

FALL 2002
HISTORY 395-03W
DU 119—T: 3:00-5:30

History & the social sciences

senior colloquium: writing intensive

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This course will examine the writing of history—or its methodology—in light of the contemporary social sciences. History as a discipline has been traditionally divided and compartmentalized for the most part into regional case studies. Thus, even though some rare historians have ventured into thematic approaches, history remains a discipline where topoi are crafted along national and nationalistic boundaries. The problem then becomes of whether it is possible to achieve any kind of synthesis out of this myriad of regional case studies. Back in the 1950s Fernand Braudel had already speculated that any kind of synthesis within the various historical studies could not be possibly achieved from within the discipline itself, and that history in order to survive and remain competitive needs to borrow extensively from the various other disciplines in the social sciences. With such an aim in mind, history would become integrated within the social sciences and achieve its goal of total synthesis not only for itself, but also for the other sciences as well. This course would therefore like to explore the possibility of creating methodologically oriented historical studies whose aim would be to go beyond the current regional and national boundaries, while remaining open to the methods adopted in the rest of the social sciences.

Reading Texts

Knowing how to approach “documents” or any other “textual” material should be at the center of the historian’s activity and approached as such. Some disciplines, such as philosophy and literary criticism, have explicitly posed the problem of *reading texts*, while in other disciplines—and history in particular—the question is either totally eluded or, at best, marginally posed. Yet, historians use a much greater variety of textual sources than, say, philosophers and literary critics who usually limit themselves to the “great texts” of various civilizations, even though western civilization tends to predominate all the rest. In addition to the “great texts,” historians usually include police records, court-documents, legal codes, correspondences, personal files, biographies, newspapers, to name only few of the sources common to the discipline of history. Here are some preliminary suggestions (“rules of thumb”) to read documents *as totalities*, that is, as texts endowed with “meaning” rather than as pure sources for collecting facts and data. The notion of document-as-text-and-as-totality implies the following:

(i) The notion of “text” or “discourse” (in the sense implied by Foucault) presupposes that a “document” is more than a combination of meaningful words, propositions, and statements. In fact, “text” and “discourse” imply that “documents” are drafted within an ideological and discursive context which frames them within a structure, or matrix, or grid through which they become readable. It is therefore the historian’s task to discover (re-construct) and find “meaning” to such “regularities” in the “texts” themselves, that is, to discover what the general structures, forms, and rules of these discursive formations are.

(ii) Documents are usually so fragmented that they might look deceitful and disappointing at first. One way to describe them would be to look at them as “non-discursive” practices (again, in the sense of Foucault) or more accurately as pre-discursive (pre-analytical) practices. If we limit the use of “discourse” to a well established set of ideas, theories, and concepts, then bureaucratic documents and the like with their fragmented narratives, pieces of evidence, and their links to “practice,” fall “below” the usually accepted criteria for “discourse.” The historian, however, should not look at this problem as a handicap or weakness. On the contrary, due to their intermediary nature between discursive formations and social practices, documents are important in unraveling the power-relations within a particular social context. Documents-as-text could provide us with a body of knowledge very different from well established discursive formations such as philosophy, literature, and the sciences, which could signal, at a particular historical moment, the appearance of a theory, an opinion, a practice unknown to more rigid or formal discursive formations.

(iii) The notion of “text-as-totality” does not necessarily imply that documents should be read line-by-line or that the meaning of words, statements, ambiguous propositions, etc., should be systematically studied. What is more important than the historical meaning of individual words and statements is the *use of language* by all the social actors. Historians quite often approach documents as made up exclusively of statements on a true or false basis. However, as J.L. Austin had noted in *How To Do Things With Words*, utterances (and statements) have a performative (perlocutionary)

effect, which consists in knowing how their reception came through on the side of the hearer/audience.

(iv) Whenever themes are explored, we should be aware that what we commonly do under such circumstances is read such themes *into* the document. We thus first read a document by placing it into the context of its own period, and we then re-contextualize it for a second time in respect to our own period, and we do so by referring the document-as-text to the themes which are most common (or uncommon) to the social sciences.

