

**THE BIG 3+1:
RACE, GENDER, CLASS, & MODERNITY**

**H548D, Graduate Seminar in Historiography, Autumn 2014
Department of History, The University of British Columbia
Wednesday, 9:30-12:00, Buchanan Tower, 1197**

Prof. Paul Krause, 1122 Buchanan Tower / Office Hours TBD

NB: There is an assignment for the first meeting of the year, which is on Wednesday, Sept. 3. The assignment is Herman Melville's short story, "Benito Cereno." This text is available online at multiple sites — [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), or [here](#) – to list but four, and in the UBC Bookstore: Herman Melville, *Benito Cereno*, edited by Wyn Kelly, and published by Bedford/St. Martin's. Additionally, there are multiple copies in the library, in many bookstores in Vancouver, and moreover on other places on the web. Unlike all other assignments, this one is meant to be undertaken solo – that is, without reading any criticism of, or any commentary on, the text, and also without consultation with your colleagues. On the first day of class, be ready to discuss this text in depth and with precision, and to give a presentation of no more than two minutes on the argument that Melville puts forward. Be equipped to defend your interpretation with references to the text. You may find it helpful to keep a journal as you read "Benito Cereno."

OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE: THE BIG 3+1

This course offers an introduction to how the discipline of history has developed and where it stands, for the most part moving from the semantically straightforward to the more complex, and focusing largely on two vexing problems – interpretation and culture, and power and violence, and how these two problems demand interrogations of the categories of race, class, gender, and modernity. Along the way, we will delve into a variety of other disciplines and sub-disciplines and also wander through time and across the globe, traversing Europe, the Americas and the Caribbean, China, the Middle East, and India. Our journey will engage metropole and periphery, colonizer and colonized, indigene and foreign, androcentric and feminist. And we will explore a range of literatures, voices, and genres: fiction; literary criticism; anthropology; works categorized as strictly historiographic; historical monographs aimed at making sense of the past but also at how we make sense of the past; engaged polemic and putatively detached analysis.

We begin with an overture comprised of two texts, one literary and the other historical, which, though they antedate the post-modern era, may well challenge many received modes of contemporary historical and critical analysis. These texts – Herman Melville's "Benito Cereno," and C.L.R. James's investigation of the great slave revolt in Saint Domingue, *The Black Jacobins* – raise questions about voice and personhood, agency and narration, and historical representation and method, and do so in ways which should prove accessible to those who have little or no formal graduate training. These works also foreground issues of historical epistemology that stand at the centre of the enterprise.

The seminar will have occasion to explore such issues throughout the term, and we shall conclude by formally revisiting Melville and James, and by reading a new work, Greg Grandin's The Empire of Necessity, which directly engages "Benito Cereno." Our second crack at Melville and James will come after we will have completed a number of other excursions, including the "post-post-modern" work of two contemporary scholars: David Scott's riff on James's book – and on many others, as well – Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment, and Michel-Rolph Trouillot's Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History, which also places the modern history of Haiti at centre stage. A paper by the historian Jeremy Popkin, which offers a possibly unfashionably "retro" look at the slave revolt in Haiti, and which is drawn from his new work, 'You Are All Free: The Haitian Revolution and the Abolition of Slavery, provides one of several alternate finales to the course. How and why, as we shall see, is a question that goes to the heart of the arguments informing H548D.

Scott, Trouillot, and Popkin offer penetrating commentaries on many post-modern writers, and put forward arguments about how to do history in a scholarly era rife with theoretical confusion and opacity. Where Melville and James serve up critiques of the modern world and its understandings of itself, Scott and Trouillot urge scholars to step beyond reductivist post-modernity and facile rejections of the possibilities for informed, meaningful scholarship. Popkin, for his part, argues more from example, but his work nonetheless engages the large question of modernity and its links to freedom and slavery, to civilization and barbarism, to power and insurgency, and to the notion of historical causality itself. (These questions are more thoroughly addressed in Popkin's book, and interested members of the seminar may want to read this text, as well.)

