

HIST 408
Pre-Industrial Daily Life and Folk Culture
MICA – SPRING 2014
Course Syllabus

Wednesday 9-11:45 PM
Bunting 470



Detail from Thomas Rowlandson's *The Harvest Home*

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Course Description & Goals

History often covers the powerful people, epochal events, and great geniuses of the past, but in this course we will seek to discover some of the lost beliefs, practices, and daily rituals that shaped the lives of the ordinary people who constituted the vast majority of those who lived before us. We will focus on Europe and North America from roughly 1200-1850, a period both formative of our own cultural experience and distant enough so that uncovering the history of its people will seem foreign and poignant to our 21st-century world. This course will provide advanced students skills in research in primary source material (songs, recipes, diaries, material culture) as well as theoretical issues involved in the study of popular history. We will study the social world in which folk practices developed, which may be of particular interest to students whose studio work draws from these traditions. As a final project, students will be asked to present research which could include a recreation or performance of some ritual, practice, or activity from this “lost” time.

To provide structure for the large subject matter this course seeks to cover, rather than proceed chronologically as many history courses do, we will approach the daily life of these past people in progressively smaller scales. We will begin with a discussion of time, nature, and *mentalité*; then progress to the social world of work and play; then to family, home, and material culture; and finally to notions of selfhood. Each of these steps requires different sources and different methodologies, and negotiating these differences to tell a coherent story will be the theme of the class.

This course fulfills is a major course seminar for Humanistic Studies majors. For Humanistic Studies majors as well as for other students the course will provide critical skills in research of diverse materials, story-telling, writing, and reading, as well as provide rich opportunity for combined studio-liberal arts study.

Course Learning Objectives

This course hopes to:

- teach advanced students methods of historical inquiry through focused research and analysis of primary sources and secondary sources.
- assist students' problem-solving and project-development skills as they move a project from an idea, through a research phase, to a final product.
- help students' writing via the assignment of a final research paper.
- introduce students to theories and methods of engaging in popular history, the history of material culture, and folklore studies
- familiarize students with the everyday ways of living of many of their ancestors, and deepen their connection to the past

Course Format, Grading and Assignments

This course will emphasize class and small group discussion. Your participation will be evaluated not only based on the quality of your comments in open discussion, but also on alertness, energy, and preparedness. Various organized activities will also provide an opportunity to participate in class ways other than in large- or small-group discussion. (Note: this participation grade does not include your field study, presentation, or feast participation grades, which are evaluated separately; see below). **Class participation is crucial to this course, constituting 20% of your grade.**

The **readings** are vital, as they will form the basis of our discussions and activities. The amount of readings varies, but at times is quite heavy. It is important not only that you do the readings thoroughly, but that you **bring them with you to class**, either printed out or on your computer screen (see below for comments on bringing laptops to class), to use as a basis for discussion. **Failure to do so will result in a grade of 'F' for your class participation for that day.**

There is one classroom activity that will be graded separately from your regular class participation. One of these is your participation in the **class feast** in Week 9 (3/26). For this assignment, you will have to **prepare some aspect of the feast**, whether it is entertainment, cooking, or some other preparation. **An informal one-page paper** describing the nature and experience of your preparation should accompany your prepared activity and be handed in on feast day. This activity is **worth 10% of your final grade.**

Each student must also **participate in and/or observe some form of folk or traditional performance, craft, or activity**, and write a **brief, informal paper** (2-3 pages) on their observations and experience. More instructions and resources will be provided on a later sheet. The student may do this at any point during the semester, but the **paper is due in Week 13 (4/23)**, and is **worth 10% of your final grade**.

There will be a **set of study questions** related to *The Cheese and the Worms*. Students must respond to these questions, and turn in their answers when we discuss the book in Week 4 (2/12). These **responses are worth 10% of your final grade**.

Students must write **2 short (2-3 pages) primary source assessment papers** this semester, in which they **discuss the methodological challenges and possibilities in analyzing the primary sources** due that week. Students may choose when they wish to write these papers: note that **not every week includes readings of primary sources**, so be sure to select a week when there are primary sources available (there are 6 such weeks). These short papers are **worth 5% of your final grade each**.

