Course outline

I have borrowed the title of this course from Al Franklin's infamous book, *Lies and the Lying Liars Who Tell Them: A fair and balanced look at the Right*, which was published in 2004. Unlike Franklin, however, this course does not take aim at Fox News or Republicans. Rather it focuses on a much more insidious enemy, American historians. And unlike, Franklin whose objective is to correct, what he sees as, the “lies” that exist in American politics and to provide you with the “truth” about what really happened, the objective of the class is not to “right” the “wrongs” of previous scholars. Instead my goal is to help you understand why historians make these types of “mistakes” in the first place and why the “corrections” can be as problematic as the so-called errors.

In order to accomplish this we will be examining some of the most controversial events in American history. Rather than concentrating on the events that unfolded during these years, this course is designed to introduce you to some of the interpretive differences that have developed among historians who study these events. Toward this end, the will focus on questions of historiography.

“Historiography” can best be understood as a study of historical interpretation. It highlights the changes in methods, interpretations and conclusions that historians have used over time. In short it is a history of history. Those interested in questions of historiography have generally assumed that there is no one single “history”. Instead many scholars, albeit not all, believe that historical stories must be understood as a series of incomplete and contradictory narratives that are “ideological” in nature and sometimes tell us more about ourselves than the event or period under examination.¹ This is, of course, a controversial hypothesis but it is one that any student interested in the [hi]stories of the past must come to terms with, whether they agree with its underlying assumptions or not.

Course Reading

There are two required books for this course. The first is Stacy Schiff, *The Witches Salem, 1692*, New York: 2015. The second is Edward Larson, *The Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America’s Continuing Debate Over Science and Religion*, Basic Books: 2006. Both of these books are available in hard copy in the bookstore or as E-books through Chapters, Amazon or I-books for a substantially reduced cost.

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¹ For the purposes of this course, the term ideology is defined as all ideas that have become politicized.
In addition to the two textbooks you are required to read a number of additional documents and articles. These articles are available on BBL.

**Writing Assignments 50%**

This class will focus on developing your writing skills and your ability to critically think about historical questions. As such the assignments are developed with these goals in mind.

**Assignment I: Writing the Origins Story 5%**

For this assignment you will be broken down into groups of four. On Thursday, January 14th your group will meet and examine sources on the Internet in an attempt to determine where the first North Americans came from. Once you have done that you will begin to write a two-paragraph (300-400 word) summary of your argument. In this exercise you will need to concentrate on developing a clear statement that outlines your argument, sentence and paragraph structure, grammar and punctuation. You will also need to provide footnotes for this assignment. Please check the history department style guide for proper formatting. Students who do not include proper footnotes or endnotes in their papers, will received a grade of F. Everyone in the group must participate in the drafting of the assignment and everyone is expected to proof read the assignment before it is handed in. The assignment is due by 12:00 pm on Monday, January 18th, 2016. Late assignments will receive a grade of 0. All assignments must be E-mailed to Dr. Corke. Assignments will be posted on BBL once they have been graded.

**Assignment II: Stacy Schiff and the historiography of the Salam Witch Trails (Draft 1 10% and Draft 2 10%)**

During the first week of classes you should begin reading Stacy Schiff, *The Witches Salem, 1692*. When you are reading the book you should concentrate on what Schiff's central argument is. At the same time, you should also think about how her argument is influenced by our contemporary political and cultural environment. In order to do this I advise that you check as many book reviews on the book as possible.

In order to help you understand how views of the Salem Witch Trials are culturally constructed, on Tuesday, January 26 I will present a lecture that outlines the historiography. In this lecture I will argue that historians' view of the trials has changed depending on the political, social, cultural and ideological periods in which each history was written.

On Thursday, January 28th we will meet to discuss the book. On that same day you will hand in your first draft of the assignment. This draft should be as near to perfection as possible. In this assignment you should focus on your introduction and conclusion, a summary of Schiff's argument and how you believe her argument reflects our contemporary ideological and cultural environment. The assignment should be between 800 and 1000 words. You are expected to use footnotes. Please check the History Department Style Guide for proper formatting. Students who do not include proper footnotes or endnotes in their papers, will received a grade of F. All assignments are due by 10:00 am on Thursday, January 28th, 2016. They must be E-mailed to Dr. Corke. Late papers will lose two marks per day beginning at 10:01 am on Thursday, January 28, 2016.

Professor Corke will grade and return your assignments to you a week later. A second draft, based on her suggestions, is due by 10:00 am on Thursday, February 11, 2016. All assignments must be E-mailed to Dr. Corke. Late papers will lose two marks per day beginning at 10:01 am on Thursday, February 11, 2016.

