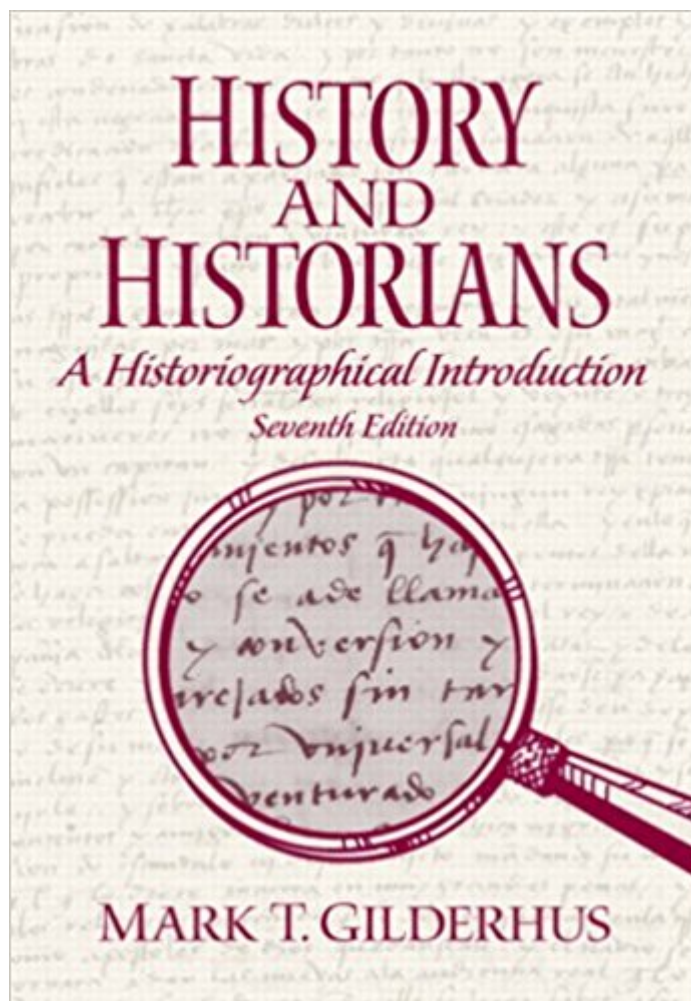


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# History And Historians (7th Edition)



## Synopsis

For undergraduate and graduate courses in Historiography, Philosophy of History, and Historical Methods. Also an ideal supplemental text for Western Civilization and Intellectual History courses.

This concise, best-selling volume presents a thorough and comprehensive overview of Western historical thinking from ancient times until the present. *History and Historians* surveys the main issues and problems in areas such as historiography, philosophy of history, and historical methodology. The book strives for a balanced coverage and attempts to make the subject accessible to readers at all levels.

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## Customer Reviews

Surveying historical thinking in the West from ancient times until the present, this very accessible text focuses on historiography, philosophy of history, and historical methodology, introducing the main issues and problems to beginning students with thorough and balanced discussions. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

*History and Historians: A Historiographical Introduction* Seventh Edition Mark T. Gilderhus

This concise, best-selling volume presents a thorough and comprehensive overview of Western historical thinking from ancient times until the present. *History and Historians* surveys the main issues and problems in areas such as historiography, philosophy of history, and historical methodology. The book strives for a balanced coverage and attempts to make the subject

accessible to readers at all levels. This revised seventh edition provides commentary on recent historiographical tendencies and trends, particularly in the areas of the cultural turn; subaltern studies; postcolonialism; the weapons of the weak; and the negotiation and distribution of power in human transactions over the whole spectrum of class, gender, and race. The bibliographies at the end of each chapter have been updated throughout.