(v) What we are aiming at in the final analysis is an anthropological epistemology of the documents-as-text: What kind of “thought” is implied in such documents? What kind of discourse do documents carry regarding representations of society, its institutions and practices, about the self and the other?

(vi) The historian is thus left with a great deal of freedom to interpret, look for themes, and reconstruct the general (global) meaning of a text. We should keep in mind, however, that this freedom is *limited* by the structure of the text itself: There is a logic to the text which we assume beforehand to be *consistent* and makes sense, which means that any interpretation should be consistent *in itself* and in respect to the text it is interpreting.

GENERAL

There are weekly readings that we’ll discuss collectively in class. Your participation is essential for the success of the course. You might be also occasionally requested to prepare a presentation on a chapter or book which are part of the weekly assignments. Presentations should be improvised and 5 to 10 minutes long. Do not prepare a written presentation. You’re also requested, after submission of a first-draft, to make a short presentation of your term-paper.

Besides the two-draft research paper (see below the section on papers), you’re expected to submit three interpretive essays. *The final grade will be calculated on the basis of one-fifth for each paper draft and one-fifth for each interpretive essay. All interpretive essays are take-home and you’ll be given a week to submit them. The purpose of the interpretive essays is to give you the opportunity to go “beyond” the literal meaning of the text and adopt interpretive and “textual” techniques. A failing grade in all interpretive essays means also a failing grade for the course, whatever your performance in the paper is. All essays and papers must be submitted on time according to the deadlines set below.*

First Interpretive Essay	20%
Second Interpretive Essay	20%
Final Interpretive Essay	20%
Preliminary paper draft	20%
Term Paper:	20%
In case the term paper grade is superior to the preliminary draft, it will count as 40%.	

- It is essential that you complete all readings on time, and that you come to class well prepared.
- The first, second, and final interpretive essays are all based on our weekly readings. They all consist of a single essay for which you'll receive the appropriate questions at the dates below, and you'll submit them in class a week later.
- For all five papers follow the procedures outlined below in the section on papers.
- Essays and papers are to be submitted only in class. Do not send any material as an attached e-mail file or otherwise.
- It's your responsibility to submit all essays and papers on time at the deadlines below. Late papers will be graded accordingly, and papers submitted a week after the deadline will be graded F.
- Each non-submitted paper will receive the grade of F, and your final grade will be averaged accordingly.
- The mid-term paper is a free-topic exercise that you should begin researching as soon as possible.

READINGS

- weeks 1, 2 & 3: August 27 & September 3 & 10
R.I. Moore, *The first European revolution*, Blackwell 063122774

- weeks 4 & 5: September 17 & 24
Quentin Skinner, *The foundations of modern political thought*, vol. 1, Cambridge

September 24: First Interpretive Essay

- weeks 6 & 7: October 1 & 8
October 15: mid-semester break
Lisa Jardine, *Worldly goods*, Norton 0393318664

- weeks 8 & 9: October 22 & 29
Carl Schorske, *Fin-de-siècle Vienna*, Vintage 0-394-74478-0

October 29: Second Interpretive Essay

- weeks 10 & 11: November 5 & 12
Eric Posner, *Law and social norms*, Harvard 0674008146

November 5: First Draft Deadline

- weeks 12 & 13: November 19 & 26
Michael Taussig, *Defacement*, Stanford 0804732000

November 26: Final Interpretive Essay

- week 14: December 3
Discussion of term-papers
All papers must be submitted with the presentations

PAPERS

You are requested to write one major research paper to be submitted during the last session, Tuesday, November 5. You will have to submit, however, a first draft of this paper on Tuesday, December 3. The first draft should be as complete as possible and follow the same presentation and writing guidelines as your final draft, and it will count as 20% of your total grade unless the final draft is of superior quality. The purpose of the first draft is to let you assess your research and writing skills and improve the final version of your paper. It is advisable that you choose a research topic and start preparing a bibliography as soon as possible. I would strongly recommend that you consult with me before making any final commitment. It would be preferable to keep the same topic for both drafts. You will be allowed, however, after prior consultation, to change your topic if you wish to do so.

