

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY MANDI

PROPOSAL FOR A NEW COURSE

Course Name: Historical Theory and Methodology

Course Number: HS631

Credits: 3-0-0-3

Prerequisites: Consent of the course instructor

Intended for: PG

Distribution: Elective for HSS

Semester: Odd/Even

Course Preamble: The scientific study of history depends upon a deep awareness of historical theories and methodological paradigms. These theories and paradigms have evolved over a period of more than two centuries through sustained reflections, empirical research and interdisciplinary engagements. They help researchers to examine historical sources with keener eyes for details, besides enabling them to pose fresh questions and explore new dimensions of the past that can expand the horizons of our historical knowledge.

Course Outline: This course involves an in-depth analysis of various theories and methodologies of history propounded in modern times. It also looks at the debates that have animated their development in the last two centuries. The study will cover six distinct theoretical and methodological currents that emerged in course of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries: i) positivism, idealist history and other early approaches, ii) Marxist history, iii) the Annales school, iv) the narrative, v) the linguistic turn, and vi) oral tradition.

Modules:

1. The Emergence of Modern Historiography [2 Lectures]

- a) The disenchantment with the Enlightenment
- b) The rise of romanticism and idealism
- c) Nationalism, positivism and the rise of the modern practice of history writing

2. Positivism, Idealist History and Other Early Approaches [4 Lectures]

- a) Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel
 - i) dialectics
 - ii) world spirit

- iii) consciousness
- iv) universal history
- b) Leopold von Ranke
 - i) objectivity
 - ii) the primacy of facts
- c) Thomas Babington Macaulay
 - i) progress and linear history
- d) Thomas Carlyle
 - i) the great man theory
- e) R.G. Collingwood
 - i) history as the study of the mind
 - ii) the autonomy of action
 - iii) reenactment
- f) Arnold Toynbee
 - i) challenge and response
 - ii) the creative minority

3. Marxist History [10 Lectures]

- a) Karl Marx
 - i) production and class relations
 - ii) historical materialism
 - iii) commodity fetishism
 - iv) the theory of surplus value
 - v) alienation
 - vi) reification
- b) Frederic Engels
 - i) evolutionary history
 - ii) the interface of anthropology and history
 - iii) dialectical materialism
- c) Antonio Gramsci
 - i) dominance and hegemony
 - ii) culture
 - iii) war of manoeuvre and war of position
- d) Louis Althusser

- i) anti-humanism
- ii) epistemological break
- iii) anti-historicism
- iv) overdetermination
- v) ideological state apparatus

e) British Marxist historiography

- i) Maurice Dobb
- ii) Rodney Hilton
- ii) Edward P. Thompson
- iii) Christopher Hill
- iv) Eric J. Hobsbawm

f) Literature and History

- i) Christopher Caudwell
- ii) George Thomson
- iii) Georg Lukacs
- iv) Raymond Williams
- v) Terry Eagleton

4. Annales School [8 Lectures]

a) Mark Bloch and Lucien Febvre

- i) the departure from political history
- ii) economic structures and relationships
- iii) geography and history

b) Fernand Braudel

- i) time and structure
- ii) geography and *longue duree* processes
- iii) capitalism and civilization

c) History of Mentalities

- i) Georges Duby: the three orders
- ii) Jacques Le Goff: merchants, churches and their time and imagination
- iii) Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie: rural life

d) Quantitative history

- i) Ernest Labrousse

ii) Pierre Chaunu

e) Cultural practices

i) Roger Chartier

5. The Narrative

4 hours

a) Fredric Jameson

i) the political unconscious

ii) narrative as a socially symbolic act

b) Paul Ricoeur

i) time and narrative

ii) mimesis

c) Louis Mink

i) representation and narrative

ii) narrative and cognition

d) Hayden White

i) the critique of narrative history

ii) emplotment

iii) literary narrative and the historical narrative

6. The Linguistic Turn [6 Lectures]

a) Jacques Derrida

i) deconstruction

ii) difference

iii) arch-writing

b) Michael Foucault

i) discourse analysis

ii) discursive formation

iii) archaeology and genealogy

c) Jean-François Lyotard

i) the critique of the metanarrative

d) Stephen Greenblatt

i) new historicism

7. Oral Tradition [3 Lectures]

a) Formulaic composition

- i) Milman Parry
- ii) Albert Lord

b) Oral tradition as history

- i) Jan Vansina
- ii) David Henige

c) Oral history

- i) Evidence and authenticity
- ii) shared authority

8. Analysis [5 Lectures]

a) Causality

- i) Mono-causal explanations
- ii) Multi-causal explanations
- iii) Internal and external causes
- iv) Laws of causality

b) The nature of generalization

- i) Difference between generalization and universalization
- ii) Generalization and the laws of historical causation

c) Argument-building

- i) Facts and argument
- ii) Conjecture
- iii) Logic in argument-building
- iv) Rhetoric

Bibliography:

(Selections from the following works)

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