final paper: due Monday, May 24, 10 a.m. (40%)

**Course calendar**

Abbreviations: Sakai (S); JStor (J); Project Muse (M); whole book (B)

**2/9/10**

**Week 1: Introduction / Foundations****Required:**

- Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (Oxford University Press, 1985), 87-93 S
- William H. Sewell, "The Concept(s) of Culture," in *Practicing History: New Directions in Historical Writing*, ed. Gabrielle M. Spiegel, (Routledge, 2005), 76-95. S
- Peter Burke, *What Is Cultural History?*, 2nd ed. (Polity, 2008). B
- James W. Cook and Lawrence Glickman, "Twelve Propositions for a History of U.S. Cultural History," in *The Cultural Turn in U.S. History: Past, Present, and Future*, ed. James W. Cook, Lawrence B. Glickman, and Michael O'Malley (University of Chicago Press, 2008), 3-57. S

**Supplemental:**

- Robert Brightman, "Forget Culture: Replacement, Transcendence, Relexification," *Cultural Anthropology* 10, no. 4 (1995): 509–546 J
- Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780-1950* (Columbia University Press, 1958). B
- Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (Columbia University Press, 1961). B
- Terry Eagleton, *The Idea of Culture* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2000). B

**2/16/10**

**Week 2: The Old Cultural History****Required:**

- Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860; Penguin Classics, 1990), selections (table of contents; pt. 1, "Introduction"; pt. 2, all; pt. 3, "Introduction,;" pt. 4, "Discovery of Man," "Description of the Outward Man"; pt. 5, "Costumes and Fashions," "Language and Society"). S
- Johan Huizinga, *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*, Paperback. (1919; University Of Chicago Press, 1997), table of contents; ch. 1, 9, 11-14. S
- Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, rev. ed., trans. Edmund Jephcott, ed. Eric Dunning, Johan Goudsblom, and Stephen Mennell (1939; Blackwell, 2000), selections (table of contents; preface; pt. 2, "Civilization as a Specific Transformation of Human Behavior," sec. 1-6, 8-10; pt. 4, "Synopsis: Towards a Theory of Civilizing Processes," sec. 1-8). S

**Supplemental:**

- E. H Gombrich, "In Search of Cultural History," in *Ideals and Idols:* S

- Essays on Values in History and in Art* (EP Dutton, 1979), 24-59.
- Johan Huizinga, "The Task of Cultural History," in *Men and Ideas: History, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance*, trans. James S. Holmes and Hans van Marle (Meridian, 1959), 17-76. S
  - Caroline F. Ware, *The Cultural Approach to History* (1940; Gordon Press, 1974) B
  - Donald R Kelley, "The Old Cultural History," *History of the Human Sciences* 9 (1996): 101–126. S

**2/23/10**

**Week 3: American Studies**

**Required:**

- David M. Potter, *People of Plenty: Economic Abundance and the American Character* (University Of Chicago Press, 1958). B
- Warren Susman, *Culture as History* (Pantheon, 1984). B

**Supplemental:**

- Elaine Tyler May, "The Radical Roots of American Studies," *American Quarterly* 48, no. 2 (1996): 179–200. J
- Alan Trachtenberg, "Myth and Symbol," *Massachusetts Review* 25, no. 4 (1984): 667–673. J
- Merle Curti, *The Growth of American Thought*, 3rd ed. (Harper & Row, 1964). B
- John Higham, "Intellectual History and Its Neighbors," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 15, no. 3 (1954): 339–347. J

**3/2/10**

**Week 4: Anthropology, Crowds, Ritual**

**Required:**

- E. P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," *Past & Present* (1971): 76–136. J
- E. P. Thompson, "Folklore, Anthropology, and Social History," *Indian Historical Review* 3 (1977): 247-66. S
- Natalie Zemon Davis, "The Rites of Violence," in *Society and Culture in Early Modern France: Eight Essays* (Stanford University Press, 1975), 152-88. S
- E. P. Thompson, "Time, Work-discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," *Past & Present* 38, no. 1 (1967): 56-97. J
- Herbert Gutman, *Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America: Essays in American Working-Class and Social History* (Vintage Books, 1977). (Selections) S

**Supplemental:**

- Raymond Williams, “Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory,” in *Rethinking Popular Culture: Contemporary Perspectives in Cultural Studies*, ed. Chandra Mukerji and Michael Schudson (Univ. of California Press, 1991), 407-23. S
- George Rudé, *The Crowd in History: A Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England, 1730-1848* (Wiley, 1964). B
- Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (Routledge, 1966). B
- Victor Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* (Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1982). B
- Herbert Gutman, *Power & Culture: Essays on the American Working Class*, (Pantheon, 1987). B

