**Week 1**: Examine the nature and characteristics of history. Examine the ways that evolution has influenced world history, especially the dating methods. Assignment 1: Write a summary of lecture notes.

The nature and characteristics of history are as follows:

1. No one knows all of history, but everyone knows something about history.
2. History is irreversible.
3. History cannot be repeated.
4. A person’s view of history only provides a certain perspective.
5. There are many perspectives of the same history.
6. History is a compression of time and events.
7. The longer the time, the less likely it is true.
8. Many historical events are based on deductions and speculations.
9. Reliable history requires reliable witnesses.
10. History is difficult to prove.
11. Recorded human history goes back to less than 5000 years.
12. All extended histories are based on deductions, which are based on assumptions.
13. Assumptions of history can hardly be verified.
14. Wrong assumptions will lead to wrong conclusions.
15. One must be careful to interpret history.
16. Looking into multiple viewpoints seems to be more objective.
17. The majority vote does not guarantee truth in history.
18. There are many ridiculous interpretations of history.
19. We hold the Bible to be historically correct in both narrative and poetry.
20. The myriads of testimonies from the Apostles to the church fathers are self-sufficient.

Evolution has affected world history in many ways:

1. The time line has been pushed back to millions of years.
2. The ancestors of man have been reduced to ape-like creatures.
3. Our existence owes to nothing but chance and time.
4. Even the concepts of God were evolved from the fear of nature.
5. Christ was reduced to a mortal. He died in vain!
6. There is no meaning in life.
7. We are left with survival for the fittest.
8. All religions are meaningless.
9. We are a series of fortunate accidents.
10. Evolutionism has caused many wars.

We will examine all dating methods in detail, starting with the old ages for the earth. We will examine the young ages for the earth. Carbon-14 dating will be examined.

**MORE ON HISTORY AND SILENCING THE PAST**

**The limitations of the particular historian**

Bob Corbett  
August 21, 1999

The comments below assume that you've already read my review of Michel-Rolph Trouillot's book. If you have not then these notes make not make too much sense.

In my review of Trouillot's book I stayed mainly within the concerns of his book itself. Here I want to broaden out and make a few more comments about this process of silencing, even "warping" the past. None of what follows is meant in any way to criticize Trouillot. Rather, I'm going beyond his thesis to make a few more comments about the process of doing, writing, reading and understanding history. Actually the comments below are directed most particularly at me and this particular course you are beginning. They are less about the silencing of history than the silencing by the particular historian.

Trouillot is concerned that certain people or phenomena get "silenced" in the creating of history by historians. On his account there are three main roots of this silencing:

1. The historical events never ever get recorded.
2. The events may get recorded, but the records get lost or destroyed.
3. The records continue to exist, but the historian chooses (in some sense at least) not to use certain records in creating the history that he or she creates.

I mainly want to comment on the third process of these three, however I want to make a couple of brief remarks about the first two.

A process of silencing may well already exist in the social structures of the society which cause the events to not be recorded. For example, if peasants living in remote areas of a country are not valued equally with city dwellers, it may be decided that peasant births and deaths, even property records, will not be formally recorded in state records.

A similar process occurs for existing records. I have recently heard that some of the very old existing records from Haiti are actually rotting away and being destroyed by insects and rodents. Supposing that money were made available to save some of these records (people on my mailing list suggested a process of photographing these records with digital cameras), then some decisions would have to be made for priorities. Which records should be saved from destruction and which not, or which first and which later? Such decision would be conscious decisions made on the basis of some evaluation of which records were more important.

The point I want to underscore is that human and societal decisions are often made that impact what things are even recorded and which things are preserved.

However, the most significant issue for history and historians is the process of silencing portions of the past by passing over existing records. I want to reflect a bit on two different aspects of the problem:

1. Passing over records by historians in general vs the passing over of records by any particular historian.
2. Passing over records because one doesn't know about them vs passing over records which are known to one.