MAIN TOPICS

Aims and Purposes The Beginnings of Historical Consciousness Historical Consciousness in the Modern Age Philosophy of History: Speculative Approaches Philosophy of History: Analytical Approaches Professional History in Recent Times Culture Wars, Postmodernism, and Other Issues

This short book does a good job of providing an overview of Western historical thinking from Herodotus and Thucydides to the modern period. The first chapter is a brief discussion of why we study history to begin with: curiosity, a need to bring order to the world, identify cause and effect, study the identity of a people, calculate the consequences of our actions, and to provide society's memory. Chapters two and three review the evolution of historical writings and their approach. Gilderhus begins with the ancient historians with a discussion of history in Greece and Rome and then reviews the influence of Christian thought; a paradigm against which history revealed the workings of God's plan. This perspective began to disappear as Western Christianity divided and historians of various religious persuasions wrote histories supporting their perspectives of the past. Enlightenment historians went on to reject a religious approach or even a factual approach wishing to rely on reason for their proofs while at the same time denigrating the past. This gave way to the influence of romanticism and nationalism in the 19th century which led to a more scientific approach to research and analysis. (p. 36) (In some ways this was a reaction to the emphasis on religion and God on man but it could also be a reaction to the renaissance emphasis on the greatness of classical civilizations.) Chapter 4 then reviews the philosophical aspects (speculative approaches) of history; Gilderhus says there are three schema: cyclical, providential, and progressive (p. 49) and discusses each in turn. Chapter 5 reviews the analytical philosophical approaches to history reflected in the positivist approach (general laws exist that govern the outcomes of human affairs, and idealist thought (which believed that because history was about man, who had free will, history was not repeatable). Chapter six is a simple overview of types of historical papers and research. The last chapter summarizes the state of historiography as it has evolved in the last century. Entire books have been written about each of the areas addressed in Gilderhus' book; the strength of this book is that it provides a simple easy-to-read overview of the whole field and the thinking behind

history.

I have to preface this with the caveat that my graduate-level historiography class was taught by Dr. Gilderhus, though that was several years ago. Then again, he didn't see the need to use this text at that level of study. Where I first read it was in my undergraduate historiography class. The text isn't earth-shattering nor meant as such. As an undergraduate though, I found the text highly informative on the basics of the history of history, its theory and various methodologies. Dr. Gilderhus has come up with perhaps the most elegant, but not simplistic, definition of what history is that I have yet to read. For Dr. Gilderhus, history is "the true story of the human past." It's a definition that works well for the non-history types but still offers something for more advanced readers to unpack. And that's the beauty of this text. It's not meant as a complex treatise on historiography but as an initial pass at the major figures, modes of thought and methodological developments that have brought Western historical thought to where it stands today. For a beginning student or avid amateur you'll find the text an accessible entry-point into historiography. While there are many other texts, such as E.H. Carr's "What Is History?" that provide a deeply nuanced examination of the field, having the basics already laid out allows one to focus on those nuances without needing to look up a name every other page. I would recommend this text to anyone, even advanced-level history students, who want to quickly grasp the basics of historiography. As any good primer text does, "History & Historians" invites the reader to delve deeper into the topic but still stands on its own strengths. I gave the text only a three-star rating because, as I said, it isn't a masterful and innovative text. Instead, the text is a solid, cursory overview of the field. Complaints about its lack of depth miss the point. If you want complex theory then move on to Hayden White or Lynn Hunt. But as an introductory text it does the job and does it well.

I've used earlier editions and needed the latest. I'll use it as a brief intro to historical methodology in a graduate seminar in the spring. I like the way he incorporates the "history of history," that is, the development of historical thought over the centuries. This grounds methodology in philosophy and guards against "presentism," that is, the idea that we moderns have the last and only word on historical thought. Gilderhus's book is clear and enjoyable.

Great read.

I liked it because it is a concise, and clear interpretation of the historiography of history research and

writing.

The book was helpful for the class I was taking. The author made sense of some important issues and it was easier to understand than some of the other required books.

great

I bought this book as a college student. It is only good if you are majoring in history or are becoming a historian. Very dry material.

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