You may choose any topic related to methodology and history and its relations to the social sciences. *Papers should be analytical and conceptual. Avoid pure narratives and chronologies and construct your paper around a main thesis.*

Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 5th ed., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987. Intended for students and other writers of papers not written for publication. Useful material on notes and bibliographies.

Keep in mind the following when preparing your preliminary and final drafts:

- once you've decided on a paper-topic and prepared a preliminary bibliography, send an abstract and bibliography of your topic to the class-list <h395-l@luc.edu> (see below) no later than November 5. Your abstract should include: (i) title; (ii) description; (iii) sources; (iv) methodology (e.g. suggestions on how to read sources). **Your preliminary draft will not be accepted unless you've submitted an on-line abstract.**
- preliminary drafts should be submitted on time, November 5.
- preliminary drafts should be complete and include footnotes and an **annotated bibliography**. (The Turabian reference above is annotated: it briefly spells what the book is about and to whom it might be useful. The same applies to many of the titles in the bibliography below.)
- do not submit an outline as a first draft.
- incomplete and poorly written first drafts will not be accepted, and you'll be advised

- to revise your first draft completely.
- if you submit a single draft throughout the semester, you'll receive F for 20% of the total and your final grade will be averaged accordingly.
- the oral presentation is an essential aspect of your grade; if you can't attend the last session, request an appointment. Absences will only be accepted after prior approval from the Dean's Office.
- **your final draft should take into consideration all the relevant comments provided on your earlier draft:**
 - all factual and grammatical mistakes should be corrected, in addition to other stylistic revisions.
 - passages indicated as "revise" or "unclear" or "awkward" should be totally revised.
 - when specific additional references have been suggested, you should do your best to incorporate them into your material.
 - there might be several additional suggestions in particular on your overall assumptions and methodology. It will be up to you to decide what to take into consideration.
- **Submit the final draft with your preliminary corrected one.**
- if you're interested in comments on your final paper and interpretive essay, request an appointment by e-mail.

Please use the following guidelines regarding the format of all five papers:

- use 8x10 white paper (the size and color of this paper). Do not use legal size or colored paper.
- use a typewriter, laser printer or a good inkjet printer and hand in the original.
- only type on one side of the paper.
- should be double spaced, with single spaced footnotes at the end of each page and an *annotated bibliography* at the end.
- keep ample left and right margins for comments and corrections of at least 1.25 inches each.
- all pages should be numbered and stapled.
- **a cover page should include the following: paper's title, course number and section, your name, address, e-mail, and telephone.**

E-MAIL DISCUSSION LIST

An open e-mail discussion list is available: each message—whether mine or from any student—will reach anyone else on the list, so that every subscriber could directly write to the list.

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- You should subscribe to this list as soon as possible, preferably by the first week of classes.
- The forum list is free speech and not subject to any censorship: each message is posted directly and not subject to review from the list's coordinator. The contents of the messages are the own responsibility of their authors.
- Updates on the syllabus—in particular on the readings—will be posted whenever necessary.
- Discussions on the weekly readings and the interpretive essays are particularly encouraged.
- You're expected to post at least one message regarding your term-paper so that everyone knows what others are working on (see supra the section on papers regarding the content of your message).
- All other messages not directly related to the course, whatever their nature, are also welcomed.
- The list will be kept for an additional semester once the course is over by December. To unsubscribe, follow the instructions below.

RECOMMENDED READING

Historiographical Methods *History & the Social Sciences*

Jacques Rancière, *The Names of History: On the Poetics of Knowledge* (University of Minnesota Press, 1994). This is the best and most challenging book I have read in recent years which describes very aggressively the current status of the most recent historiographical methods. Rancière argues that Michelet was the real precursor to the *Annales* school (something that Lucien Febvre acknowledged and was the first to see clearly). First, Michelet was probably the first to have voluntarily stepped out from a pure history of kings and political events into some kind of “social history” and showed a great interest into this category which he broadly defined as “Le Peuple” (the people); second, Michelet was sensitive to the *document* as a starting point for his analysis: he created this unique method of reading *into* a document by creating his own narrative out of them and by listening to their silences. But Michelet could only create a dynamics out of a narrative where the Hobbesian Monarch does not play anymore the central role by transforming *France* as the real Subject of history—something that the *Annales* could not keep up with anymore. The *Annales* in fact transformed its historical “topics” into *objects* of research. In other words, France, for example, becomes an object of research like European feudalism or the Mediterranean. Thus by stating that every entity in the social world is worth being an object of scientific research, the *Annales* has ipso facto robbed traditional historiography, including that of Michelet, from its deepest foundations. Which leaves us today, towards the end of an eventful twentieth century, with a big problem: How can we rehabilitate the role of the subject—that is, *any* subject of democratic societies—in