The first issue concerns the individual historian as opposed to the discipline of history itself. I am not a historian in the professional sense. That is, I don't do original historical research on Haiti, or at least very little. Nor am I a professional historian in that I earn my living as an historian and am designated by colleagues in this way. Yet I "do" history in a derived sense. I read other historians and pull together their views and create from their works a view of my own. This too is history, though at a lower level of scholarship and creativity that the historians who work with primary sources.

As an individual doing this work I am limited in which existing sources I consult in several ways:

* What is known to me and what I search out.
* What is available to me.

This includes available to me in two senses:

* + available in the sense of just getting my hands on the sources.
  + available in the sense of being able to read the materials -- language limitations.
  + What I have or take the time to consult.

Each of these areas poses limitation on me the individual creating history.

However, when we broaden the question to that of the entire discipline, then each of these three limitations are less likely to be evidenced in the finished product. What one historian my not know about or search out another will use. What isn't available to one historian (in any sense of the term) may be available to others. What one ignores another is likely to follow up upon.

Given the existence of sources, and their being known and available in a general sense, then they are likely to enter into the tradition of history as a discipline, even though any given historian may never have consulted or even know about a particular source.

This point enters importantly into the history course you are currently embarking upon. I am presenting materials which I have organized to you. These materials carry all the limitation described above. In particular I am limited mainly to materials in English. I probably have a greater knowledge of what the existing English language sources are than most people, but I have not fully consulted even all the existing materials IN MY OWN LIBRARY!

This particular limitation indicates why it is very important for students of history to be interactive with the instructor (the primary creator of the history you imbibe). If the students are able and willing to consult sources which the instructor (creator or historian) has not, and to bring forward items which have been "silenced" because of this limit, then the history which results will have less of the limits of this silencing than it would otherwise.

However, there is yet another important sense of "silencing" the past which must be faced. One may know of sources, even know what it is they say, but silence them consciously, knowingly. Why would one do this? Not ever reason is necessarily pernicious, but I think ever reason is dangerous to good history.

Consider some of the reasons:

* It just hasn't dawned on the historian the importance or meaning of some source.
* The historian may be quite suspicious of the source and doubt its reliability.
* The historian may believe that the particular audience he or she is creating for, doesn't want or can't handle this particular complexity.

Note: This is not necessarily a pernicious motive. I wrote a short introductory history for you which I called a "short and oversimplified history of Haiti." That seems appropriate to me. I am assuming that many of you know virtually nothing about Haiti. In order to place the more particular historical issues into context, it seems to me valuable for you to have some notion of an overview in mind. But, by definition this overview must be very short and simple -- that is, heavily silenced.

Even then, moving along, we are going to do 16 weeks of Haitian history. This is a MOST ELEMENTARY course. Many, many aspects of Haitian history, hundreds and hundreds of them will NEVER EVEN BE MENTIONED. Nearly every issue to which I do give play will be consciously silenced by me since there just isn't the time to raise every question in the fullest detail that even I, in my limited knowledge, may know about.

* The historian may hold that some sources are simply not quite appropriate.

This is the area that I find most troublesome. Suppose I am writing a history of the United States for elementary school. Okay, I have all the limitations mentioned above, and I must produce an oversimplified picture of the nation, and my own historical knowledge may not be that of a creative scholar, thus that knowledge too many be inadequate, oversimplified and a source of silencing.

But more than this I may decide (or even be ORDERED by the publisher or whoever) to write a history in which the U.S. is portrayed overwhelmingly in a morally positive light even though I may have sources that suggest things to the contrary.

This is the sort of silencing that most concerns me. That is, cases where I have a conscious ideological view which moves me to choose certain sources and silence others, and to create a picture which flows from limited data, when I myself am aware of the limits of that data.

Here too, however, there is a complexity. There are again two categories of even this sort of silencing. The case I point out in the paragraphs immediately above this one are cases where the historian is consciously aware that he or she has chosen a particular ideological view and consciously aware of sources which have been silenced.

