

*THIS IS A VERY TENTATIVE SYLLABUS AND WILL UNDERGO CHANGES DURING THE TERM. FOR EXAMPLE, MANY OF THE COURSE READINGS ARE NOT LISTED, AND OTHER TOPICS OR FILMS MAY BE INTRODUCED.*

## POSTMODERN HISTORY

**Course Description:** In recent years some historians have experimented with new and innovative ways of telling the past – on the printed page, using film and video, and in the electronic media, including the internet. The course will focus on these new approaches to historical presentation and knowledge. Students will read, watch, and interact with various examples of these innovative historical works. They will also be exposed to the critiques of traditional historical writing from philosophers, literary critics, and postmodern theorists which provide intellectual underpinning for experimenting with new forms of history. As a term project, students will be produce an innovative historical work of their own.

**Readings:** Robert A. Rosenstone, *King of Odessa*  
Alun Munslow and Robert A. Rosenstone, eds, *Experiments in Rethinking History*  
Keith Jenkins and Alun Munslow, eds, *The Nature of History Reader* (reserve)  
Keith Jenkins, ed., *The Postmodern History Reader* (reserve)  
H 130 course website

### Course Requirements

1. Attendance and participation in class discussions.
2. Term project which involves creating a work of postmodern history. **This is a major part of the course.** It involves taking some traditional historical topic or book and condensing and reconfiguring it in line with postmodern theories and ideas, or creating a new work using the same sort of ideas. I will meet with you individually EARLY in the course to get you moving on this.
3. Oral presentation: during the last two weeks of class, each student must present term project orally in a 15-20 minute presentation.

**Weekly Schedule:** Note: The readings on this syllabus are NOT a full schedule of the readings for the quarter. To maintain flexibility in assignments, many of the weekly readings on the website will only be posted on the board in class or on the syllabus on the website the week before the class in which they will be discussed. So heads up!

- Jan 5: **History Without a Historian:**  
Film: *32 Short Films About Glenn Gould*
- 12: **Postmodern History on Film**  
Read: Rosenstone, "Confessions of a Postmodern Historian";  
"Film and the Beginnings of Postmodern History";  
Denning, "Performing on the Beaches of the Mind"; White, "The  
Burden of History" (website)
- 19: **Theory and Innovative Narrative: I**  
*Experiments*, Introduction, chapters 3-7; *NHR*, chapters 26-31;  
*PHR*, chapters 2-6  
**Topic for final presentation / paper due:**
- 26: **Theory and Innovative Narrative: II**  
TBA  
Read: *Experiments*, chaps 8-14; *PHR*, chapters 3-6, 13; *NHR*,  
chapters 26-31.
- Feb. 2: **Guest Historian**  
Guest: Professor Marjorie Becker  
Read: *Setting the Virgin on Fire*, chapter 5, "As Though They Meant  
Her No Harm" (both website);
- Feb. 9: **History and the Internet**  
Read: "Forum: History and the Web", 253-350 (handout and  
reserve)
- Feb. 16: **Fiction as History:**  
Read: Rosenstone, *King of Odessa*
- 23: **Making History**  
Student Presentations:
- Mar 1: **Making History**  
Student Presentations:
- Mar 8: **Making History**  
Student Presentations