Is the writing of history a science or an art? Is history writing just another form of literature? Can there ever be such a thing as “undiscovered history”, or do we arbitrarily select incidents from the stream of events and weave them into a narrative that is presented as truth? Whether history repeats itself, historians certainly do repeat each other. In this course we will read selections from both famous and forgotten historians who have been addressing these questions over the past 250 years.

Our basic textbook will be Fritz Stern, *The Varieties of History from Voltaire to the Present (2nd edn, London, 1970)*, but often we will be supplementing those short selections with further pages from the original books, all of which will be available on LATTE, or via internet links.

■ 14 Jan / 16 Jan: Introduction

■ 21 Jan:
** Voltaire (1694-1778), 'On History: Advice to a Journalist' and 'Letter to Abbé Dubos' (30 October 1738) and *Siècle de Louis XIV* (1751), introduction and 'On the Usefulness of History' [all of the above in Stern, *Varieties, I.1]*
** Pierre Force, 'Voltaire and the Necessity of Modern History', *Modern Intellectual History*, 6 (2009), 457-484: [https://doi.org/10.1017/S147924430999014X](https://doi.org/10.1017/S147924430999014X)

■ 23 Jan:
** Edward Gibbon (1737-94), *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (London, 1776-88), chapter 68 (on the fall of Constantinople, 1453): [https://www.ccel.org/g/gibbon/decline/volume2/chap68.htm](https://www.ccel.org/g/gibbon/decline/volume2/chap68.htm)

■ 28 Jan:
** Isaiah Berlin, 'The Counter-Enlightenment', in *Against the Current* (London, 1979), chapter 1: [http://berlin.wolf.ox.ac.uk/published_works/ac/counter-enlightenment.pdf](http://berlin.wolf.ox.ac.uk/published_works/ac/counter-enlightenment.pdf)
30 Jan:
** Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886), Geschichten der romanischen und germanischen Völker von 1494 bis 1514 (1824) ... and two fragments [in Stern, Varieties, I.3]

4 Feb:
  ** Herbert Butterfield, The Whig Interpretation of History (1931):
  https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/bd1f/6956d18953146b43394b06f1341b66f8cc99.pdf

6 Feb:
** Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), ‘On History’ (1830) and On Heroes and Hero Worship and the Heroic in History (1841) [in Stern, Varieties, I.6]

FIRST SHORT PAPER DUE

11 Feb:
** Jules Michelet (1798-1874), The People [in Stern, Varieties, I.7]

13 Feb:

25 Feb:

27 Feb:
** Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), 'On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life' (1874): http://www.leudar.com/library/On%20the%20Use%20and%20Abuse%20of%20History.pdf

3 Mar:
** Theodor Mommsen (1817-1903), [Rectorial Address] (1905) [in Stern, Varieties, I.12]

5 Mar:
** Frederick Jackson Turner (1861-1932), 'The Significance of History' (1891) [in Stern, Varieties, I.13]

10 Mar:

> **12 Mar:**

SECOND SHORT PAPER DUE

> **17 Mar:**

> **19 Mar:**
> **Andrew Dickson White** (1832-1918), *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom* (New York, 1896), based on earlier edition called *The Warfare of Science* (New York, 1876), pp. v-xii (introduction), ii. 120-130, and table of contents for both volumes (i. and ii): https://archive.org/details/historyofwarfare189701whit/page/n2 and https://archive.org/details/historyofwarfare189702whit/page/n9


> **24 Mar:**

> **26 Mar:**

> **31 Mar:**
> ...now in a new English translation by R.J. Paton and U. Mammitzsch as *The Autumn of the Middle Ages* (Chicago, 1996).