Just how to do worthwhile, defensible history stands as the largest question that H548D poses, and we will begin to address it well before we get to the challenging work at the end of the term. In fact, we directly confront the question immediately after our initial encounters with Melville and James, when we read Silencing the Past, which in recent years has become a favorite, if not a kind of *Urtext*, for many UBC graduate students, faculty members, and undergraduates. Following Trouillot, and continuing and extending the theme of silencing and unsilencing, we will engage the work of the pioneering feminist historian Joan Scott and of one of her intellectual heirs, Judith Bennett. The historian Elizabeth Clark, who also self-identifies as a feminist, also extends Trouillot in certain ways and moreover explores some vexing epistemological problems. With Clark, which can serve as a kind of crib sheet or program guide to post-modernism, with all its quirks and vagaries, we conclude the introductory module of the course.

Next, we will consider more carefully positivism and its legacies, including Marxism. And then in subsequent weeks we engage: the anthropologist Clifford Geertz and problems in the interpretation of culture; the philosophers Paul Ricoeur and Charles Taylor, who wrestle more systematically with the problem of interpretation; the cultural historian Alain Corbin, who unearths (or creates) some surprising truths about the murder of a nobleman in an isolated French village in 1870; Tim Brook, who weaves global economic, art, and Chinese history into a compelling narrative that conflates micro and macro, personal and social, and West and East; the historian Richard White, who explores the emerging world of shared meanings and practices shaped by indigenes and Europeans alike in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815; for a second time, the historian Joan Scott – in this instance, her more recent work, and critical assessments of it offered by Judith Butler and others; and, finally, Edward Said, Arif Dirlik, and Dipesh Chakrabarty, who, in exploring post-modern and post-colonial history in Europe, China and on

the Indian sub-continent, offer compelling critiques of modernity, reintroduce some of the problems encountered at the very beginning of the course in Melville and James, and set up the final sessions of the seminar.

For them, we will read Scott and Popkin, and Grandin and/or Snyder, whose recent book, Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin, presents a magisterial, and magisterially disturbing, account of the most modern of wars in the most civilized of worlds. In so doing, Snyder interrogates, like Richard White, a “borderlands” region where history is informed by high-stakes geo-political maneuvers, ethnic violence, contests between putative barbarisms and putative civilizations, and genocidal or quasi-genocidal death. For those interested in comparative history, and in the problem of analytic categories, White and Snyder invite weighty concluding questions. For those who may be equally or more intrigued by related questions raised by Melville, James, Popkin, and Scott – questions that most certainly include the meaning of modernity – the final texts will be Greg Grandin’s The Empire of Necessity, as well as an extraordinary review of it by the literary and social critic H. Bruce Franklin.

Active engagement in the seminar is expected, and there will be opportunities for students to lead the discussions. Peer review of some of the shorter written assignments, which will be explained in detail at our first meeting, also will be offered. There will be a final, synthetic essay assigned later in the term; it will be due during the exam period, and once the date for submission is set, it must be observed. No extensions will be available, save for the most exigent of circumstances, as will be discussed at our first meeting. I have put this rule in place not for reasons of personal convenience, and certainly not to flex professorial power but, rather, as a way of protecting seminar members from the consequences, personal and professional, that often follow in the wake of incomplete work.

Throughout the term, careful attention must be paid to the texts we read. It is these readings which will inform our meetings – meant to be thoughtful discussions, not radio call-in shows, and meant to keep potentially interesting associations to other texts at some distance from centre stage. In our discussions, as in written work, it is therefore advisable to avoid invoking reputed or assumed authorities in an attempt to make a point: stick to the texts at hand and to your own trusted readings of them, which ought to be at once empathic and critical.

The breakdown for calculating term marks will approximate the following chart:

Short critical essays of no more than four pages; no more than three assignments per term.	25%
Brief oral and written commentaries on these papers by your peers.	10%
The quality of your contributions to our discussions. Such contributions may include brief presentations as well as the give-and-take of normal seminar exchange.	25%
A final paper of no more than 15 pages. You will receive some suggestions for questions, but you also will be able to frame your own questions, in consultation with the instructor.	40%

Please be advised that plagiarism in any form cannot be tolerated and that, if it should occur, no energy will be spared to enforce the rules and regulations of the Department of History and of the university, as well as the statutes and legal codes of the Province of British Columbia. Please familiarize yourselves with such rules, etc. We will be talking about this issue at our first session.

