

USC VAN HUNNICK HISTORY DEPARTMENT

UNDERGRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

SPRING 2026 SEMESTER

102gm The Worlds of Medieval Europe **Glenn** **T/Th** **12:30-1:50pm**

Course Description:

In this course, we study the social, political, religious, and intellectual landscapes of Europe from the fourth through the fourteenth century. In particular, we explore the works of a number of people who populated those landscapes and, in their own ways, shaped them. By getting to know them (both the works and their authors), we learn about the cultures from which they come. In other words, our careful and rigorous study of primary sources of various genres—narrative histories, biographies, laws, theological treatises, philosophical tracts, poems, letters, literature, art, architecture, and the material remains of the period—will enable us to glimpse at least some of the norms and institutions of the peoples who inhabited Europe (and some of their neighbors) during the period generally known as the Middle Ages. We shall attempt to determine what some of these norms and institutions were and their similarities and/or differences across time and place as we visit the late antique world of the fourth century, the barbarian west of the sixth, the age of cathedrals and chivalry in twelfth-century northern France, the eastern Mediterranean in the time of the Crusades, the Silk Road, and late medieval Italy (thirteenth- and fourteenth-centuries).

What do these cultures share? our authors? their works? How are they alike? And how do they differ? From the sources, students are encouraged—indeed, really required—to develop their own answers to these questions over the course of the semester. (Very) brief lectures may sometimes supplement our readings, but much—indeed, most!—of our class time will be devoted to discussion of the sources as we analyze what they can (and cannot) tell us about their authors and creators, about the cultures in which they lived, and about the pasts (real or imagined) out of which their cultures and Europe emerged. While the focus of this course is the worlds of medieval Europe, it is therefore in many ways a course about (1) the methods of historical inquiry—about how to do history rather than about learning history per se—and, albeit perhaps more implicitly than explicitly, (2) how these methods and, more generally, the thoughtful reflection on the complexities of the past can stimulate nuanced reflection about the complex world in which we live today.

- **General Education:** This course satisfies the university's general education requirement.
- **Diversity Requirement:** This course satisfies the university's diversity requirement.

103g The Emergence of Modern Europe **Soll** **M/W** **12:00-1:20pm**

Course Description:

Political, intellectual, and cultural developments in Europe, 1300-1815. Renaissance and Reformation; absolute monarchy, scientific changes, and Enlightenment; French Revolution and Napoleon.

- **General Education:** This course satisfies the university's general education requirement.

104gp Modern Europe **Velmet** **T/Th** **10:30-11:50am**

Course Description:

The Enlightenment, French Revolution, industrialization, Darwinism, socialism, nationalism, technological revolutions, mass culture, imperialism, race, fascism, communism, world wars, genocide, migration, the Cold War, terrorism.

- **General Education:** This satisfies the university's general education requirement for Global Perspectives in Category H: Traditions and Historical Foundations and one or more additional general education requirements.

107gp Introduction to the History of Japan Uchiyama T/Th 3:30-4:50pm

Course Description:

Japan from the earliest times to the present; social, cultural, and political dimensions.

- **General Education:** This satisfies the university's general education requirement for Global Perspectives in Category H: Traditions and Historical Foundations and one or more additional general education requirements.

108g Histories of South Asia Pant T/Th 10:00-11:20am

Course Description:

History of South Asia from the tenth century to the present day; examines imperialism, capitalism, nationalism, and immigration.

- **General Education:** This course satisfies the university's general education requirement.

111g Africa Since 1880 Mseba T/Th 12:30-1:50pm

Course Description:

This course is a survey of the history of sub-Saharan Africa from the 1880s to the present. It examines the experiences of Africans under Colonial domination and under the independent states which succeeded colonial governments after 1960. The objective of the course is to introduce students to the major forces that have shaped Africans' lives in the recent past and to the initiatives of Africans in charting the course of their own lives. Major themes include European conquest, colonial economic structures, African responses to colonial rule and African political movements. The course also explores struggles against the form of white domination known as apartheid in South Africa and Zimbabwe. It further examines the opportunities and challenges that independence brought to Africans.