In order that students may engage in a deep study of one particular person from the past, and also so they can analyze the merits or problems associated with these type of sources, students will each be **individually assigned a memoir/diary/letters** – or a historian’s commentary on such a source – that they will read on their own and **write a medium-length (3-4 pages) paper on the source and the question of selfhood in the pre-modern past**. This paper is **due in Week 12 (4/9)** and is **worth 15% of your grade**.

For a final project in this class, students will have **2 options**: 1) they may **recreate a ritual, practice, or craft** from the pre-industrial period, and present it in class, accompanied by a **shorter (4-6 pages) paper** describing their project and presenting the research background; or 2) they may **write a longer, formal research paper** (8-12 pages) on a subject of their choice. This will be explained in more detail later in the semester. The final project **topic must be chosen by Week 10**. This **final paper/project represents 25% of your final grade**.

Late Assignment Policy

In-semester paper assignments will be marked down a grade for each day late (A to A-, B- to C+, etc.) Presentations and final papers cannot be late. I do not accept computer submissions of work.

Attendance Policy

There are only 15 meetings in the semester so we have to make the most of them.

An absence **will only be excused following a class meeting if the student provides a doctor’s note or some other legitimate notification**. In some cases I will excuse an absence if a legitimate reason is given and I am notified before class

time. In all cases, **I will excuse only 1 absence per term.** Any medical or other issue that requires any more missed time must be **verified by the appropriate MICA adviser**, and even then keep in mind **that too many absences – even “legitimate” ones – may make earning credit for the course inappropriate.**

Any **unexcused absence beyond 1** will result in a decrease of two grades from class participation (A to B+, B- to C, etc.). **2 late arrivals (> 10 minutes) equals 1 absence.**

Classroom Laptop/Cellphone Policy

Because students in previous classes have abused the privilege of having laptops in class, I am going to set limits on their use in our class. **If there are no online or Moodle readings, an open laptop is not permitted in class, unless you receive special permission from me to take notes on it or for some other purpose.** If there are online or Moodle readings, you can have the computer open. However, if you are observed using the computer for anything not related to classroom activity, **you will get an F for the day and your laptop privileges will be revoked.**

Cell phones must be stowed away and turned off for the duration of the class.

Americans with Disabilities Act

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Learning Resource Center at [410-225-2416](tel:410-225-2416), in Bunting 458, to establish eligibility and coordinate reasonable accommodations.

Health and Safety

It is the responsibility of faculty and students to practice health and safety guidelines relevant to their individual activities, processes, and to review MICA's Emergency Action Plan and attend EHS training. It is each faculty member's responsibility to coordinate with the EHS Office to ensure that all risks associated with their class activities are identified and to assure that their respective classroom procedures mirror the EHS and Academic Department guidelines. Each of these policies and procedures must be followed by all students and faculty. Most importantly, faculty are to act in accordance with all safety compliance, state and federal, as employees of this college and are expected to act as examples of how to create art in a way to minimize risk, and reduce harm to themselves and the environment. Faculty must identify, within each art making process, and require personal protection equipment use, by each student for each class, when applicable. Students are required to purchase personal protection equipment appropriate to their major. Those students who do not have the proper personal protection equipment will not be permitted to attend class until safe measures and personal protection is in place.

Environmental Health and Safety (EHS)

It is the responsibility of faculty and students to follow health and safety guidelines relevant to their individual activities, processes, and to review MICA's Emergency Action Plan and attend EHS training. It is each faculty member's responsibility to coordinate with the EHS Office to ensure that all risks associated with their class activities are identified and to assure that their respective classroom procedures mirror the EHS and Academic Department guidelines. Each of these policies and procedures must be followed by all students and faculty. Most importantly, faculty are to act in accordance with all safety compliance, state and federal, as employees of this college and are expected to act as examples of how to create art in a way to minimize risk, and reduce harm to themselves and the environment. Faculty must identify and require appropriate personal protective equipment for each art making process, for each student, in all of their classes, when applicable. Students are required to purchase personal protection equipment appropriate for their major. Those students who do not

have the proper personal protection equipment will not be permitted to attend class until safe measures and personal protection are in place.