GUIDELINES FOR H548D, 2014

1. Participation, Comfort and Civility, and Workplace Safety

Participation in our discussions is an essential part of this seminar. What does participation mean? It means active engagement with your colleagues; it means asking questions and listening carefully to others; it means trying to answer questions and having the courage to share your ideas; it means coming to class prepared – that is, coming to class with having completed the reading. Each of us shares the responsibility for how well H548D will work. Accordingly, we need to build an environment where everyone feels welcome and safe, where all of our ideas are respected, and also where they can be explored and criticized.

This means above all that it is our shared responsibility to ensure that everyone in the class is comfortable and safe in it, and that no one feels ill-at-ease for reasons of age or gender, economic standing, political preference, race, ethnic or religious background, national origin, or sexual orientation. It therefore follows that jokes at anyone's expense other than that of the instructor are not permitted.

The issue of workplace safety is of paramount importance, and it requires that all of us adhere to codes of behavior – in and out of the classroom and indeed wherever we encounter each other – that respect the emotional and physical integrity of all of our colleagues, and well-known, established behavioral and social boundaries which, as newspapers and television remind us on a daily basis, all-too-often continue to be breached. My expectation, and the expectation of the Department of History, is that all of us will abide by the guidelines for appropriate behavior outlined by UBC, as well as by these more directly stated standards of H548D and of our graduate program. UBC has issued a new policy on the matter of respectful environments for students, faculty, and staff. It is available here: <http://www.hr.ubc.ca/respectful-environment/>. And you may find UBC's most recent update on the issue of sexual assault and workplace safety here: <http://www.ubc.ca/staysafe/>.

2. Marks

No one likes to deal with marks, but they are a fact of our university lives. In H548D, you will be rewarded for consistently doing your work over the course of the entire term; there will be chances to resubmit work with which you may be dissatisfied.

Work that receives an "A" is inspired: it demonstrates a thorough grasp of the material and an *original* understanding of it. Work that receives a "B" means that it constitutes a strong performance and demonstrates a good understanding of the material. A "C" in this class means that you have attained an adequate comprehension of the material we cover, but one that contains serious gaps and misunderstandings. A "D" will be awarded if your work is completely inadequate, that is, if it reveals that you have no real understanding of the material we have

covered. A “C” or lower signals caution to the graduate advisor and ordinarily necessitates meetings and conferences to figure out ways to improve and to assess your status in the program.

Remember that marks are merely an evaluation of your work, and not a comment on your intelligence. They are not an evaluation of you as a person. And they are not a comment on how hard you have worked. It is possible in this class to work very hard, and still receive a “B.” Curiously, perhaps, the more you concentrate on marks and on the results, the less well you may do. In learning, it is the process that matters and, I believe, it is the process which in the end determines the results. So, work hard, take notes when you read – I can help with strategies about this – and ask questions. If you can do this, the results should take care of themselves.

If you are experiencing difficulties with the readings, please come see me. We can discuss the troublesome material or, if you like, some general strategies for doing the work in H548D. Don’t wait until November or December; drop by early in the term. I always am happy to meet with students. Really.

3. Attendance, Academic Integrity, and Deadlines

What we do in the seminar will help you make sense out of our readings, which are the core of this course. Therefore, attendance at all meetings is mandatory. If you have a valid reason for missing a class, please send me an e-mail. If you become seriously ill or have a crisis that interferes with your work, please let me know so that we can discuss strategies for dealing with the situation and possible exceptions to the regular deadlines. If you do not inform me of the extraordinary circumstances that you may be facing, all work must be completed on time. You will find me sympathetic and flexible if you are confronting a difficult situation; however, if you do not inform me, in advance, you will be expected to complete your work on time.

In the realm of academic integrity, you are expected to refrain from cheating, lying, or engaging in acts of plagiarism. All written work should be prepared and completed by each individual student. If you borrow someone’s words or ideas, they should be cited in the proper manner. See my web page on writing for some links to helpful sites on how to avoid plagiarism.