**3/9/10**

**Week 5: Geertz and the Historians**

**Required:**

- Clifford Geertz, “Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight,” in *The Interpretation Of Cultures* (Basic Books, 1977), 412-53. S
- Robert Darnton, “Workers Revolt: The Great Cat Massacre in the Rue Saint-Severin,” in *The Great Cat Massacre: And Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (Basic Books, 2009), 75-104. S
- Roger Chartier, “Text, Symbols, and Frenchness,” *Journal of Modern History* 57, no. 4 (1985): 682–695. J
- Robert Darnton, “The Symbolic Element in History,” *Journal of Modern History* 58, no. 1 (1986): 218–234. J
- Dominick LaCapra, “Chartier, Darnton, and the Great Symbol Massacre,” *Journal of Modern History* 60, no. 1 (1988): 95–112. J

**Supplemental:**

- James Fernandez, “Historians Tell Tales: Of Cartesian Cats and Gallic Cockfights,” *Journal of Modern History* (1988): 113–127. J
- Clifford Geertz, “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture,” in *The Interpretation Of Cultures* (Basic Books, 1977), 3-30. S
- Jean-Christophe Agnew, “History and Anthropology: Scenes from a Marriage,” *Yale Journal of Criticism* 3, no. 2 (1990): 29–50. S
- Marshall Sahlins, “Other Times, Other Customs: The Anthropology of History,” *American Anthropologist* 85, no. 3 (1983): 517–544. J
- Clifford Geertz, “History and Anthropology,” *New Literary History* 21, no. 2 (1990): 321–335. J
- Renato Rosaldo, “Response to Geertz,” *New Literary History* 21, no. 2 (Winter 1990): 337-341. J
- Aletta Biersack, “Local Knowledge, Local History: Geertz and Beyond,” in *The New Cultural History*, ed. Lynn Hunt (University of California Press, 1989), 72-96. S

3/16/10

**Week 6: Taste and Power****Required:**

- Lawrence Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Harvard University Press, 1990). B
- Leora Auslander, *Taste and Power: Furnishing Modern France* (University of California Press, 1996), 1-34, 141-6, 255-9. S
- Pierre Bourdieu, "Distinction & The Aristocracy of Culture," in *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader*, ed. John Storey, 2nd ed. (Pearson/Prentice Hall, 1998), 431-41, orig. pubd. in *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Harvard University Press, 1987). S

**Supplemental:**

- Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1912; Oxford University Press, 2007). B
- Russell Lynes, *The Tastemakers* (Harper, 1954). B
- Carl Wilson, *Let's Talk About Love: A Journey to the End of Taste* (Continuum, 2007). B

3/23/10

**Week 7: The Mass Culture Debates – The Frankfurt School and Beyond****Required:**

- Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility (Third Version)," in Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, trans. Edmund Jephcott and Harry Zohn (Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), 4:251-283. S
- Theodor W. Adorno, "On the Fetish-Character in Music and the Regression of Listening (1938)," in *Essays on Music*, ed. Richard Leppert (Univ. of California Press, 2002), 288-317. S
- Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception," in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947; Stanford University Press, 2007). S
- T. J. Jackson Lears, "From Salvation to Self-realization: Advertising and the Therapeutic Roots of the Consumer Culture, 1880-1930," in *The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History 1880-1980*, ed. Richard Fox and T. J. Jackson Lears (Pantheon, 1983). S
- Lizabeth Cohen, "Encountering Mass Culture at the Grassroots: The Experience of Chicago Workers in the 1920s," *American Quarterly* (1989): 6-33. J
- Charles McGovern, *Sold American: Consumption and Citizenship, 1890-1945* (University of North Carolina Press, 2006), ch 1. S

**Supplemental:**

- Theodor W. Adorno and Anson G. Rabinbach, "Culture Industry Reconsidered," *New German Critique*, no. 6 (Autumn 1975): 12-19. J
- Andreas Huyssen, "Adorno in Reverse: From Hollywood to Richard Wagner," *New German Critique*, no. 29 (Spring - Summer 1983): 8-38. J
- James W. Cook, "The Return of the Culture Industry," in *The Cultural Turn in U.S. History: Past, Present, and Future*, ed. James Cook, Lawrence Glickman, and Michael O'Malley (University of Chicago Press, 2008), 3-57. S
- Vanessa Schwartz, "Walter Benjamin for Historians," *American Historical Review* (2001): 1721-1743. J
- William Leach, *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture*, 1st ed. (Pantheon Books, 1993). B
- Michael Kammen, *American Culture, American Tastes: Social Change and the 20th Century* (Knopf, 1999). B

**3/30/10****Week 8: Spring Break****4/6/10****Week 9: In the Shadow of Foucault****Required:**

- Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (University Of Chicago Press, 1992). B
- Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (University Of Chicago Press, 1996). B

**Supplemental:**

- Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (Harvester Press, 1980). B
- Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (Vintage, 1984). S
- Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (Tavistock, 1970). B
- Patricia O'Brien, "Michel Foucault's History of Culture," in *The New Cultural History*, ed. Lynn Hunt (University of California Press, 1989), 25-46. S

**4/13/10****Week 10: Cultural Studies****Required:**

- Stuart Hall, "Notes on Deconstructing 'the Popular'," in *Cultural Theory* S

*and Popular Culture: A Reader*, ed. John Storey, 2nd ed. (Pearson/Prentice Hall, 1998), 442-53, orig. pubd. in *People's History and Socialist Theory*, ed. Raphael Samuel (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981).

