

# HISTORIOGRAPHY INTO THE 21st CENTURY

**Coordinators: Judy Goldman, Maureen Sullivan**

Influenced by their times, new sources and new philosophies, historians' interpretations of events change over time. Ten IRP members coordinate this study group by exploring the changing interpretations - the historiography - of the following topics: Slavery, Teaching History, Globalization, Africa, Ireland, Literary Imagination, Memory in Israel, Art, Islam and the West, and World War I. Together we look at how various historians have treated these topics over time. We examine why interpretations changed, whether from new documents, historic events or changing social norms. We also discuss whether historians can truly be objective, or whether they are influenced by the values of their times.

## **Readings and other Required Materials:**

A Coursepack will contain readings for the Study Group. Cost estimated at \$20.00. All material will also be available online. Estimated reading time - 2 hours per week. Internet access is required.

**Judy Goldman** has coordinated study groups including Journey from Tribe to Nation, Bible from Joshua through Kings, Moral Dilemmas of the Twentieth Century and History of Ugly Art.

**Maureen Sullivan** has coordinated study groups including War and Peace, 20th Century Historiography and Historical Books of the Hebrew Bible

## **\* \* \* \* \* Syllabus \* \* \* \* \***

The Readings for each session are listed on the web site:

<https://sites.google.com/site/irphistorio/>

Jan 28 . Introduction Maureen Sullivan  
Major turning points in the history of Historiography over the past 100+ years

Feb 4. Slavery: Carol Groneman  
*Gone With the Wind* to *12 Years a Slave*  
From the post Civil War into the 1950s, most historians believed that slavery, although an evil system, had benefitted slaves, civilizing and

Christianizing them. But in the next decades, historians provoked a profound reinterpretation of slavery by changing the question from: “what was done *to* and *for* slaves?” to “how did enslaved African-American men and women *respond* to their enslavement?”

Feb 11 History of Teaching History Rita Silverman  
The shift from civics as history to the current practice of history with civics embedded. Also the shift from American history as the story of the noble white men who founded the country to including women and non-white people.

Feb 18 Changing Views of World War 1 Maureen Sullivan  
The major questions of WWI remain: Why Did it Happen, What Effect Did it Have, What Lessons were Learned. However, the answers have differed in the past 100 plus years.

Feb 25 Africa, the Forgotten History Helise Harrington  
Confronting the prevailing view of a barbaric Africa with no historical consciousness, the initial focus of African historians was “Grand Narratives” of the Africans’ pre-colonial political history and of Africans’ heroic resistance to Imperialism.

Today African historians are taking a more nuanced look at the diverse localized histories of many societies in Africa, including Africans’ struggle against Apartheid in South Africa, the role of women in pre-colonial and colonial societies and the Atlantic slave trade from the viewpoint of Africans who participated in the trade.

Mar 3 History & Literary Imagination Barbara Marwell  
This session considers the nexus of history and literary fiction, specifically in the study of Thomas More and Thomas Cromwell, both Chancellors to Henry VIII. We explore how generations of historians have viewed each of the men, and influenced the contrasting fictional portrays in Robert Bolt’s play, *Man for All Seasons* and Hilary Mantel’s novels, *Wolf Hall* and *Bring Up the Bodies*.

Mar 10 The Shadow of a Gunman: Eileen Sullivan  
Ireland's Easter Rising after 100 Years  
For many years after the 1916 rising in Dublin, accounts of its character

and significance were left to popular historians and journalists who portrayed the event as the last in a long chain of violent rebellions against England led by selfless men who represented a nonsectarian nationalist tradition. Starting in the late 1960s this 'national myth' was seriously challenged by revisionist historians who reflected new documentary sources and a changed political context. In more recent decades, historians have criticized the revisionists both for their conclusions and for their failure to mediate between popular tradition and academic history, maintaining that historians should not simply undermine the traditions that sustain a people.

Mar 14 to Mar 27 Spring Break

Mar 31 State of Israel : The Struggle over Memory Judy Goldman  
In the 1980s and 1990s, a group of historians changed the study of Israeli history. Now in the 21st century, a new generation of scholars are studying new subjects, using new types of sources and new writing styles, asking new questions about Israeli society, and having a more empathic attitude to Zionism than the generation before.

Apr 7 Islam Through Western Eyes Barbara Marwell  
Although only 20% of the world's Muslim population lives in the Middle East, Western perceptions of Islam have largely been formed by studies in this area. This session looks at the intellectual history of the development of the concept of Islam in the West, and the remarkable persistence of the negative image of the "other" from the Middle Ages to the present day.

Apr 14 Globalization Ann-Lou Shapiro  
As economists and political analysts have increasingly moved to examine contemporary problems in transnational terms, so too historians have begun to explore the opportunities (and costs) of using a similar lens to understand historical phenomena.

Apr 21 Art Judy Goldman  
During recent decades, the history of art has broadened to include different theories, new techniques, current social and cultural awareness, and visionary artistic expressions as illustrated in art publications and exhibited in galleries and museums.

Apr 28 Wrap-up

Presenters and Study Group Members