If you face a learning challenge, such as a diagnosed “learning disability,” please know that I stand ready to work with you so that you can achieve to the fullest extent to which you aspire. Drop by to discuss the course requirements and whatever accommodations may be helpful to you. If you have fears about speaking in public, please let me know so that we can work out an appropriate, helpful, and non-threatening strategy for equitable evaluation and, I would hope, for some modicum of success in this realm. If you do approach public speech with trepidation – and also if you do not – try to assume that you are among friends in H548D. My experience suggests that the more of us who proceed from this assumption, the more likely it is to become a demonstrable fact of our shared classroom experience.

4. More on Integrity and Writing

Consistent attendance, conscientious reading, and attentive and civil participation are essential parts of your work in this course. In this realm, as in all others, strict adherence to the principles of academic integrity is expected. Plagiarism, in any form, will not be tolerated. For guidance on writing and on professional integrity, in addition to the web sites listed on my “writing page” (<http://faculty.arts.ubc.ca/pkrause/writing%20links%20and%20tips.html>), see the UBC Calendar. Additionally, the following sites may be helpful:

<https://www.history.ubc.ca/content/common-questions-about-citations> and <http://help.library.ubc.ca/planning-your-research/academic-integrity-pla...> You may also want to check out UBC's policies on academic misconduct: <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,960>.

Above all, please remember that all authors own their ideas, words, and research; you therefore must give appropriate credit, typically in the form of quotations and footnotes, when using the work of another scholar. Plagiarism, whether or not it is “intentional,” is a serious violation of UBC's standards; violations of the standards will be prosecuted. If your work is late, if you feel under pressure, do anything but cheat, please. Do not jeopardize your career and your good name for the sake of a mark in H548D. It is not worth it.

Take great care when using resources on the Web. Many can prove helpful, but a significant number of web-based sources and materials can be misleading – including, of course, Wikipedia. Be certain that unattributed sentences gleaned from the web do not find their way into your submissions. Failure to be vigilant about this matter inevitably will raise questions about academic integrity.

All written work must be:

1. Prepared only on a typewriter or a computer. Handwritten work is not acceptable. And faxes or e-mails of your work cannot be accepted by the Department of History.
2. Double-spaced and formatted in a simple, easy-to-read font, such as Times New Roman. The size of the font must be 12-point.
3. Set so it has margins of one inch on both sides, and at the top and bottom.
4. Numbered by pages and stapled in the upper left corner. (Do not use paper clips or creative folding.)
5. Backed-up, always, at regular intervals. (I recommend every three minutes.) Use a USB mini-drive, an external hard drive, a network storage service, and/or a hard copy. Computer or printer crashes or problems are not acceptable reasons for late submissions.

CALENDAR

Note that, for some weeks, not all of the readings will be required for all members of the seminar. We will make selections and emendations according to our interests and needs. As things always seem to get a bit rushed toward the end of the term, we will be obliged to schedule an additional meeting early in the exam period. For this, we may convene at the instructor's home – which will allow for a festive conclusion to our extra travails. Alternatively, we may have a party earlier in the fall.

Session One, Sept. 3 – Organization of & Expectations for H548D / Ways of Seeing: Post-Modernity *Avant La Lettre*, 1 – The Enlightenment Project & Modernity from the Belly of the 19th-Century Beast

Herman Melville, “Benito Cereno” (1855-56). Unlike all other assignments, this one is meant to be undertaken solo – that is, without reading any criticism of the text and without consultation

with your colleagues. Please be certain to read Melville's story for our first meeting, and follow the instructions for the session that may be found at the beginning of this syllabus.

Session Two, Sept. 10 – Post-Modernism *Avant La Lettre*, 2: From the Belly of the 20th-Century Beast

C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins* (1938, with later changes).

Session Three, Sept. 17 – What is History, 1? (And What is Post-Modernism?) – An Anthropologist On How History 'Works'

Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (1995).

Session Four, Sept. 24 – What is History, 2? Silencing and Unsilencing Problems of Gender and Patriarchy

Joan Scott, AHR article; Judith Bennett, *History Matters*.

Session Five, Oct. 1 – What is History, 3? Problems of Epistemology, Method, & Criteria of Judgment and Evaluation

Elizabeth Clark, *History, Theory, Text: Historians and the Linguistic Turn* (2004).

