

Department of English, Carleton University

ENGL 5900X

Fall 2012

*** Preliminary Course Outline / Subject to Change

**Selected Topic in English Studies- Historical Representation
(X with HIST 5906F, CLMD 6106F, and ARTH 5112S)**

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Course description:

(This course is cross-listed with HIST 5906F, CLMD 6106F, and ARTH 5112S.)

This course takes a deliberately broad view of issues of historical representation as they arise in a variety of historically-minded genres, including history “proper”, biography, historical novel, and history painting. Students are encouraged to extend this range still further in their term papers. The focus of our common readings is on narrativity and historical distance as exemplified in the historical thought of the second half of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th. Our starting point will be the idea that history is essentially a mediatory art and therefore that a central issue for historical representation (whatever the genres or media) is the problem of what we will call “historical distance”. Drawing on a variety of theoretical discussions as well as primary readings in history, biography, fiction, and art theory we will explore the idea of “distance” as a tool for analyzing structures of historical representation in a number of different kinds of narrative- including historiographical, philosophical, fictional and visual.