historical processes?

Hunt, Lynn, ed. *The New Cultural History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989. A collection of articles that discusses the new “cultural history,” a recent trend that focuses on the importance of language in understanding political and social trends—the “linguistic turn.”

Momigliano, Arnaldo. *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

Palmer, Bryan D. *Descent into Discourse. The Reification of Language and the Writing of Social History*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990.

Reddy, William M. *Money and Liberty in Modern Europe. A Critique of Historical Understanding*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987. A critical study on modern historiographical trends related in particular to social and economic history.

Scott, Joan Wallach. *Gender and the Politics of History*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988. Wallach relates gender to history and language and thus joins the “linguistic turn” school that focuses on the importance of language in structuring social and economic movements.

B. H. Moss, “Republican Socialism and the Making of the Working Class in Britain, France, and the United States: A Critique of Thompsonian Culturalism,” *Comparative Study in Society and History*, 35(2) 1993, 390-413. This essay is an attempt to analyze the impact that had Thompson’s *Making of the English Working Class* on studies of labor movements in France, England, and the United States, on the one hand, and the weaknesses of such “culturalist” analyses (as opposed to the Marxist and neo-Marxist) on the other. Moss concludes that what these studies have unknowingly confirmed is the traditional and Marxist view that socialism arises when intellectuals bearing collectivist ideas join with workers undergoing a process of proletarianization.

Carrard, Philippe. *Poetics of the New History: French Historical Discourse from Braudel to Chartier*. Parallax Re-visions of Culture and Society, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992. Excellent introduction to the *Annales* tradition in historiography. More broadly, Carrard shows that the discipline of history is now marked by fragmentation and that *histoire totale* (in the strong sense of the project) is dead.

Editorial. “Histoire et sciences sociales. Un tournant critique?” *Annales É.S.C.* 2 (April-March 1988): 291-293. A key editorial of the *Annales* in which a “crisis” in contemporary historiography was admitted for the first time and a rapprochement with the rest of the social sciences is now considered as essential for the writing of a new (more fragmented) history. The notion of “document” is also questioned and a more “textual” approach seem to be suggested. Some of the responses to this editorial have been collected in the special issue of November-December 1989 celebrating the 60th anniversary of the *Annales*.

Dominick LaCapra, *History & Criticism* (Cornell University Press, 1985). With essays on Ginzburg, *mentalité* history, and the history of criticism, LaCapra's enterprise in providing a critical perspective on contemporary historiography is probably the best in US academia today.

Pierre Bourdieu, Jean-Claude Passeron, Monique de Saint Martin, et al, *Academic Discourse* (Oxford: Polity, 1994). The authors make the claim that "academic discourse" is a rare commodity, some kind of "cultural capital," in the hands of professors-researchers who find it contrary to their interests to propagate and "popularize" especially among students and other faculty members who might not have access to types of discourse unknown to them and who are thus left in the dark on recent trends and discoveries in the arts and social sciences. Unlike other critiques from the political left, the authors argue that universities exert a conservative social influence not by transmitting an intellectual heritage but by failing to transmit it. While the left and the right continue to bicker over whether the academic culture students absorb is too traditional or too radical, Bourdieu and his colleagues question whether students absorb the academic culture at all. Thus, it is quite common for professors either to claim that their students "cannot understand sophisticated theories," or that it would be better, in a class-context, "to avoid larky expressions and the like," or to pretend that "they are already 'familiar' with such-and-such an approach." Academic discourse ends up a "cultural capital" in the possession of the happy few who can afford it. The book, written and published in the mid-sixties on the basis of extensive research on the French educational system, needs to be "re-adapted" to an American context. My impression is that in the United States, a particular kind of academic discourse, which borrows extensively from the French gurus (among them Bourdieu, Lyotard, Derrida, and Foucault), is more common in the Ivy League and the top-twenty-colleges than in other, more provincial, higher education institutions. But even in the Ivy League, it remains to be seen how much of the academic discourse which Bourdieu and his colleagues have in mind is transmitted and "absorbed."