Session Six, Oct. 8 – The Positivist Tradition: Overviews, Reclamations, Critiques

Readings by Carl L. Becker, Richard J. Evans, R.G. Collingwood, Wulf Kansteiner, Dominick LaCapra, and Joyce Appleby et al, *Telling the Truth About History*, selections.

Session Seven, Oct. 15 – Positivism With a Twist: Marx & Marxism

Karl Marx, "The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte;" LaCapra on "The Eighteenth Brumaire;" Jackson Lears and Raymond Williams on hegemony; additional readings from Thomas Wartenberg and Walter Adamson.

Session Eight, Oct. 22 – History, Anthropology, & the Problems of Culture and Interpretation (in the 'Core' and the 'Periphery')

Readings by Clifford Geertz, Charles Taylor, Raymond Williams, and William Sewell; Paul Ricoeur, "The Model of the Text: Meaningful Action Considered as a Text," *New Literary History* 5 (Autumn 1973): 91-117; and E.P. Thompson on "Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism."

Session Nine, Oct. 29 – History, Anthropology, & the Problem of Culture, Violence, & Modernity in the Metropole

Alain Corbin, *The Village of Cannibals: Rage and Murder in France, 1870* (Harvard University Press; Reprint edition, 2006); Michel Foucault, selected readings.

Session Ten, Nov. 5 – Metropole and/or 'Semi-Peripheral' Meets the 'Peripheral,' Local Meets Global, History Meets Anthropology

Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* OR Tim Brook, *Vermeer's Hat: The Seventeenth Century and the Dawn of the Global World*.

Session Eleven, Nov. 12 – Feminist Historiography & the Problem of Analytic Categories, redux

Joan Scott, The Fantasy of Feminist History; Judith Butler, The Question of Gender. Also of interest: David Halperin, "Forgetting Foucault: Acts Identities, and the History of Sexuality," Representations 63 (Summer, 1998): 93-120, and "Is There a History of Sexuality?" History and Theory 28 (Oct. 1989): 257-74.

Session Twelve, Nov. 19 – Postcolonial and Subaltern History: Trying to Put it All Together, 1

Edward Said, Orientalism, selections; Dipesh Chakrabarty on "postcoloniality;" Arif Dirlik, "Thinking Modernity Historically: Is "Alternative Modernity" the Answer?" Asian Review of World Histories 1:1 (January 2013), 5-44. Also of interest: Dirlik, "Chinese History and the Question of Orientalism," History and Theory 35, no. 4 (1996): 96-118; "Reversals, Ironies, Hegemonies: Notes on the Contemporary Historiography of Modern China," Modern China 22, no. 3 (1996): 243-84, and "Postmodernism and Chinese History," Boundary 2 28:3 (2001):19-60; Immanuel Wallerstein, on China, Marxism and the World System, in Timothy Brook and Gregory Blue, eds., China and Historical Capitalism: Genealogies of Sinological Knowledge (1999).

Session Thirteen, Nov. 26 – Post-Post-Modernity: Trying to Put it All Together, 2 (Narrative Possibilities and Challenges in a Post-Positivist, Post-Constructivist Era)

David Scott, Conscripts of Modernity; Jeremy D. Popkin, essay on Toussaint & Robespierre

Session Fourteen, during the undergraduate exam period – Trying to Put it All Together, 3: Modernity

Snyder, Bloodlands, OR Greg Grandin, The Empire of Necessity and H. Bruce Franklin's review of it

"What appears real and objective from TV or the newspaper is the result ... of choices, of constructions, of a great deal of hiding of other realities. Walter Benjamin says every document of civilization is also a document of barbarism. What we see as real immediately is only a fraction of the truth. It is the role of the intellect not just to amass expert information, but much more basically, to question and, yes, to challenge the framework of knowledge – to ask about the hidden costs or barbarism, to ask for whom is this knowledge useful and why is it set up this way, for whom does this objective news, as it's sometimes called, serve as a reality, for what end, ethical or unethical, is a war declared, a missile deployed, a distant people punished, and so on. The greatest danger to the educated mind is that it should be made silent or stilled in its restlessness, its volatility, its need to ask provocative questions that challenge authority.... Most of what is presented as reality is the result of constructions and representations that I believe have to be looked at as having a history which is very often either forgotten, or hidden or distorted."

— Edward Said, Commencement Remarks, Haverford College, 2000