COURSE DESCRIPTION: This class is an interdisciplinary investigation of the interrelationships among (1) discursive and material representations of the past, (2) systems for measuring intervals or cycles of time, (3) the preservation or invention of cultural traditions, and (4) social and cognitive processes of remembering and forgetting. After exploring various concepts of historical agency across a number of scholarly disciplines and the methodological role of the temporal dimension in the theoretical work of historians and non-historians, we turn to a survey of changing notions of history and temporality from ancient Mesopotamia to contemporary post-modernity. This provides the foundation for the study of four comparative cases (Hawaii, Palau, Aztec, Inka) that illustrate the multiple linkages between social organization, temporal consciousness, and historical representation. Finally, the creative manipulation of the past is examined in readings dealing with the invention of tradition, its material embodiment in museums and monuments, and collective processes of remembering and forgetting.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES: There are four graded requirements for this course: regular attendance and active, informed participation in class discussion (20%); a midterm writing assignment based on the readings in Parts One and Two (20%); one or more in-class presentations of the assigned readings (20%); a final research paper (about 10 pages for undergraduates, about 15 pages for graduate students) on a topic selected in consultation with the instructor (40%). Assignments are due on the date assigned; unexcused late work will be subject to a one-third letter grade deduction. Extensions are automatically granted for circumstances beyond student control equal to the number of academic work days lost. Please restrict the use of laptops and other portable electronic devices during class time to course-related activities. Your registration in this course implies that you will follow the university’s policies for maintaining academic integrity, as outlined in Section 4 of the Rights and Responsibilities document.

FINAL RESEARCH PAPER: A principal graded requirement for the course is a research paper dealing with the intersection of at least two of our four analytical variables: history (or, the past), temporality (or, calendrical systems), tradition (or, custom), and memory (or, forgetting) in some specific or comparative social, historical, linguistic, artistic, or ethnographic context. Your paper needs to demonstrate that you have engaged with relevant readings on the syllabus, using the results of your research to support, supplement, or challenge the arguments of these readings. To the degree possible it is always advisable to rely on some primary data (textual, archaeological,
material, iconographic, musical, etc.) but in the span of a one-semester class I realize that you will, in many cases, need to rely on data collected or compiled by other scholars. Paper topics should be discussed with the instructor no later than the sixth week of the semester.

ORAL PRESENTATIONS: Oral presentations should be about ten minutes long and should include the following: (1) briefly remind the class what the article/chapter you have selected is about (just so everyone is on the same page); (2) explain why you think this reading fits into the set of readings assigned for the day (e.g., perhaps it engages one or more of the other readings or perhaps it is a specific example of a theme introduced in another reading); (3) mention technical terms that are either new to you or common words used by the author with specific meanings (especially terms you don’t fully grasp); (4) formulate two questions that you would like to ask the author (and which will hopefully stimulate class discussion).

READINGS: Class time will be devoted to detailed, critical discussion of the assigned readings. The readings listed below represent the maximal assignments; the list will be modified to fit the interests and skills of the students in the class. There are two paperback textbooks for the class; all other readings are posted on LATTE. Readings that are indented in a smaller font are supplementary to the required assignments.

TEXTBOOKS: The following paperback textbooks are available for purchase at the bookstore:
(1) Marshall Sahlins, Islands of History.
(2) Eric Hobsbawn and Terence Ranger, eds., The Invention of Tradition.

SPECIAL NOTE: If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately.

PART ONE: THINKING HISTORICALLY

Unit 1: Clues, Evidence, and Signs: What Is History?


Unit 2: Historiography in Historical Perspective


Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum* [selections].
Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* [selections].
Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Historia Regum Britanniae* [selections].

Aaron Gurevich, “Saga and History: The ‘Historical Conception’ of Snorri Sturluson,” *The Historical Anthropology of the Middle Ages*, 103-115.

PART TWO: HISTORY AND TEMPORALITY

Unit 3: Temporality within History


Jacques LeGoff, "Merchants’ Time and Church's Time in the Middle Ages," *Time, Work and Culture in the Middle Ages*, 29-42.


**Unit 4: Time outside History**


M. M. Bakhtin, “Forms of Time and the Chronotope in the Novel,” *The Dialogic Imagination* [part only], 158-258.


PART THREE: HISTORICAL DISCOURSE

**Unit 5: History as Historia: Figures, Tropes, and Narratives**

Erich Auerbach, “Figura” [1944], *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature*, 11-76.


**Unit 6: Whose History? Agency, Voice, and Ownership**


**PART FOUR: FOUR CROSS-CULTURAL CASE STUDIES**

**Unit 7: Structure and History in Ancient Polynesia**


**Unit 8: Signs of History, Signs in History: Myth and History in Palau** [Guest lecturer: Uchermelis er a Ngeremlengui]


**Unit 9: Aztec Myth, Ritual, and Calendar** [Guest lecturer: Javier Urcid]


**Unit 10: Space, Transformation and Prophecy in Inca History**


**PART FIVE: THE PAST INVENTED, EMBODIED, AND REMEMBERED**

**Unit 11: The Past Invented, Performed, and Represented**


Unit 12: The Past Embodied: Memorials, Monuments, and Museums


Unit 13: The Past Remembered or Forgotten


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