1. It is just as likely that the historian has done this BUT IS NOT CONSCIOUSLY AWARE OF HAVING DONE IT -- at least at some levels. Historians, like all people, come to their material with varying degrees of intelligence, inquisitiveness, conscious awareness, skepticism, insight and moral courage, among other things.
2. Historians may silence the past consciously or unconsciously, but not all unconscious silencing is an innocuous as others. I would argue that people of serious purpose and intent, historians among them, have an obligation to not allow themselves to be consciously unaware of important data to their enterprise, especially when they are in the role of interrupting that information for others.

Thomas Aquinas made a distinction between two kinds of ignorance:

* + Inculpable ignorance. This is ignorance where it is reasonable and understandable that the person is ignorant. Aquinas argued that no blame accompanied such ignorance.
  + Culpable ignorance. This ignorance, on the other hand, is the sort of where one ought to have known better and not knowing so was a moral weakness on the part of the knower or not taking the matter as seriously as it deserved. Such ignorance, even though it is genuine ignorance, is not excusable on Aquinas' argument.

Thus upshot of all of this for you folks who are about to venture out with me on an historical quest is: BE CAREFUL.

Corbett is organizing and presenting a history of Haiti. It is filled with silences of every sort. I would hope that I will earn your trust that I have put forward a very sincere and responsible account of Haitian history. But, I have no illusions that it is fully adequate and I know that there are gaping silences all over the place. Some of the most disturbing silences are the ones I don't even know are there!

Thus I ask you to approach what I offer with some skepticism and some sense of responsibility to go beyond me, go beyond what I offer. I know this is a lot to ask. Most of you will come to this project because you know very little about Haiti. I've been at this task of learning about Haiti and even reconstructing a history of Haiti for many years. There are, and should be, gaps between us. Just don't be too trusting, too uncritical. Don't be too intellectually lazy to go out beyond where I take you. And lastly, help out your student colleagues by calling attention to things that puzzle you along the way.

We don't have the time (nor do I have the knowledge) to do a phenomenally detailed history of Haiti. On the other hand, we don't need to settle for just a single voice or single set of choices of sources either. Let's go forward together and hopefully each come away with a much richer view of the country of Haiti and her history, and a much more conscious awareness of the areas of great silence that shroud out picture.

**(下面中文使用谷歌翻译。需要修正和编辑。)**

**第一周**：检查历史的性质和特点。检查影响历史的演变，尤其是确定年龄方法的途径。作业1：写一篇讲稿摘要。

历史的性质和特点如下：   
1。没有人知道所有的历史，但人人都知道一些历史。   
2。历史是不可逆转的。   
3。历史不能重演。   
4。一个人的历史观只提供了某种观点。   
5。有许多不相同的历史观点。   
6。历史是时间和事件的压缩。   
7。时间越长，就越不可能是真的。   
8。许多历史事件的基础上扣除和揣测。   
9。可靠的历史需要可靠的证人。   
10。历史是很难证明的。   
11。记录人类的历史可以追溯到不足5000年。   
12。所有历史扩展都基于扣除，并且是基础上许多的假设。   
13。历史的假设，难以核实。   
14。错误的假设将导致错误的结论。   
15。我们必须要小心解释历史。   
16。成多个观点看似乎更加客观。   
17。多数表决不保证历史的真相。   
18。有许多可笑的历史诠释。   
19。我们认为圣经是历史和诗歌中叙述正确的。   
20。从使徒证词教会父亲的涌现足够证明。

进化的过程在许多方面影响世界的历史：   
1。时间线已被推迟至数千百万年。   
2。人类的祖先已认为到类人猿的生物。   
3。欠我们的存在只是机会和时间。   
4。即使是上帝的概念演变而来的自然恐惧。   
5。基督被减少到一个凡人。他白白死去！   
6。没有生命的意义。   
7。我们只剩下了优胜劣汰。   
8。所有的宗教都是没有意义的。   
9。我们是一个幸运的一系列事故。   
10。进化论引起的战争。   
我们会仔细研究所有测年方法，与大地的旧时代。我们将研究对地球的年轻时代。碳14测年将进行审查。 