**Assignment III: The Dropping of the Atomic Bomb 10%**

This assignment is also a group project. On Thursday, March 10th you will be broken down into groups of four and asked to discuss a number of primary documents. These documents are available on the National Security Archives webpage. It is expected that you will have examined the documents before you come to class on Thursday. Based on the documents you will be asked to develop a five-slide,
power-point presentation on the dropping of the atomic bomb. How you decide to approach this topic is up to you. Each group will present the assignment to the class on Thursday, March 17th, 2016. Assignments will then be posted on BBL. The class will then vote on which assignment captures the story of the dropping of the atomic bomb best. (1st place 10/10, 2nd place 9/10, 3rd 8.5/10, 4th 8/10, 5th and 6th 7.5/10, 7th and 8th 7/10, 9th and 10th 6.5/10). Late assignments will receive a grade of 0.

**Assignment IV: Essay on the Scopes Trial 25%**

In this assignment you are asked to explain how and why our understanding of the Scopes Trial has changed between 1960 (and the release of the movie Inherit the Wind) and 2006 with the release of the book The Summer of the Gods. The assignment should be between 2,000 and 2,500 words. In this project we will be focusing on developing a thesis statement and marshaling evidence to support that thesis. I expect all students to have a clear argument or thesis in their paper. This should not be difficult. Your thesis statement is how and why you believe our understanding of the Scopes Trial has changed. The purpose of this essay is to convince me that your argument is correct. As a result the thesis is the central point to which all other information relates. Your thesis informs the reader of the conclusions you have reached. It is always an arguable or debatable point. Your thesis must be more than a description of the topic or a statement of fact: it should present your interpretation of the sources you have examined.

Once you have decided on a thesis, the paper itself should then concentrate on “proving” the thesis using the book, the film and any relevant articles or book reviews on the topic. Keep in mind that whatever argument you make must be articulated clearly in the introduction, developed coherently throughout the paper and summed up in the conclusion. Make sure that you stick to your thesis throughout the paper. Try not to get off track. As you are writing the paper, continually ask yourself; “How does this relate to my thesis?” If it does not directly relate to your argument, cut it out. Throughout the paper, provide me with clues that remind me what your main argument is. In short explain to me why this or that point is important and why it helps prove your central argument. Last but not least, take some time to think about your answer (or thesis). Write an initial draft and then set it aside for a few days, go back to it when you have had some time to reflect on your argument. In no uncertain terms this thinking stage is the most important part of writing an historical paper or essay.

Each paper must have both footnotes or endnotes and a bibliography. The style of the bibliography is similar to the footnotes, except that the author’s last name appears first, then given names and all works are cited alphabetically. Do not number the sources in your bibliography. Do not include sources in your bibliography that you do not use in your paper. In your footnotes you must cite both direct quotations (and/or preferably paraphrases of direct quotations) and all ideas that you take from a primary or secondary source. The majority of papers have three footnotes per page. When in doubt: footnote. Avoid using sources for multiple notes in a row. This suggests that you have not thought about your topic and that you simply copied someone else’s argument. Your goal in the paper should be to collect as much information, from as many different sources as possible and then construct an argument using primary and secondary sources as evidence to support your case. Students who do not include proper footnotes or endnotes in their papers, will received a grade of F.

All assignments are due by 12:00 pm on April 5, 2015. Late assignments will lose 5 marks per day beginning at 12:01 pm on April 5, 2015.

**Attendance 10%**

It is expected that you will attend all of the classes. You will lose 2% for each undocumented absence. If you miss more than three classes you will receive a grade of 0 for this component of the course

**Participation 20%**

It is expected that you will actively participate in all of the seminar classes. In order to do this, you must complete the weekly readings. Students who come to the classes and do not do the readings
will not receive a grade higher than a C-. Students who come to class, do the readings, and fail to participate will not receive a grade higher than a B-.

Test 10%

The final test will consist of one essay question. It will be based on the material in the whole course.

Reading and Lecture Schedule

Week One
Tuesday, January 5, 2016
Course Introduction
Thursday, January 7, 2016
(L) The Politics of History

Stacy Schiff, *The Witches Salem, 1692*,

Week Two
Tuesday, January 12, 2016
(L) Christopher Who?

Thursday, January 14, 2015
(Seminar) Writing the origins story
Please bring a computer or an alternative electronic device to this class

Stacy Schiff, *The Witches Salem, 1692*,

Week Three
Monday, January 18, 2016, 12:00 P.M.
Assignment #1 Due
Tuesday, January 19, 2016
(L) Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings: The re-appearance of race in American History


Thursday, January 21, 2016
Writing Tutorial: For this class students will be broken down into three groups. The first group will attend an in class writing tutorial from 10:00 A.M. to 10:20 A.M. The second group will attend a tutorial from 10:30 A.M. to 10:50. The third group will attend a tutorial from 11:00 A.M. to 11:20 A.M.

