

# HIST355: Making History

## Table of Contents

The Emergence of History as a Modern Scholarly Discipline.....	2
Economic History .....	3
Marxist History + History from Below.....	6
Post-Structural, Post-Modern & Post-Colonial Histories .....	8
Postcolonial Histories & Histories of Race .....	10
Feminist Histories & Histories of Gender.....	12
Historical Research in the Digital Age .....	14
Transnational History.....	16

# The Emergence of History as a Modern Scholarly Discipline

## Focus Questions:

1. How did the type of history that was being produced in the 19thC differ from older forms of history?
  - rather than focusing on great storytelling or political purposes → became more focused on empirical evidence, facts, etc. became a science
2. What is the relationship between empirical history and positivism?
  - empirical history = data-based, relying in primary sources
  - positivism is also, but focused on law of progress
3. Is Whig history dead? Explain your answer
  - no

## Historical writers:

- Herodotus
- Thucydides - Peloponnesian War
  
- how did history begin as a form of creative writing and up being a form of science?

## Progression of the study of history over time

### Medieval traditions

- history & religion entwined
- history as a product of God's will (providence), human societies thought of as moving towards final judgement
- medieval scholars sought to trace their countries' origins, narrate recent histories of kings/villains in chronological way
- in China court historians employed to write history of dynasties - aimed to be more truthful - more scholarly than what was happening in the West
- Islamic traditions - even more scholarly - sought to give causal explanations for history - eg. explaining the economy, society, culture as what drive historical process - Ibn Khaldun

### The Enlightenment

- 18th C - a more enlightened history?
- history as progress toward perfection; unreason to reason; irrationality to rationality; savagery to civilisation
- more preoccupation with individualism, reason, rationalism, progress, etc over the role of religion
- Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) wrote about history as progress, overall scheme of cultural improvement
- saw growth in literacy rates = broader market for history
- publications begin to be more similar to what we have today

### Professionalisation of History as a discipline

- 19th C
- growing focus on diplomacy, politics, influence of 'great men'
- less focus on 'the hand of god'
- fact-oriented empirical approach to history - looking at facts rather than assuming its because of god

- history taught at universities, subject to assessment and earning of qualifications - PhDs

#### Empiricism & Leopold van Ranke

- argued for need to understand and reconstruct the past on its own terms by collecting as many first hand accounts/primary documents as possible - focus on evidence and facts
  - van Ranke championed the idea of collecting primary sources
  - escaping the way history had previously been used for political purposes
- also committed to mastering the narrative and telling a good story
- similar attitudes throughout the Eastern world - not just happening in Europe

#### Whig History

- as in Whigs v. Tories
- political form of history - belief in progress
- purpose is deeply political
- seeks to explain glory, might and enlightened morals of the British Empire and English society in general
- term used to describe works which seek to legitimise historical changes interpreting them as beneficial and progressive
- history is made by 'great men', great powers, etc - not by general workers

#### TB Macaulay's History of England 1848

- What is Macaulay's key argument? How might Macaulay's social context have impacted on his account of the history of England?
  - the idea of progress - particularly economic progress
  - England as the most superior, civilised power in the world
  - told from elite perspective
  - contrast between England being stable and consistently progressive, with Italy/Germany who were undergoing revolution at the time

#### Critique of Whig History

- not until 20th C
- Herbert Butterfield - historical understanding can only be achieved by attempting to see life with the eyes of another century than our own

#### Positivism

- history as a science?
- devised by Auguste Comte (1798-1857) - sociology, positivism
  - sociologists could use scientific methods to analyse data in order to understand the causal links between the past, present, future → to identify the laws of human progress
- dedication to data
- discover the past → link to the present → predict the future
- Lord Acton - empiricist - influenced by Ranke
- Henry Buckle - positivist - influenced by Comte

## Economic History