Plagiarism

Each discipline within the arts has specific and appropriate means for students to cite or acknowledge sources and the ideas and material of others used in their own work. Students have the responsibility to become familiar with such processes and to carefully follow their use in developing original work.

Policy

MICA will not tolerate plagiarism, which is defined as claiming authorship of, or using someone else's ideas or work without proper acknowledgment. Without proper attribution, a student may NOT replicate another's work, paraphrase another's ideas, or appropriate images in a manner that violates the specific rules against plagiarism in the student's department. In addition, students may not submit the same work for credit in more than one course without the explicit approval of the all of the instructors of the courses involved.

Consequences

When an instructor has evidence that a student has plagiarized work submitted for course credit, the instructor will confront the student and impose penalties that may include failing the course. In the case of a serious violation or repeated infractions from the same student, the instructor will report the infractions to the department chair. Depending on the circumstances of the case, the department chair may then report the student to the Office of Academic Affairs, which may choose to impose further penalties, including suspension or expulsion.

Moodle

MICA uses the computer classroom site called Moodle. Everyone enrolled in the course with the registrar should have access to the site. Be sure to have your enrollment papers and your log-in and password information correct: if there is a problem, be sure to see the Help Desk at the Art Tech Center on Mount Royal Ave.

To reach the Moodle site, go to:

www.classroom.mica.edu

and enter your log-in information. The rest should be self-explanatory.

Readings

- Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: the Cosmos of a Sixteenth-century Miller*.
- Supplementary texts on Moodle class site, online, or handed out in class.

Course Schedule (Topics and Assignments) - Subject to change if necessary.

Assignments are listed the day they are due, not the day they are assigned.

Week 1 – 1/22: Introduction to course

- Introduction to course; introduction to each other.

Week 2 – 1/29: The “Old” World

- “Old Europe,” Traditional Society, *Gesellschaft & Gemeinschaft*, Preindustrial Society, Pre-Modern Society: Modes of Defining the Pre-Modern World.

Reading:

1. Robert Darnton, “Workers Revolt: the Great Cat Massacre of the Rue Séverin” from *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (approx. 35 pages)
2. Fernand Braudel, “Preface” to *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (approx. 4 pages).
3. Peter Spierenburg, “Changing Emotions and World Views” from *The Broken Spell: a Cultural and Anthropological History of Preindustrial Europe* (approx. 13 pages).

Week 3 – 2/5: Time, Nature, Rhythms

- Relationships to the natural world and our place within it; time regimes and their implications.

Reading:

1. Richard Hoffman, “Medieval Christendom in God’s Creation: Environmental Continuities, Co-evolutions, and Changes” (approx. 30 pages).
2. E.P. Thompson, “Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism” (approx. 40 pages).
3. A. Roger Ekirch, “Segmented Sleep” from August 2013 *Harper’s Magazine* (approx. 3 pages).
4. Prefaces of Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms*.

Week 4 – 2/12: *Mentalités*

- Discussion of Ginzburg.

Reading: Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms*.

Writing: Short-answer questions sheet on *The Cheese and the Worms* (10% final grade).

- In addition to the above, students will today be assigned their task in preparation for the class feast in Week 9 (3/26). Recipes and other reading materials will be provided by the professor from Madeleine Pelner Cosman, *Fabulous Feasts*:

Medieval Cookery and Ceremony; Posner, *Medieval Holidays and Festivals*; Constance B. Heiatt, Brenda Hosington, Sharon Butler, *Pleyn Delit: Medieval Cookery for Modern Cooks*; and Jeffrey L. Singman, *Daily Life in Elizabethan England*.

Week 5 – 2/19: Folklore as a concept; Folktales

- History of the concept of folklore; methods of accessing and working with “folk” culture in the past and today.

Reading:

1. Richard Dorson, “Concepts of Folklore and Folklife Studies” from *Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction* (approx. 50 pages).
2. Selected Folktales with commentary from Kate Wolford, *Beyond the Glass Slipper*.

Week 6 – 2/26: Songs as Historical Sources

- Discussion of the connection between music and *mentalité*.

