

SYLLABUS

LBS 502 Seminar in the Humanities: History, Literature, and Film
Summer 2017

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Course Introduction

This course will explore how historical events, people, movements, ideas, and the like are handled by historians, fiction writers and film makers. History is constrained by evidence, but the interpretation of that evidence is almost endless. Nevertheless at any given point, there is a kind of operating interpretation that holds favor with historians. The creative arts, and in this case both fiction and film, are not bound by the rules forced upon historians. The way this plays out offers an opportunity to look at different representations of history in the humanities.

Course Requirements

The class will focus on four European historical subjects, each with their own issues of historical interpretation and methodology. In each case we will anchor our historical understanding of these subjects with a book and a discussion of its historiography (the understanding of that subject over time and as it stands today) in a lecture/discussion class. We will then consider a novel or play that uses that historical subject to see in what ways that subject is handled in fictional work and for what purpose. Here we will consider how that subject is handled by the author, and consider how the plot, characters, style, etc., use that subject as the basis of the story. Lastly, we will look at a film on the same subject and compare it to both the fictional and historical treatment of the subject at hand. Students will write ca. 900-1200 word reaction essays (4) about each, discussing what was covered, attempting to arrive at some kind of synthesis about the subjects treated in these ways. To finish the semester students will expand one of these subjects and produce a final paper of some 3200 words. This final paper must reflect some additional reading and research beyond that gone over in class.

Grading and the like:

Attendance in class will be mandatory.

Each of the four reaction essays will constitute 10% of the final grade. The final paper will constitute 40% of the final grade.

Students should come to class prepared to discuss the materials assigned. Films will be shown in class but may of course be viewed ahead of time on your own if desired (film understanding

always improves with more than one viewing). In any case, class participation and preparation will constitute for the final 20% of the final grade.

Subjects and Required Readings with the films to be shown in class in the following order (those books available in Kindle noted). For expanding one of these subjects for purposes of the final essay you will add and use the material indicated below.

The Dreyfus Affair: An Incident in History

Books: History: Piers Paul Read, *The Dreyfus Affair* (Kindle)
Fiction: Robert Harris, *An Officer and a Spy* (Kindle)

Film: *Prisoner of Honor*

To expand this for the final essay: Add the Film *The Life of Emile Zola* and Louis Begley's *Why the Dreyfuss Affair Matters*

Thomas More: Biography and History

Books: History: John Guy, *Thomas More* (Reputations Series published in 2000)
Fiction: John Guy, *A Daughter's Love* (Kindle)

Film: *A Man for all Seasons*

To expand this for the final essay: See Episodes of the TV series, *The Tudors* and Ricard Marius's *Thomas More: A Biography*

Britain Between the Wars: An Era and its Zeitgeist

Books: History: Robert Graves and Alan Hodges, *The Long Week-End*
Fiction: Evelyn Waugh, *A Handful of Dust* (Kindle)

Film: *This Happy Breed*

To expand this add: The film *Brideshead Revisited* and Robert Overy's *The Twilight Years*

Existentialism

Books: History: Victor Frankel, *Man's Search for Meaning* (Kindle)
Fiction: Jean-Paul Sartre, *Nausea* (Kindle)

Film: *The Seventh Seal*

To expand this add: Simone de Beauvoir's *The Mandarins* and Woody Allen's film *Stardust Memories*

Or, you may choose to write your final paper on this topic, using the materials indicated below

Thomas Becket

Books: History: Anne Duggan, *Thomas Becket* **or** John Guy, Thomas Becket
John Guy, *Thomas Becket, Priest, Rebel*

Fictional Treatments: T.S. Eliot, *Murder in the Cathedral*

Simon Webb, Gilbert's Tale: *The Life and Death of Thomas Becket*
(Kindle)

Film: *Becket*.

Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine (England)

Books: History: W.L. Warren, *Henry II* **and** Amy Kelly, *Eleanor and the Four Kings*

Fiction: T.S. Eliot, *Murder in the Cathedral*, *Courts of Love* **and**

Elizabeth Chadwick, *the Autumn Throne* (Kindle)

Film: *The Lion in winter*

Henri Toulouse-Lautrec

Books: History: Julian Frey, Toulouse-Lautrec and Marie-Christina, A Life and Toulouse-Lautrec and His World

Fiction: Christopher Moore, *Sacre Bleu* and Pierre La Mure, *Moulin Rouge*

Film: *Moulin Rouge*