128gp The Arts and Society in Latin America, Colonial to Contemporary Bleichmar M/W 2:00-3:20pm

Course Description:

This class provides an introduction to the art, architecture, and visual culture of Latin America from the colonial period to the present, with a particular focus on social, cultural, and political functions of art. In the first half of the semester, we will study the colonial period (1492–ca. 1820), examining early contact between indigenous Americans and Europeans, wars of conquest and the establishment of a colonial order, the importation and adaptation of European artistic models in the Americas, and the transformation of indigenous art as a result of colonialism. In the second half of the semester, we will examine Latin American art after independence, from the early nineteenth century to the present, considering the role of the arts in building new nations and developments in modern and contemporary art. Over the course of the semester, we will analyze a variety of primary sources including urban planning, architecture, paintings, sculpture, manuscript drawings, and prints. We will place particular emphasis on the role that the arts played in society, focusing above all on politics, religion, and daily life.

201 Approaches to History Glenn T/Th 9:30-11:00am

Course Description:

Although it comes in perhaps as many versions as instructors who teach it, History 201 typically aims to offer students a somewhat systematic overview of a range of approaches to the study of the past, that is, to the discipline of History. This version of the course has no such ambitions. Instead, it consists of a hodgepodge of exercises and undertakings designed to raise questions and problems of the sort historians — whatever their particular geographical, temporal, thematic or topical interests — must consider in their reflection on the past and in their research and writing about it.

There are four essential, if seemingly distinct, elements of this course; some of them will be interwoven over the course of the term; others will stand alone with no obvious connection to the rest.

1. Over the course of the term, students shall create an archive of their own writing and documents related to — and which relate — their lives and experiences. The archive will include all written assignments and most of the class readings. It will be housed digitally in a Dropbox folder to which all students in the class will have access. And it will not only serve to raise questions about what constitutes an archive and how an archive might come into existence, but it will also serve as our materials for a number of exercises that we undertake together as a group and for individual research projects.
2. We shall also read a series of seminal essays written by scholars and view several films. In different ways, these essays and films will articulate and illustrate some of the fundamental problems and questions with which historians have struggled in the modern study of the past. They will also inform our creation and analysis of the class archives.
3. We shall read an as-yet-to-be-determined monograph. We shall consider, on the one hand, the author's historical methods, theoretical approaches, and historiographical concerns as well as their implications for our own reflection on the past. On the other hand, we shall discuss at some length how it is that we can or, indeed, should read and engage contemporary historical scholarship.
4. Each student will study a monograph of a faculty member (of his/her/their choice) within the history department. They will analyze the historian's approaches to the topic and the ways she/he/they chose to present his/her/their findings. Students will each offer a short presentation in class about the scholar and, ultimately, evaluate the book alongside the as-yet-to-be-determined monograph in a paper of between five and seven pages in length — like every other piece of writing that students do, this review will be included in the class archive.

211gp Race in America Shaler M/W 9:30-10:50am

Course Description:

This course will investigate what race is, how race has been instrumental in the formation of the American republic and of the Americas as a whole, how race has been entrenched through legal and legislative mechanisms, how it has been built into societal structures, and how it operates both obviously and subtly. We will discuss how race and racial ideologies have been constructed since the first encounter with indigenous American populations, how they have shifted and changed over time, and how daily actions and systems reflect racist ideology. We will begin with the first European encounters of American indigenous populations in the 16th century and continue to the present day.

