

MYSTERIOUS HISTORIES

Seminar on History and Religion

(SARS 433, RELS-465)

Fall Semester 2003
Wednesday 2-5pm
Location: TBA

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Course Synopsis:

“[History] aims at calming the dead who still haunt the present,
and at offering them scriptural tombs.”
Michel de Certeau

“Many academics may live in enclaves of irony,
but most Americans believe in angels.”
Kerwin Klein

Requirements: You’re required to attend all classes, read all materials carefully and thoughtfully, and engage with the subject matter in class and in your writing. This means that during class you’re expected to participate enthusiastically and outside of class to complete your readings conscientiously. Each week you’ll be asked to compose a **short reaction** paper; you can send this to me electronically. In addition, for at least one class in the semester, you’ll give **an informal presentation** on the readings and assist in leading discussion for the remainder of the class. At the end of the term, **undergraduate** students write a **twelve to fifteen (12-15) page paper** on a subject of your choice, which should be printed and submitted; **no electronic submissions**. **Graduate** students will write an essay relevant to their dissertation thesis.

Grading: Fifteen percent (15%) of your grade will depend on your attendance and the quality of your classroom participation; twenty percent (20%) will be based on the quality of your weekly reaction papers; twenty-five (25%) percent will depend on your day(s) of presentation and leading discussion; and forty percent (40%) will hinge on your final paper.

Materials: The required books listed below are available at House of Our Own for purchase. A bulkpack will be available at the Wharton Copy Shop. You are also required to purchase the

bulkpack and bring readings to class. The required texts, films, and other readings **not** in the bulkpack will be on reserve at Rosengarten.

Require books available at House of Our Own:

Gold, Ann Grodzins. 2002. *In the Time of Trees and Sorrows: Nature, Power, and Memory in Rajasthan.*

Hegel, G. W. F. 1837. *The Philosophy of History.*

Rushdie, Salman. 1989. *The Satanic Verses.*

Syllabus

Week One—Introduction

Read “Sultan Muzaffar’s Chronicler of Events,” by Naiyer Masud, translated by Aditya Behl.

Discuss the content and aims of the course. Review the syllabus.

Week Two—Hegel, History, and The Fairy Region

Read selections from *The Philosophy of History*: “Introduction” [1-79]; “Part I: Principle of the Oriental World” [111-115]; “Section II. India” [139-166].

Week Three—History and Religion

Read the First Half of *Satanic Verses* by Salman Rushdie

Week Four—Religion and History

Finish *Satanic Verses*.

Week Five—Memory, History and Religion in the Euro-American World—Part I

Read “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire” by Pierre Nora in *Representations*, Vol. 0, Issue 26, Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory (Spring, 1989): 7-24.

Week Six—Memory, History and Religion in the Euro-American World—Part II

Read “Memory and History: Liturgical Time and Historical Time” by Gabrielle M. Spiegel in *History and Theory* 41 (May 2002): 149-162.

One hour screening of parts of the documentary *Shoah*.

Week Seven—Religion and Modernity

Read “Introduction” and “Genealogies” [1-26; 27-82] from *Genealogies of Religion* by Talal Asad.

Week Eight—History and Hinduism

Read “Mimamsa and the Problem of History in Traditional India,” by Sheldon Pollock in *The Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Volume 109, Issue 4 (Oct.-Dec., 1989): 603-610.

Read “Imagined Religious Communities? Ancient History and the Modern Search for a Hindu Identity,” by Romila Thapar in *Modern Asian Studies*, Volume 23, Issue 2 (1989): 209-231.

Week Nine—History and India

Read “History as a Sign of the Modern,” by Nicholas Dirks in *Public Culture*, Volume 2, Number 2, Spring, 1990.

Read “Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for ‘Indian’ Pasts?” by Dipesh Chakrabarty in *A Subaltern Studies Reader 1986-1995*, edited by Ranajit Guha, 1995.

Week Ten—Trauma, History, and Nations Part I

In Class showing of Deepa Mehta’s *Earth* and discussion.

Week Eleven—Trauma, History, and Nations Part II

In Class showing of Anand Patwardhan’s *Father, Son, and Holy War*.

Week Twelve—Memory, Gender, and History in South Asia

Read selections from *In The Time of Trees and Sorrows* by Ann Gold.

Weeks Thirteen and Fourteen: Papers Workshop