BRIEF COURSE DESCRIPTION.

This course is concerned with the analysis of the theoretical foundations and general methodological principles of a variety of thinkers who can loosely be described as historicist. From Vico's original idea of a New Science, the science of history, to Gramsci's absolute historicism, this school is noted for its emphasis on the historical analysis of social practices, and its critique of the so-called positivist social sciences. The thought of Vico, Sorel and Gramsci will be carefully examined. Their views on the nature of knowledge, the historical process, and their contribution to the methods of social enquiry will constitute the focus of the course.

READINGS.

Required readings.


Braudel, Fernand. *On History*. (Scott reserves)


Sorel, George. *Reflections on Violence*. Peter Smith. (Scott reserves)


**Recommended readings.**


Cox, W. W. *Production, Power, and World Order*. (Scott reserves)


Fiori, A. *Antonio Gramsci. Life of a Revolutionary*. (Scott reserves)

Haddock, B. A. *Vico’s Political Thought*. Brynmill: Mortlake Press, 1986 (Scott reserves)


USEFUL WEB SITES:

Resources on Antonio Gramsci (Bibliografia Gramsciana and others)
http://www.soc.qc.edu/gramsci/

International Gramsci Society
http://www.italnet.nd.edu/gramsci/

GRADING SCHEME.

Short paper (due Oct. 21) ....................... 30%
Research paper (due Dec. 9) ...................... 50%
Seminar participation .......................... 10%
Seminar presentation ............................ 10%

ASSIGNMENTS.

Undergraduate Students:

1. Each week, one (or two) students will present one (or two) of the non-required readings to the class. The purpose of the presentation is to provide some key ideas and arguments on which to centre the discussion. Hence, rather than a full and detailed report on the contents of the article, the presentation should bring out the main conclusions, the salient points, the supporting arguments, and any other feature worth discussing.
2. The first paper should be a critical analysis of one of the readings for the course. It is not to be a mere summary of the article; rather, it should focus on the central argument of an article, explore its soundness, draw its implications, and then either criticize its weaknesses, or if you deem it appropriate, attempt to strengthen the author's position. This essay should be of 6 to 8 pages (1500-2000 words) in length.

3. The second paper should develop a thesis on some appropriate topic of your own choice. You must consult the instructor on your chosen topic. This paper should be based on some research to explore different approaches to the subject matter of the paper. However, the paper is not to be merely a report on the state of the debate, but rather a well-developed, systematic argument in defence of your well-considered thesis. Research is a necessary component; it helps you to discover other ways of dealing with the material at the same time that it connects you with the intellectual community: Writing is essentially a dialogue. It must be of 10 to 15 pages in length (2500-3000 words).

Provide proper reference notes for all quotations, paraphrases, ideas, or significant facts taken from other sources. Consult Kate Turabian's *Manual for Writers*, or Joseph Gibaldi and Walter S. Achtet's *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* for proper notes or citations and bibliographical entries.

Graduate Students:

All graduate students will initiate the discussion with a presentation similar to the one described in 1 above. However, they will have the option of writing a single research paper of roughly 25 pages (6250 words) or a short, exploratory paper of 8-12 pages (2000-3000 word) and a longer research paper of 15-20 pages (3750-5000 word).

Both undergraduates and graduates should consult the instructor on assignment choices.

READING SCHEDULE.

Sep. 9 Introduction: Historicism and History.

16 History and Philosophy
   Readings: Khaldun (pp. vii-xiv, 1-43), Cox, Braudel ("History and the Social Sciences: The Longue Durée").

23 Vico and his times

30 Vico on Knowledge
   Collingwood, pp. 59-71
   Stark, "G. Vico's Sociology of Knowledge"
   Berlin, "A Note on Vico's Concept of Knowledge"
Oct. 7  Language and Myth
          White, "The Tropics of History"
          Cantelli, "Myth and Language in Vico"

14  Vico on History
          Book IV, The Course of Nations Run
          Book V, The Recourse of Human Institutions
          Which Nations Take When They Rise Again
          Walsh, "The Logical Status of Vico's Ideal Eternal History"

21  Sorel and his Times
Readings: Hughes, H. Stuart. *Consciousness and Society*.

28  First essay is due

Nov. 4  Sorel: Knowledge and History
          "Materials for a Theory of the Proletariat" (*From Geroges Sorel*, pp. 227-56)
          Jennings, J. R. "Sorel, Vico, and Marx."

11  Sorel: Morals and Action.
Readings: Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*
          Sorel, " The Ethics of Socialism" (*From Geroges Sorel*, pp. 94-110)

18  Gramsci and his Age.
Readings: Fiori, A. Antonio Gramsci. Life of a Revolutionary.

25  Gramsci History and Political Theory.
          Morera, *Gramsci's Historicism*
          Jacobitti, E. E. "From Vico's Common Sense to Gramsci's Hegemony."
          Cox, R. W. "Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations: An Essay in Method."
Dec. 2  Gramsci on Culture, History, and Fordism.
Readings: Gramsci, *Selections*, pp. 1-122, 277-318
Cox, R. W. Production, Power, and World Order, ch. 9.

**Second essay is due**