225g Film, Power, and American History Ross M/W 10:00-11:50am

Course Description:

This course analyzes the nature of power in the United States—as exercised from above and below—and how it operated to shape the course of American history from the 1890s to the present. We will examine many of the fundamental social, political, and economic problems that have shaped the 20th and 21st centuries: industrialization, urbanization, war, poverty, crime, politics, success, race, class, and gender conflict. Using methodologies drawn from history and cinema studies, we will learn how to navigate among three different types of sources that inform our knowledge of how human behavior has shaped the economic, political, cultural and social landscape: (a) primary documents that shed light on those issues and behaviors; (b) secondary sources (historical overviews) that assess those issues; (c) films made during the period that address those issues.

A note on our use of film as an analytic tool: Few contemporary institutions have a greater effect on molding popular understandings of the world than film and television. Yet, most citizens lack the critical tools to contextualize, analyze, and critique the images and ideologies conveyed on the screen. This course is designed to join elements of film studies with various schools of historical analysis to provide students with the critical skills needed to analyze the images and ideologies they see on the screen and to understand how those images effect our views of the past and present.

Our films and documents cover the period from 1900 to 2010. We only watch films (which *include fiction films, documentaries, and newsreels*) that were made during that decade and deal with one or more of the major problems

of the time. In this way, these films serve as another primary source. But movies offer only one perspective on the world. Each week we will also read and analyze works that offer additional perspectives: **secondary source readings** that discuss the general historical events of the era; readings that offer **primary documents** that shed light on how people of the time saw their world and sought to change it; and **contemporaneous films** that deal with the problems of the time. In short, we will triangulate our way through American history using different methodologies and sources to understand the past, the present, and the possibilities for the future. It is the student's job to figure out which of these perspectives seem most convincing, why it seems so, and the implications of one form of knowledge being more powerful than another.

276g The Byzantine Empire, 324-1453 TBA M/W 8:30-9:50am

Course Description:

Overview of Byzantine political, social, economic, legal, cultural and religious history and its legacy today; primary sources and approaches which historians use to reconstruct the richness and complexity of the Byzantine past. Contacts with Arabic, Latin, Slavic, Georgian, Armenian, Persian, Turkic and Aramaic cultures; Byzantium's own Greek, Roman and Christian heritage.

- **General Education:** This course satisfies the university's general education requirement.
- **Crosslist:** This course is offered by the Classics (CLAS) department but may qualify for major credit in the History (HIST) department, and will appear as CLAS 275 on all student records and transcripts. To register, enroll in CLAS 275.

278gp Ottomans and Empire: Anatolia, Antaramian T/Th 11:00-12:20pm
the Middle East, and the Medi

Course Description:

Overview of the history of the Ottomans and their imperial subjects.

- **General Education:** This satisfies the university's general education requirement for Global Perspectives in Category H: Traditions and Historical Foundations and one or more additional general education requirements.

316 The Renaissance Ibarra T/Th 12:30-1:50pm

Course Description:

The flowering of arts, literature, and learning at the end of the Middle Ages.

340 History of China Since 1880 Goldstein T/Th 9:30-10:50am

Course Description:

Western impact and dynastic decline; problems of the Chinese Republic; nationalism and communism.

352 The American Civil War Baumgartner T/Th 11:00-12:20pm

Course Description:

This course examines the causes, course, and consequences of one of the most transformative events in American history. At the cost of 700,000 lives—the equivalent per capita of four million Americans dying in Vietnam—the Union remained intact and over three million enslaved people won their freedom. The war remains significant not only because it preserved the Union and destroyed slavery, but because it raised questions that remain central to our understanding of ourselves as a nation. What is the correct balance between the state and federal governments? Who is entitled to U.S. citizenship? What do freedom and equality actually mean?

355 The African-American Experience Wilson T/Th 9:30-10:50am

Course Description:

An historical and social analysis of the African- American experience from Colonial times to the present.

364	Religion and Difference in the Modern Middle East	Antaramian	T/Th	12:30-1:50pm
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Course Description:

Introduction to the diversity of religions in the Middle East and how they have responded to imperialism, colonialism and nationalism in the modern period.