Greeks & Romans

Early Christians

Peter Brown, *The Body and Society. Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (Columbia University Press, 1988). In nineteen chapters, and basing himself on original manuscripts, Peter Brown is very successful in describing attitudes of early Christians towards the body and sexuality. Augustine, in the last chapter, provides the *summa* of the endless variations of the early Christians and their erring: fulfillment is only achieved in the "city of heaven." What Christianity has introduced to the Greek and Roman world-views is the duality between mind and body, a dualism we still live with in different forms whether Cartesian or Freudian. The mind "controls" the body, its appetites and drives, hence the mind controls the body's sexuality. To the early Christians, this meant sexual renunciation and virginity in order to preserve the integrity

of the soul. Brown demarcates Roman sexuality from the Christian in his introductory chapters: Roman sexuality looks at women, slaves, and barbarians as inferiors, hence sex with women was riddled with anxieties and it was common for men to have sex with their slaves. Brown, however, does not see Christian renunciation as caused by Roman “tolerance” and he never provides his readers with a sharp answer to the historical causes of Christian asceticism. Instead, he provides us with the variations of the Christian model, and, with this, a view of religion as an agglomeration of infinitesimal efforts comes up, or, in other words, how disparate views become public and create an institution—the Church. Brown also provides an account of a religion—Christianity—as a *social* movement with no state control. Brown, however, seems locked up in his texts and I would have wished more social history on the Roman family and marriage, the social roots of the early Christians, and the Church and its clergy. Brown’s tone seems also to belong to the 1980s, under the influence of Veyne and Foucault, which looks at sexuality as a discourse, or rather, as a discursive practice.

Medieval Europe

Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory* (Chicago University Press, 1984 [1981 for the French Gallimard edition]). This is a *longue durée* history of the Purgatory, roughly from early Christianity till the twelfth and thirteenth centuries when the Purgatory has achieved a more or less completed structure (even in its poetic form through Dante). Le Goff, however, is eager not to make his history “evolutionary,” that is, he insists that the history of the Purgatory remains unpredictable despite early signs (with Augustine in particular) of a desire to *spacialize* something between hell and heaven. This creation of an additional space of judgment and repentance shall be expressed differently from one period to another, but by the thirteenth century one thing is certain: the Purgatory integrates well in the European societies where the judicial now plays a dominating and intermediary role between the “body politic” and “society” (or “civil society,” *civitas*). Le Goff’s method is very much “textual,” and even though he does well in integrating his material with the social trends of each period, one would have wished more social history, in particular for the thirteenth century when several things seem to come together: the political, religious, judicial, and economic.

Modern Europe: Populations, Material life & the Economy

Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, trans. Siân Reynolds (New York: Harper & Row, 1973 [first French edition published in Paris by Armand Colin, 1949]). Picking up from where Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre (his “Maître de thèse”), Braudel constructs a thesis around the Mediterranean as an object of study for what become the cult book of the *Annalistes*: it’s not anymore Philip II who occupies the center of the stage, but the Mediterranean as a complex object of geography, economics, and cultures at the *age* of Philip II. Actually, Braudel dismisses the person of the King altogether as someone who was not even conscious of the importance of the

Mediterranean: “I do not believe that the word Mediterranean itself ever floated in his consciousness with the meaning we now give it, nor that it conjured up for him the images of light and blue water it has for us.” With this, Braudel created a fundamental rule for both historians and social scientists: the historian does not have to identify with the “subjects” of history anymore—distance from what shines at the surface has become the golden rule (but wasn’t it so for Marx and Freud?). But the book, half a century later, has also aged tremendously: Braudel never took seriously the claim he has set up for himself and for the discipline of history as “La Reine des sciences sociales,” and he never borrowed much anyhow from the languages of the social sciences. The *Mediterranean* leaves us struggling with an array of questions concerning the role of the “subject” and “culture” in history.