Week Four
Tuesday, January 26, 2016
(L) The Salem Witch Trial

Draft I Assignment #II Due

Thursday, January 28, 2016
(S) Class Discussion: Stacy Schiff, *The Witches Salem, 1692*

Week Five
Tuesday, February 2, 2016
(L) The war of 1812, Gender and the Reconstruction of Laura Secord to sell chocolates

Thursday, February 4, 2016
(S) The War of 1812: Win, Loss, Draw -- Who Cares?

Required Reading
February 8th, 2016 Last day to drop classes without a “W”

Week Six
Tuesday, February 9, 2016
(L) Civil Wars
Thursday, February 11, 2016
(S) Debating the Civil War in Popular Memory

Draft II Assignment II Due

Required Reading
Links to a selection of magazine and newspaper articles will be available on BBL.

Week Seven
February 15th-19th Reading Week: No classes
Edward Larson, *The Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate Over Science and Religion*

Week Eight
Tuesday, February 23, 2016
(L) The historiography of World War One
Thursday, February 25, 2016
(S) Telling stories on the origins of World War One

Required Weekly Reading
A number of textbooks will be put on reserve at the library. You will be asked to read a section on World War One from one of the textbooks.

Week Nine
Tuesday, March 1, 2016
(L) Understanding “Fundamentalism” and “Modernism” in the debates over Evolution.
Thursday, March 3, 2016

Writing Tutorial II: For this class students will be broken down into three groups. The first group will attend an in class writing tutorial from 10:00 A.M. to 10:20 A.M. The second group will attend a tutorial from 10:30 A.M. to 10:50. The third group will attend a tutorial from 11:00 A.M. to 11:20 A.M.

Required Weekly Reading
Edward Larson, *The Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate Over Science and Religion*

Week Ten
Tuesday, March 8, 2016
(F) Inherit the Wind
Thursday March 10, 2016
(S) The Scopes Trial

Required Weekly Reading
Edward Larson, *The Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate Over Science and Religion*

Week Eleven
Tuesday, March 15, 2016
Thursday, March 17, 2016
(S) Working Group: Using Primary Sources to Write History
Required Weekly Reading


**Week Twelve**
Tuesday, March 22, 2016
(L) Culture Wars
Thursday, March 24, 2016
Assignment III Due
(S) Group Power Point Presentations

**Week Thirteen**
Tuesday, March 29, 2016
Test
It is strongly recommended that all students use the bathroom facilities prior to writing the test. You are required to complete your test before exiting the classroom.

Thursday, March 31, 2016
Course evolutions and review

**Week Fourteen**
April 5, 2016
Assignment IV Due
Snow Day

**Class Discussions**
In this class we will be dealing with a lot of controversial questions. As a result, in consultation with the Office of Human Rights and Equity, I have set forth a number of ground rules. They are the following:

Be honest and willing to share.
Listen with curiosity and the willingness to learn.
Resist the desire to interrupt.
Try to understand by asking questions, clarifying, reflecting before responding.
Think critically not only about others’ perspectives but also about your own.
Use “I” statements and speak only for yourself.
Avoid critiquing others experience, focus on your own experience.
You can disagree. Differences in perspectives foster learning.
Suspend judgment. Be open to the kernel of wisdom in each person’s story.
Be brief.

**Accommodation Statement**
Students may request accommodation as a result of barriers experienced related to disability, religious obligation, or any characteristic protected under Canadian human rights legislation. Students who require academic accommodation for either classroom participation or the writing of tests and exams should make their request to the Advising and Access Services Center (AASC) prior to or at the outset of the regular academic year. Please visit www.dal.ca/access for more information and to obtain the Request for Accommodation form.

A note taker may be required as part of a student’s accommodation. There is an honorarium of $75/course/term (with some exceptions). If you are interested, please contact AASC at 494-2836 for more information or send an email to notetaking@dal.ca
Please note that your classroom may contain specialized accessible furniture and equipment. It is important that these items remain in the classroom, untouched, so that students who require their usage will be able to fully participate in the class.

**Academic Integrity Statement**

All students in this class are to read and understand the policies on academic integrity and plagiarism referenced in the Policies and Student Resources sections of the academicintegrity.dal.ca website. Ignorance of such policies is no excuse for violations.

Any paper submitted by a student at Dalhousie University may be checked for originality to confirm that the student has not plagiarized from other sources. Plagiarism is considered a serious academic offence which may lead to loss of credit, suspension or expulsion from the University, or even to the revocation of a degree. It is essential that there be correct attribution of authorities from which facts and opinions have been derived. At Dalhousie there are University Regulations which deal with plagiarism and, prior to submitting any paper in a course, students should read the Policy on Intellectual Honesty contained in the Calendar or on the Online Dalhousie website. The Senate has affirmed the right of any instructor to require that student papers be submitted in both written and computer-readable format, and to submit any paper to be checked electronically for originality.

As a student in this class, you are to keep an electronic copy of any paper you submit, and the course instructor may require you to submit that electronic copy on demand. Professor Corke may also ask you to provide various drafts of your assignments.