373	History of the Mexican American	Chavez	T/Th	12:30-1:50pm
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Course Description:

Racial and cultural background of Mexico; immigration and conquest; the Mexican in California and the southwest; the rise of contemporary Mexican-American consciousness.

- **Diversity:** This course satisfies the university's diversity requirement.
- **Crosslist:** This course is offered by the AMST department but may qualify for major credit in HIST. To register, enroll in AMST 373.

378	Introduction to Asian American History	Saliba	T	2:00-4:50pm
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Course Description:

Comparative examination of the social, economic, and political experiences of Asian immigrants and their descendants in the U.S., 1840s-present.

- **Diversity Requirement:** This course satisfies the university's diversity requirement.
- **Crosslist:** This course is offered by the American Studies and Ethnicity (AMST) department but may qualify for major credit in the History (HIST) department, and will appear as AMST 378 on all student records and transcripts. To register, enroll in AMST 378.

389p	Modern Iran	Movahedi-Lankarani	M/W	3:30-4:50pm
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Course Description:

History and culture of modern Iran from the nineteenth century to present through historical and ethnographic approaches to Iran today, richly contextualizing events and people.

- **Crosslist:** This course is offered by the MDES department but may qualify for major credit in HIST. To register, enroll in MDES 313.

393	Quantitative Historical Analysis	Kurashige	T/Th	3:30-4:50pm
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Course Description:

This course explores quantitative approaches to studying the past that rely upon an understanding of statistical theories and applications, historical data and their manipulation, and the use of statistical software (SPSS). There are countless ways to study history, none of which provide the BEST view of the past. Some historians (especially those in economics and demography) rely largely on quantitative methods and data, but many combine quantitative analysis with qualitative (non-numerical) approaches in order to uncover different dimensions of a given topic. The approach used to study the past has a direct impact on the stories and lessons that emerge.

There are no prerequisite courses required for HIST 393g. This class focuses on statistical concepts and the use of statistical software to provide insight into historical questions; it does not require the study of mathematical equations or problem-solving. The goal is to promote numerical and statistic literacy while adding quantitative data and analysis to the student's "toolkit" for studying the past. HIST 393g satisfies General Education Category F (Quantitative Reasoning) for those students who began their college careers at USC or at other schools in Fall 2015 or later.

397 Gender, Madness, and Modernism Lerner W 12:30-1:50pm
in Freud's Vienna

Course Description:

Vienna at the turn of the twentieth century (1890-1910) has long been celebrated as a heady site of innovation and experimentation in the visual arts, music, literature, and architecture. As the home of Freud (1865-1939) and the birthplace of psychoanalysis, it was also a place where scientists and artists challenged the view of human beings as rational animals, sought to turn sexuality into a science, and explored our darker natures and drives.

We will begin with a deep grounding in this period and follow these developments into post-World War I Vienna (1919-1934), a time when progressive movements in public health and education, public housing, and gender and sexual liberation changed the face of the city, until civil war (1934) and annexation to Nazi Germany (1938-1945) abruptly ended this period of radical experimentation.

While some historians have linked these explosive changes to the larger political context – the defeat of Austrian liberalism, the waning of the Habsburg Empire, etc. – most accounts of this period emphasize leading male artists, architects, and doctors, paying scant attention to the women who constituted the great majority of psychoanalytic patients, artists' subjects, and patrons. In this course we focus above all on how women experienced these cultural currents, asking how women, gender, and sexuality were represented in the visual vernacular of modernism and how they figured into the creation of Freudian psychoanalysis and other contemporary movements in medicine, culture, and psychology. And it was not only women, but often Jewish women in particular who stood at the center of Viennese intellectual, cultural, and medical history, who experienced the period's upheavals with particular intensity, yet have often been erased from the historical record.