Reddy, William M. *The Rise of Market Culture. The Textile Trade and French Society, 1750-1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

Scott, Joan Wallach. *The Glassworkers of Carmaux. French Craftsmen and Political Action in a Nineteenth-Century City*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974.

Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital* (1988).

Intellectual Movements in Modern Europe

Latour, Bruno and Steven Woolgar. *Laboratory Life: The Social Construction of Scientific Facts*. London: Sage, 1979. A book that belongs to what we now qualify as the new “anthropology of the sciences,” i.e. a discipline (or sub-discipline) that focuses on how the natural hard-core sciences are produced and manufactured within the laboratories, elite teaching colleges, staff recruitment, and the professional journals that transmit and conserve scientific knowledge. A big step from the “idealized” Khunian paradigmatic view of the sciences that became dominant in the last three decades.

Shapin, Steve and Simon Schaffer. *Leviathan and the Airpump. Hobbes, Boyle and the Experimental Life*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985. In the line of the “anthropology” of Bruno Latour, this book tries to connect the political ideas of the father of “Absolutism” in the Anglo-Saxon world with those of the natural experimental sciences.

Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment* (1951). The enlightenment within a Kantian perspective. A book that remains a classic.

Peter Gay, *The Cultivation of Hatred. The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud. Volume 3* (New York: Norton, 1993). This is the third volume after “Education of the Senses” (1984) and “The Tender Passion” (1986), and is fed by some rich insights. Gay argues that the Victorians were prone to mix cruel aggression and ferocious erotic pleasure; thus

our Victorian legacy is a struggle to deal with the joys of aggression. The book also ends with a subtle analysis of the development of “professionalism” and the way all these finer specialties became finely guarded. Unfortunately, the bulk of the book forgets from time to time such rich insights and the reader is left with a bunch of facts that ranges from the very obvious to the sophisticated.

Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms. The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller* (Johns Hopkins, 1980). Ginzburg argues that the heretical thoughts of Menocchio, his sixteenth-century miller, are the effect of an old rural popular culture despite the fact that Menocchio was an avid reader of some medieval texts. In a footnote added later as a response to critics (pp. 154/5), Ginzburg claims a circularity—or complementarity—between elite and popular cultures. Looked upon retrospectively, two decades after the publication of the original Italian edition, which made a sensation, Ginzburg’s thesis on popular culture is neither convincing nor interesting. Going through Ginzburg’s 62 short partitions, one is more puzzled by the Church’s insatiable willingness to force Menocchio “confess” than by popular culture which we can hardly see and perceive.

The French Revolution

Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, 1790. A great classic.

François Furet & Mona Ozouf, *Critical Dictionary of the French Revolution* (Harvard University Press, 1989). A “dictionary” of the French Revolution organized in thematic and biographic articles.

Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*, 1990. Focuses on ideas and their “public” circulation before and after 1789.

Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, 1855. A great classic by the author of *Democracy in America*. Tocqueville was among the first to argue that much of what is usually attributed to the Revolution, namely the centralization of the state and its bureaucracy; the advancement of the “bourgeoisie” as a class, etc., were already part of the policy of the old monarchical regime.

Sewell, William H., Jr. *Work and Revolution in France. The Language of Labor from the Old Regime to 1848*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980. A classic on the French guilds, manufactures and labor force, and the first major historian to apply the Thompsonian problematic to France. An attempt to explain the rise of socialism and the making of the French working class. Sewell chose to highlight the culturalist theme and argued that “socialism” was essentially a cultural reconstruction of an eighteenth-century guild tradition of moral collectivism.

Sonenscher, Michael. *Work and Wages. Natural Law, Politics, and the Eighteenth-*

Century French Trades. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Robert Darnton, *The Literacy Underground of the Old Regime* (Cambridge, Mass., 1982).