- Stuart Hall, "Encoding, Decoding," in *The Cultural Studies Reader*, ed. Simon During (London: Routledge, 1993), 90-103, orig. pubd. in Stuart Hall and et al., eds., *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972-79* (Hutchinson, 1980). S
- George Lipsitz, "Popular Culture: This Ain't No Sideshow," in *Time Passages: Collective Memory and American Popular Culture* (University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 3-20. S
- Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents: Dime Novels and Working Class Culture in America*, 2nd ed. (Verso, 1998). B

**Supplemental:**

- Antonio Gramsci, *An Antonio Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings, 1916-1935*, (Schocken Books, 1988). B
- Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula A Treichler, eds., *Cultural Studies* (Routledge, 1992). B

**4/20/10**

**Week 11: Culture and Empire**

**Required:**

- Amy Kaplan, "'Left Alone with America': The Absence of Empire in the Study of American Culture," in *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, ed. Amy Kaplan and Donald E Pease, *New Americanists* (Duke University Press, 1993), 3-21. S
- Mary A. Renda, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915-1940* (University of North Carolina Press, 2001). B

**Supplemental:**

- Edward W Said, *Orientalism* (Pantheon Books, 1978). B
- Edward W Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (Knopf, 1993). B
- Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East Since 1945* (University of California Press, 2005). B
- Robert W Rydell, *Buffalo Bill in Bologna: The Americanization of the World, 1869-1922* (University of Chicago Press, 2005). B

**4/27/10**

**Week 12: Postcolonialism**

**Required:**

- W. J. T. Mitchell, "Translator Translated: Interview with Cultural Theorist Homi Bhabha," *Artforum* 33, no. 7 (1995): 80-84. S
- Hazel Carby, "Proletarian or Revolutionary Literature: C. L. R. James and the Politics of the Trinidadian Renaissance," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 87 S



(1988): 39-52.

- Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double-Consciousness* (Harvard University Press, 1993). B

**Supplemental:**

- Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (Grove Press, 1965).
- Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (Grove Press, 1967).
- Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271-313. S
- Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton University Press, 2000). B
- Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (Routledge, 1995). B
- Robert J. C. Young, *Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, USA, 2003). B

5/4/10

**Week 13: Performance**

**Required:**

- Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead* (Columbia University Press, 1996). B
- Jean-Christophe Agnew, *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theater in Anglo-American Thought, 1550-1750* (Cambridge University Press, 1988). B

**Supplemental:**

- Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Anchor, 1959). B
- Peter Burke, "Performing History: The Importance of Occasions," *Rethinking History* 9, no. 1 (2005): 35-52. S
- Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Indiana University Press, 1984). B
- Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (Oxford University Press, 1995). B
- Karen Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-class Culture in America, 1830-1870* (Yale University Press, 1986). B
- Karen Sotiropoulos, *Staging Race: Black Performers in Turn of the Century America* (Harvard University Press, 2006). B

5/11/10

**Week 14: Sense and Sentiment**

**Required:**

- Alain Corbin, *The Foul and the Fragrant: Odor and the French Social* B

- Imagination* (Harvard University Press, 1988).
- Barry Shank, *A Token of My Affection: Greeting Cards and American Business Culture* (Columbia University Press, 2004). B

**Supplemental:**

- Raymond Williams, "Structure of Feeling," in *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford University Press, 1977). S
- Alain Corbin, *Time, Desire and Horror: Towards a History of the Senses* (Polity, 1995). B
- David Suisman, "Introduction: Thinking Historically about Sound and Sense," in *Sound in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, ed. David Suisman and Susan Strasser (University of Penn Press, 2010) S
- Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (Viking, 1985). B
- Emily Thompson, *The Soundscape of Modernity: Architectural Acoustics and the Culture of Listening in America, 1900-1933* (MIT Press, 2004). B
- Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (MIT Press, 2001). B
- Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the 19th Century* (MIT Press, 1992). B
- Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (University of California Press, 1994). B
- William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge University Press, 2001). B
- Sarah Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution* (University of North Carolina Press, 2009). B

**5/18/10**

**Week 15: Whither Cultural History**

**Required:**

- Geoff Eley, *A Crooked Line: From Cultural History to the History of Society* (University of Michigan Press, 2005). B
- "Introduction," *American Historical Review* 113, no. 2 (April 1, 2008): 391-392. \*
- William H. Sewell, "Crooked Lines," *American Historical Review* 113, no. 2 (2008): 393-405. \*
- Gabrielle M. Spiegel, "Comment on A Crooked Line," *American Historical Review* 113, no. 2 (2008): 406-416. \*
- Manu Goswami, "Remembering the Future," *American Historical Review* 113, no. 2 (2008): 417-424. \*
- Geoff Eley, "The Profane and Imperfect World of Historiography," *American Historical Review* 113, no. 2 (2008): 425-437. \*

\* To access these articles, search for *American Historical Review* in Delcat and click through to the Univ. of Chicago Press website

**Supplemental:**

- William Sewell, *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation* (University of Chicago Press, 2005).

B