

History 397: Seminar in Comparative History, Spring 2022
Professor Jonathan Skaff

Historiographical Paper on Comparative History

Due: Monday, February 14

Hard copy due in class with the grading sheet on the reverse attached

Electronic Copy submitted to the D2L Dropbox in doc, docx, or rtf file format.

Length: 5 to 8 pages, double-spaced in 12-point font

Topic: Historians have been debating the definition, purpose and value of comparative history for more than a century. By 1980, Raymond Grew, the editor of the journal *Comparative Studies in History and Society*, felt it necessary to write an article entitled, “The Case for Comparing Histories.” More than three decades later, Philippa Levine wrote, “It would not be unfair to say that Raymond Grew’s claim...that comparative history is ‘more widely admired than consciously practiced’ still holds true” (pp. 331-332). A different perspective comes from Sebastian Conrad who wrote in 2017 that, “global/world history is currently booming” (p. 1) and “comparative history in recent years has taken a global turn...and indeed there are no inherent contradictions between the two approaches” (p. 39). In contrast, Levine, argues that, “there is a tendency to conflate world history, transnational or cross-national history, and comparative history, a tendency related to the fallacy that comparative history always works cross-nationally.”

Keeping these debates in mind, write a historiographical paper that argues for your own definition of comparative history, and based on your definition, explains how the comparative field has developed since Grew wrote in 1980. In writing the historiography, be sure to evaluate the purpose and value of new approaches to comparative history that Levine and Conrad discuss. Your main sources for writing the paper are the works by Grew, Levine, and Conrad. Additional research in library sources is allowed, but not necessary. **NO INTERNET SITES ARE ALLOWED UNLESS LEHMAN LIBRARY PROVIDES DATABASE LINKS TO THEM.**

The paper should include citations and a bibliography. Cite Grew, Levine, Conrad, and any other sources in proper Chicago A (Turabian notes-bibliography) or Chicago B (Turabian author-date) format. *The Chicago Manual of Style* (Z253 .U69 2017) and Turabian’s manual (LB2369 .T8 2018) are available at the library reserve desk. Online summaries of the two styles can be found linked to the Skaff website>Study Aids>Writing and Citation Help.

Evaluation of Papers: 80% of the grade will be based on content. Grades of A will be awarded to papers that persuasively define comparative history, thoroughly review the historiographical developments in the field, and persuasively explain the purpose and value of new approaches to comparative history.

The other 20% will be based upon grammar and word usage (4%), spelling, capitalization and punctuation (4%), organization (4%), readability (4%), and citations and bibliography (4%).