Barry M. Shapiro, *Revolutionary Justice in Paris, 1789–1790* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), addresses the subject of political crime in the first year of the French Revolution.

de Baecque, Antoine. *Le corps de l'histoire. Métaphores et politiques (1770–1800)*. Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1993.

Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (University of California Press, 1992), analyzes the images and familial models that inhabited revolutionary France.

United States

Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery, 1619–1877* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1993), is an excellent introduction to the subject of slavery with an annotated bibliography for further reading.

Charles A. Beard, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* (Free Press, 1963 [1913]). First published in 1913, Beard's radical interpretation brought the Constitution of the United States from its political "idealism" to its economic roots. Scrutinizing the Constitution in light of economic forces, he proposed for the first time that this politico-legal document was shaped by a group of men whose commercial interests were best served by its provisions.

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*. Tocqueville's analysis of the American democratic system remains my favorite in its simplicity and complexity. The "democratic spirit" is traced back to the first European settlers who were suspicious of all the monarchies they had left behind and were thus not that eager to replicate on the new continent political systems which they saw as potentially corrupt because based on rigid hierarchies between individuals, classes, and status groups. Tocqueville then goes on to show that this basic idea of democracy—that all men have the *right* to be "equal"—is reproduced at every level. Thus, several laws were promulgated in the 17th and 18th centuries in New England and the North-East in particular forbidding large property holdings. In education, this meant the focus on "practical" matters rather than on formal and abstract issues, a major weakness, according to Tocqueville, because it weakens artistic and scientific creativity. The legal system is analyzed in terms of the "power of judges" to overrule previous decisions and interpret the Constitution (another particularity of the American system is that a single Constitution frames both the political and judicial). But the greatness of American democracy has its dark side too, and in a concluding chapter, Tocqueville is more than cautious about a type of democracy, which despite all its merits, also creates simple-minded individuals and mediocre spirits who have no choice but to leave "government" to a group of professionals.

J. C. D. Clark, *The Language of Liberty, 1660-1832. Political Discourse and Social Dynamics in the Anglo-American World* (Cambridge University Press, 1994). One of the latest attempts in the search for “a deeper understanding of the causes” of the Revolution. Clark makes three general claims: (i) that the years between 1776 and 1787 gave rise to a new dissenting conception of liberty which was the principal source of the ideas of popular sovereignty that some colonists employed against the traditional idea of absolute sovereignty; (ii) that 1776 may be understood as a revolution of natural law against common law; (iii) that the American Revolution was in essence “a rebellion by groups within Protestant Dissent against an Anglican hegemony.”

Carl J. Richard, *The Founders and the Classics. Greece, Rome, and the American Enlightenment* (Harvard University Press, 1994). Ever wondered the influence of Greece and Rome on the Founding Fathers of the American Constitution? The addiction of the Founders to classical allusion has never been denied, but in the work of many recent historians its importance has been questioned. Richard’s book is a refutation of such doubts. It was in America that the historical and the legendary figures of antiquity could serve as real models for conduct rather than oratorical embellishment. Though Greece and Rome were equal partners in the colonial educational curriculum, it was to the Roman republic that the Founders turned for a model when they came to frame their constitution. Athenian democracy, criticized by Thucydides, condemned by Plato and disapproved of by Aristotle, inspired in them a fear of the tyranny of the majority. They favored instead what they believed was the “mixed government” of the great days of Rome, the era of the Second Punic War. Should we then be surprised that very few people participate in the democratic process today?

Music & The Arts

Theodor W. Adorno, *Mahler. A Musical Physiognomy* (Chicago University Press, 1993). A major study by one of the leading Frankfurt School giants that focuses on one of the most important Viennese musicians at the turn of this century. Adorno shows that Mahler’s music is the expression, in its artistic form, of the “end” of the false “totalities” that he found in metaphysics (by contrast, Beethoven would look very much Hegelian). Knowledge of Mahler’s nine symphonies is, of course, a must for understanding Adorno’s analysis. For a broader account of modern music see Adorno’s *Quasi Una Fantasia. Essays on Modern Music* (Verso, 1993).