403 Carolingian Europe Glenn T/Th 2:00-3:20pm

Course Description:

In this seminar, we shall examine the evolution of the social, political, religious, and intellectual complexion of European lands from the time when we first encounter a family — Charlemagne's family — which, in the words of one scholar, "made Europe" to the time when that family is no more. We begin with a quick introduction to the Franks who set up perhaps the most successful of the barbarian kingdoms in the wake of Roman imperial rule in the west and witness the rise to power of the Carolingians, a rise which reached its apex in the late eighth and early ninth centuries as their imperium extended across much of the continent. This Carolingian empire—or at least the Carolingian dynasty—and the institutions on which it stood dominate the imaginative landscape of Europe through tenth century, into the eleventh and, arguably, beyond. But just as the Roman Empire had, this empire too eventually evolved into smaller, more autonomous units which developed, in time, their own national identities.

As we move from week to week, we shall use a wide range of primary sources which enable us to witness this process and to speculate about its various causes and significance. More so, we shall also use these sources to explore, indeed, to feel the texture of the Carolingian world. In a series of weekly readings, we shall therefore study contemporary histories, chronicles, annals, and biographies not merely to trouble over what happened in this period, but also to consider how those who wrote them, and perhaps more generally, those who lived in Carolingian Europe recall, reconstruct, and use the past. These narrative sources also will help us to see the norms and institutions of Carolingian culture, some of which are prescribed by collections of laws and decrees (both secular and ecclesiastical) which we shall also read, and some of which appear to ignore these prescriptions. Administrative records, letter collections, poems, lives of saints, a variety of manuals, images of art and architecture, and philosophical tracts will enable us both to glimpse the inner workings of the court, of the monastery, and, indeed, of the minds of elite men and women and to reflect on the experiences not merely of this elite, but also of men and women with less power and scant resources at their disposal.

This course requires extensive reading and writing. Reading assignments range from 100 to 175 pages per week, and there will be periodic written assignments of anywhere from a paragraph to two pages — from time to time, these written assignments will be submitted by email and circulated among the class participants before our class meeting. There will also be a final paper of fifteen to twenty pages in length. This paper will be based principally in

the readings done for our class meetings, but in most cases it will require some additional reading of texts selected in consultation with the instructor.

Students are expected to attend all class meetings and to come to those meetings prepared to contribute to class discussion.

431 Histories of the Apocalypse Velvet T 3:30-6:20pm

Course Description:

A historical overview of apocalyptic hopes and fears, from Revelations to the present. New World explorations, utopian communes, nuclear war, zombies, climate change.

433 The History of Drink O'Neill M 2:00-4:50pm

Course Description:

Our very existence is predicated on our ability to drink. Water is one of the necessities of life, but we have long gulped things beyond water. This class explores how what we drink explains a lot about who we are and the society we live in. We will cover a range of different beverages from beer, wine, rum, tequila, gin, and whiskey, to less alcoholic varieties like tea. Each has a different story to tell. Beer can tell us about gender. Rum tells us about slavery. Gin about social control and tequila about national identity. Each is a window into how society works and how it has developed overtime. Yet historians approach the story of drink differently. We will look at the multiplicity of ways that historians have used drinks to highlight historical change and we will use what we have learned from these different stories and different approaches to tell our own. For the goal of this class is for students to produce their own piece of research that explores the relationship between a beverage of their choice and the society that drank it.

438 War and Peace in Medieval Japan Piggott W 3:30-6:20pm

Course Description:

The highways of medieval Japan were travelled by itinerant minstrels who chanted, to the accompaniment of their biwa music, the exploits of fighting men during the civil war of the late twelfth century. These bards shaped the earliest parts of the *Heike* corpus, likely based on an early written text in Chinese characters. In the mid-fourteenth century, the *Heike monogatari*, Tales of the Heike as we know it today, was compiled by the master bard Kakuichi. In this seminar we will read the *Tale* and study the world in which it took form. We will consider its main themes, its historicity, how it depicts the medieval world in which it was produced, and why it has been beloved by listeners and readers since medieval times. We will debate its categorization as history or literature and some strategies proposed by historians like Jacques Le Goff in France and Fumihiko Gomi in Japan who advocate attention to "works of the imagination" like the *Heike* for the study of history.

