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History and Social Science Seminar Syllabus

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HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE SEMINAR

History 450 | Spring 1985 | Dr. Samson

Course Description

A survey of historical writing and philosophies of history. Practice in methodology of research. Required of all history and social studies majors.

Reading Material

Norman F. Cantor and Richard I. Schneider, How to Study History
D. W. Bebbington, Patterns in History: A Christian View
Frances Fitzgerald, America Revised
Rousas John Rushdoony, The One and the Many
Kate L. Turabian, A Manual for Writers (recommended)
Readings on Reserve (as assigned)

Term Schedule

I. Introduction to Historiography--January 31-February 12

Organization
General Discussion: What Is History?
Topics for Oral Reports and Historiographic Essays
Reading Assignment: Cantor and Schneider, How to Study History, chs. 1-6
Bebbington, Patterns in History, ch. 1
E. H. Carr, What is History? ch. 1
Carl Becker, "Everyman His Own Historian"
Charles W. Ramsdell, "Lincoln and Fort Sumter"

II. Modern Historiography--February 14-26

General Discussion Examining Evidence, Motives, and Presuppositions
Reading Assignment: Fitzgerald, America Revised
Robin Winks, ed., The Historian as Detective (selections)
Additional Readings on Reserve

III. Philosophies of History--February 28-12

General Discussion: Historical World-Views
Presentation of Essay Topics: Each student should consult with me before deciding on a topic to be presented. The presentation should consist of a brief oral report that a) defines the topic; b) indicates something of its significance; and c) outlines the general nature of the problem and the major sources to be used.
Reading Assignment: Cantor and Schneider, chs. 7-13
Bebbington, chs. 2-8
Additional Readings on Reserve

IV. Toward a Christian Reconstruction of History--March 14-April 2

General Discussion: Marks of a Christian World-View
Presentation of Book Reports
Reading Assignment: Rushdoony, The One and the Many
Additional Readings on Reserve

V. Writing and Presentation of Historiographical Essays

Class will not meet April 4, 9, 18, or 23 so students may work on essay
Progress Reports to Class--April 11, 16: Bring Preliminary Draft
All Papers Due: April 25
Discussion of Papers--April 30-May 9

Historiographical Essays

Essays should be 18-30 pages in length and should be modeled along the lines of a standard historical monograph. Turabian's Manual for Writers or other standard style manual should be followed in matters related to spelling, grammar, footnotes, and bibliography. Each student should meet with me at each stage of the research and writing.

Grading

The students final grade will reflect the quality of his or her research, writing, oral presentations, and general class participation.

FIRST EXAM

Answer two of the following:

1. Identify and discuss the similarities and differences between any five reformist or revolutionary movements that predated or coincided with the Protestant Reformation. How do they compare with political and intellectual trends in late 20th century America?

Suggested Readings: Kuehnelt-Leddihn 1; Shafarevich; Winks, ch. 22.

2. Identify and discuss five features in American intellectual life that (have) provided support for its original "mixed" Constitution. How have these been strengthened or weakened?

Suggested Readings: Combee; Dodd; Fitzgerald; Kuehnelt-Leddihn 1; Montgomery; North 1, 3; Samson 2.

3. Using a model such as Rushdoony's "Inescapable Concepts" or Dorothy Sayers' "Lost Tools of Learning," identify five means by which you would refashion the prevailing educational system to bring it into harmony with biblical Christianity.

Suggested Readings: Berman; Brooks; Combee; Kirk 1, 2; Montgomery; North 1, 3; Rosenstock 1; Singer

4. Assuming that a radical (or a reformer) sought to challenge the credibility of any influential person or paradigm in American political and intellectual life (e.g., biblical Christianity), identify and discuss any five means or strategies which he might choose.

Suggested Readings: Barzun; Bebbington; Brooks; Combee; Kirk 1,2; Kuehnelt-Leddihn 1; Montgomery; Ramsdell; Samson 1, 2; Winks, ch. 18.

History and Social Science Seminar: SECOND EXAM

Pick two:

1. According to Rosenstock, unity was synonymous with the emperor at the dawn of western civilization and the imperial household was the center of political life (pp. 490-91). "The sequence of European revolutions can be illustrated by a diagram of the imperial palace and its slow dissolution (p. 517)."

   Identify the sequence by which different parts of the "imperial palace" became "emancipated" from its "majordomo." Discuss the origins and consequences of any four of the following: the State, central authority, the restoration of authority to old age, the revolutionary manifesto, the concordat, the corporation, nationalism, or democracy.

2. According to Rosenstock, "different as the European languages are, they are branches on the same tree since the dualism of faith and wealth is the problem of all of them. . . . Two allegiances are the secret of civilization (498-499)." The fact of a double allegiance "is the secret of political liberty (542)."

   Discuss the implications of this "dialectical tension" in light of the treatment of nominalism and realism by Rushdoony, North, and Chilton. What are some of the practical consequences of these views? How is the tension to be resolved?

3. According to Rushdoony, the "emancipation" of men from church, family, local rulers, and customs has been accomplished by the modern state in order to strengthen itself at their expense (p. 139).

   Discuss this pattern in relation to any four of the following: human rights, education, religious toleration, sovereignty, the minimum wage, eminent domain, or legal positivism.

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SECOND EXAM

Discuss two of the following in terms of the readings.

1. Using Karl Popper's concept of "the law of unintended effect" (Johnson, p. 644), how has the well-intended expansion of the federal power for humanitarianian purposes--as, for example, in promoting higher education, racial justice, and a war poverty--produced "death and destruction?" Why might this be the case, according to such observers as Otto Scott, Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, and/or R. J. Rushdoony?

2. Otto Scott believes that the "final stage in all revolutions is an assault against the Executive." Illustrate this from any three of the readings. Evaluate Scott's contention that the "revolutionary tide is not 'inevitable'" in light of the readings and current events.

3. Russell Kirk writes of "conceivable renewal" in higher education. In light of "The Portland Declaration" and/or R. J. Rushdoony's "Strategy of Fabian Socialism," discuss at least three positive steps that may be taken toward renewing our basic institutions, whether political, religious, or cultural.

4. Analyze Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy's model of European revolutions in light of Bebbington's "patterns of history." How does Rosenstock's view of revolution compare with (resemble or differ from) the views of Kuehnelt-Leddihn, Billington, Scott, and/or Rushdoony?