2 Apr:


7 Apr:

**Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning* (London, 1605), Book I, from 'In the entrance to the former' to 'unwisely mingle or confound these learnings together.' [http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etext04/adlr10.txt]

**Stephen Greenblatt, 'Marlowe and the Will to Absolute Play', in his *Renaissance Self-Fashioning From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago & London, 1980), chapter 5: on LATTE


21 Apr:


23 Apr:


28 Apr:

**Learning Goals:**
1. To learn how to perform ‘close reading’ of key texts in the history of ideas.
2. To develop research skills.
3. To appreciate the ethos of historical research and writing: never accept what anyone says until you have seen and understood the original source.
4. To be able to express the results of your reading and thinking in academic form and written in an approachable literary style.
5. To engage with the intellects of some of the world’s great modern historians.

**Prerequisites:** none.

**Changes to the Syllabus** … due to snow days or the natural evolution of discussion in class: check your messages to see if this has happened.

**Summary of Requirements:** Two short papers (5-7 pages) (30%); informed class participation, (30%); and final research paper of 15-20 pages (40%); **RESEARCH PAPER DUE ON THE LAST DAY OF CLASS.** Success in this four-credit course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for exams, etc.). As this is a seminar, lively discussion is crucial in order to make it a valuable experience. I expect you to come to class each day with a printed page on which you have written what you think are the key issues in the texts we are reading and how you relate to them. You may be called upon to share your thoughts with your fellow students. Furthermore, each session will have a designated ‘discussion leader’, someone who has read more carefully and thought more deeply about the day’s material.

**Research Paper:** Perhaps the most useful life-skill you learn by studying history is the ability to do research. This means not just looking up the subject on Google, but finding and exploiting the raw materials of history, both primary and secondary, organizing and crafting your findings into a well-written literary construction including footnote source citation in a uniform style. We will need to meet individually at least once to focus on a topic, and to agree on a basic outline. I will be available for guidance as your work evolves.

**Plagiarism** will not be tolerated in any form. Professors develop a keen eye for nuances of language and tone that give away even the most subtle of cut-and-paste attempts. You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. Please consult Brandeis University Rights and Responsibilities for all policies and procedures related to academic integrity. Students may be required to submit work to TurnItIn.com software to verify originality. Allegations of alleged academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the Director of Academic Integrity. Sanctions for academic dishonesty can include failing grades and/or suspension from the university. Citation and research assistance can be found at LTS - Library guides.
**Attendance:** This is a seminar: attendance is mandatory and will be recorded. Students will be permitted a maximum of two unexcused absences, after which the overall participation grade will be lowered by 1/3 of a letter grade for each day missed. Excused absences, which require notes from University Health Services or resident deans, must be discussed with me. Please be on time, and don’t leave early. If it happens too often, it will affect your grade.

**ABOUT NOT LEAVING YOU TO YOUR OWN DEVICES: NO COMPUTERS IN CLASS.** I notice that some students become very pious in seminars: they have their hands together and bow their heads, as if praying. I suspect they may be looking at their phones. Many students using laptops pretend to listen but are actually checking their email, looking at WhatsApp, scrolling through Facebook, and laughing at YouTubes of hamsters wearing hats. A study showed that students seated near laptop users were also **negatively affected**, like people sitting next to smokers. A study by a [team of professors](#) at the US Military Academy showed that students who used tablets or laptops did not do as well as students in sections where electronics were banned. There is much evidence showing that taking notes on your computer is not a good way to learn. If you have a documented learning issue for which you require a device, please come talk to me to discuss this.

**OFFICE HOURS:** My office hours are Tuesdays, 2-3 PM. That being said, I try to be at the University most days, so email me and perhaps we can find a time to meet that suits us both. The best way to get in touch with me is by email: davidkatz@brandeis.edu.

Brandeis seeks to welcome and include all students. If you are a student who needs accommodations as outlined in an accommodations letter, please talk with me and present your letter of accommodation as soon as you can. I want to support you. In order to provide test accommodations, I need the letter more than 48 hours in advance. I want to provide for your accommodations, but cannot do so retroactively. If you have questions about documenting a disability or requesting accommodations, please contact Student Accessibility Support (SAS) at 781.736.3470 or access@brandeis.edu.

If you are having difficulty purchasing course materials, please make an appointment with your Student Financial Services or Academic Services advisor to discuss possible funding options and/or textbook alternatives.