467 Defeat and Occupation in Modern Japan Uchiyama T/Th 5:00-6:20pm

Course Description:

History of the Allied Occupation of Japan after the Second World War, with particular focus on democratic reforms, war crime trials, gender and popular culture.

470 The Spanish Inquisition in the Early Modern Hispanic World Ibarra T 2:00-4:50pm

Course Description:

The Spanish Inquisition is often invoked as the early modern paragon of fanaticism, violence, bureaucratization, surveillance, and institutional persecution. This course will provide an introduction to the legal and institutional history of the Inquisition across the Iberian world, from Spain and Portugal on the peninsula itself, to the tribunals established in the Americas and the Indian Ocean. Students will consider the legal procedures and institutional frameworks involved in its creation and operation, as well as major myths, theories, and interpretations of the impact of the Inquisition on Iberian societies from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century. Along the way, we will also

explore critiques of the “inquisitorial” mindset from the period and consider the tensions between legislation and social practice. In addition, students will become familiar with the primary sources produced by the Inquisition, both in translation as well as through images of original manuscript trials, in order to consider the extent to which these documents can serve as evidence about everyday experiences, culture, and beliefs. The final product of the course will be a research paper, produced in stages throughout the semester, that will answer the question: what can we expect to learn from the Inquisition and the documents it produced that can advance our understanding of law, society, and culture in the early modern Iberian world?

489 The Mongol Era in China: Genghis Khan, Khubilai, Marco Polo Birge F 3:30-4:50pm

Course Description:

An exploration of the Mongol era in China through an examination of three great historical figures, including how depictions of them have changed over time.

- **Crosslist:** This course is offered by the East Asian Languages and Cultures (EALC) department but may qualify for major credit in the History (HIST) department, and will appear as EALC 489 on all student records and transcripts. To register, enroll in EALC 489.

490 Directed Research TBA TBA TBA

Course Description:

Individual research and readings. Not available for graduate credit.

- **Credit-Restricted Course:** This course does not qualify for major credit, degree credit, and/or graduate credit for certain majors.
- **Restrictions:** This course is open to the following class levels: Junior and Senior.

492 Honors Thesis Flores-Villalobos T 3:30-6:20pm

Course Description:

Writing of the honors thesis; for students in the History Honors Program. Requirements for acceptance into the History Department Honors Program.

- 3.5 History GPA
- B+ or higher in HIST 201
- Completion of at least one 400-level seminar in area of concentration
- Approval of Faculty Thesis Advisor and Honors Seminar Instructor

493 Law, History, and Culture Honors Thesis Seminar Serna M 2:00-4:50pm

Course Description:

Writing of the honors thesis; capstone for students in the Law, History and Culture major.

- **Restriction:** Registration open to the following major(s): Law, History and Culture

498 America 250: Telling the Story of the United States, 1776-2026 Mancall W 2:00-4:50pm

Course Description:

What the American Revolution meant and how to remember it has always been contested. Even John Adams, one of the Founders, asked in 1816, “What do we mean by the American Revolution?” In 1852 Fredrick Douglass would ask, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” These questions often surface when the anniversary of the event rolls around like in 2026. To mark the 250th anniversary of the Declaration, six Los Angeles institutions are mounting shows that reflect the different ways Americans have told the story of the Revolution and how its meaning has evolved since 1776. Students in the class will visit these exhibitions, speak to curators involved in their creation, and read primary source documents from the era of the Founding to explore how it was thought of at the time. The

course will focus on three related questions: What did the Declaration mean in 1776? What has it meant over time, within the United States and abroad? Why does it still command attention? This will be a unique experience to engage directly with museum curators and those who are involved in public history.