Reading:

1. George List, “Folk Music” from Dorson, ed., *Folklore and Folklife* (approx. 20 pages).
2. David Hopkin, “Work Songs and Peasant Visions of the Social Order” from *Voices of the People in Nineteenth-century France* (approx. 25 pages).
3. Selections from the *The English & Scottish Popular Ballads*, ed. Francis James Child & *Slave Songs of the United States*, ed. William Francis Allen, Charles Pickard Ware, and Lucy McKim Garrison.
4. Listen to songs from class CD.

Week 7 – 3/5: Village Life, City Life and Work

- Modes of work; social relationships in town and country.

Reading:

1. Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, “Social Relationships” from *Montaillou: The Promised Land of Error* (approx. 25 pages).
2. Jacob Melish, “Women and the Courts in the Control of Violence between Men: Evidence from a Parisian Neighborhood under Louis XIV” in *French Historical Studies* 33 #1 (Winter 2010): 1-31.
3. Miscellaneous documents: notary records from Kathryn Reyerson & Debra Salata, *Medieval Notaries and their Acts*; and apprenticeship contracts from *Medieval Towns: a Reader*, ed. Maryanne Kowaleski; documents on women’s work from *Women’s Worlds in Seventeenth-century England: A Sourcebook*, ed. Patricia Crawford and Laura Gowing.

- Students will today be assigned their diary/memoir for their paper due in Week 11 (4/9).

Week 8 – 3/12: Criminal Records & Coroner’s Rolls

- Problems and benefits of using criminal records to access the lower classes.

Reading:

1. Miscellaneous Criminal Records from the 14th-18th Cs.
2. Excerpts from *Select Cases from the Coroner’s Rolls*, ed. Charles Gross.

***** NO CLASS 3/19 SPRING BREAK *****

Week 9 – 3/26: Class Festival! Food! Games!

- Bring your appetite and sense of merriment: in class today we will have a feast featuring food made (by you) from pre-modern recipes, and we will play a few Renaissance and medieval games and listen to some of the period’s music.

Assignment: Planning, decorations, events and food will be prepared by students. Remember to provide a brief write-up describing your preparation and your experience in preparing for the activity.

Week 10 – 4/2: Individual Meetings

- WE WILL NOT MEET AS A CLASS TODAY: CLASS TIME WILL BE USED FOR INDIVIDUAL STUDENT/PROFESSOR MEETINGS TO DISCUSS YOUR FINAL PROJECTS.

- Final project topics must be chosen by this date.

Week 11 – 4/9: Selfhood and Memory

- Discussion of the individual memoir/diary/letter entries and books and papers.

Reading: Complete your individually assigned memoir/diary/letters.

Writing: Paper (3-4 pages) assessing your memoir source.

Week 12 – 4/16: Family Life

- Myths and realities in the domestic world of the past.

Reading:

1. John Gillis, “Myths of Families Past” in *A World of their Own Making* (approx. 18 pages).
2. Excerpt from *The Good Wife’s Guide*, trans. Greco & Rose, pp. 138-146 (14th-century instructions from husband to his young wife).
3. Excerpt from William Gouge, *Of Domestic Duties* (1622), pp. 152-188.

4. Various excerpts from *Women's Worlds in Seventeenth-century England: A Sourcebook*, ed. Patricia Crawford and Laura Gowing (approx. 15 pages).

Week 13 – 4/23: Material Culture, Part I

- Methodologies of material culture. What is our relationship to things? What do our things say about us?

Reading:

1. James Deetz, "Recalling Things Forgotten: Archaeology and the American Artifact" from *In Small Things Forgotten: an Archaeology of Early American Life*, pp. 1-37.

Week 14 – 4/30: Material Culture, Part II

- Examples of Material Culture.

Reading:

1. Student selects a chapter on material culture interesting to them. You may pick a chapter from *In Small Things Forgotten* on 1) ceramics; 2) houses; 3) cemeteries; or 4) colonial-era African-American material culture. Or you may pick from Roberta Gilchrist *Medieval Life: Archaeology and the Life Course* on 5) medieval clothing; or 6) medieval domestic material culture.

Week 15 – 5/7: FINAL CLASS

- Presentations of Final Projects. Farewells.

Assignments: Final Research Papers due today!!!