Sarah Maza
History 405-0-22

INTRODUCTION TO CULTURAL HISTORY
Day/Time: M 2:00-4:50
Office Address: Harris Hall Room L31
Office Phone: (847) 467-7033
Email Address: scm@northwestern.edu
Maximum Enrollment: 15

COURSE DESCRIPTION: What is cultural history? Why did it become prominent in the last twenty years or so, and is there truth to rumors of its decline? How does it relate to other approaches to history, and how does it intersect with other disciplines? What are the rules, if any, governing the use of evidence in cultural history? Do cultural-historical approaches lead to the neglect of causality in historical explanation? These are some of the questions we will explore in this version of the 405 seminar. The weekly sessions will include some of the following topics: the debate over historical “objectivity” and “invention”; the relationship between history and fiction; the influence of postmodernists and of thinkers like Michel Foucault on historical writing; cultural approaches to the history of gender, class, race and nationhood; and recent contributions to the history of material culture.

PREREQUISITES: For students outside of History, permission of instructor

TEACHING METHOD: Seminar

EVALUATION METHOD: Two shorter papers (5-6 pg.), a longer final paper (10-12 pg.), class participation

GRADING BASIS: ANC

READING LIST:
We will read a variety of books and articles by Lynn Hunt, Geoff Eley, Clifford Geertz, E.P. Thompson, James C. Scott, Benedict Anderson, Judith Walkowitz, Walter Johnson, Natalie Davis, David Roediger, Gail Bederman, Michel Foucault, Gabrielle Spiegel, William H. Sewell, Robin Bernstein, and others

INSTRUCTOR PROFILE: Sarah Maza has been teaching French history at Northwestern for several decades and has published four books on various aspects of French political, social, and cultural history from the 18th to the 20th century. She also directs NU’s Nicholas Chabraja Center for Historical Studies.