**(下面中文使用谷歌翻译。需要修正和编辑。)**

**更多文史沉默过去的事件**   
  
对特定历史的局限性   
  
鲍勃科尔韦特  1999年8月21日   
  
下面的意见假设你已经阅读过我的米歇尔，罗尔夫特鲁约的书评。如果你还没有那么这些票据的，并不作太多太大的意义。   
我在特鲁约的书评我留下来主要是在他的书本身的关注。在这里，我想扩大出去，让一些有关此过程的沉默的意见，甚至是“扭曲”了过去。以下都不是什么意思以任何方式批评特鲁约。相反，我要超越他的论文提出一些更关注的是这样做，写作，阅读和理解历史进程的意见。其实，下面的评论是针对最特别是在我和这个特定课程你开始。他们对历史的比由特定的历史沉默沉默少。   
  
特鲁约关注的是，某些人或现象得到“沉默”，在创造历史的历史学家。在他的帐户有三本沉默的主要根源：   
  
1.历史事件没有得到记录。   
2. 这些事件可能已记录，但记录丢失或被毁。    
3.记录继续存在，但是，历史学家选择（至少在一定程度上）不使用记录的历史，他或她创造某些记录。

我主要想谈谈这第三个的过程，不过我想制作一个简短的讲话前两个。   
  
一个沉默的过程很可能已经存在于社会上造成的事件不会被记录下来的社会结构。例如，如果一个国家的农民在偏远地区的居民不重视与城市居民一样，它可能决定，农民出生和死亡，甚至财产记录，将不会在国家正式记录中。   
  
一个类似的过程发生的现有记录。我最近听说，很老的现有来自海地的一些记录实际上是腐烂和被昆虫和啮齿类动物破坏。假如这些钱获得了一些保存这些记录（在我的邮寄名单上的人提出了用数字相机拍摄的这些记录的过程），然后一些决定将要作出的优先次序。它记录应该保存，哪些不免遭破坏，或先，后来？这一决定将是对一些评估，记录了更多的双向选择的重要依据。   
  
这一点我要强调的是，人类和社会做出的决定往往是什么东西，甚至记录和保留这些事的影响。   
  
然而，历史和历史学家最重要的问题是沉默比现有的纪录，过去部分传递过程。我要反映的两个问题的不同方面位：   
  
1.在逝去的记录一般通过与历史学家的记录在任何特定的历史学家。   
2.记录，传递，因为在一个不知道他们比超过这是众所周知的一个记录传递。

第一个问题涉及到个人的历史学家，而不是对历史本身的纪律。我不是历史学家的专业感。也就是说，我不这样做对海地的原始历史研究，或者至少是很少。我也不是一个专业的历史学家，我赚我作为一个历史学家的生活和我的同事们以这种方式指定。然而，我“做”在派生意义上的历史。我读了其他历史学家和集中他们的意见，从他们的作品创造了我自己的观点。这也是历史，虽然在学术和创造力下级历史学家谁与主要来源的工作。 

作为个人，我这样做，在这有限的现有资源我在几个方面咨询工作：   
  
1.我知道什么是什么，我搜索出来。   
2.什么是提供给我。   
这包括提供两种感觉对我说：   
  
1.可在刚开的来源我的手的感觉。   
2.可在能够阅读材料的感觉 - 语言的限制。   
我已经或花时间去咨询。   
3.其中的每个领域构成对我个人的创造历史的局限性。   
  
然而，当我们扩大到该问题对整个纪律，那么这三个限制每个都不太可能在成品可见一斑。一位历史学家什么我不知道，或者搜索出另一个将使用。什么是不提供给一个历史学家（这个词在任何意义上的）可能会提供给其他人。什么人可能会忽略另一个是在跟进。   
  
鉴于源存在，并在他们被称为一般意义上的，那么他们很可能进入到作为一门学科的历史传统，即使任何历史学家可能从来没有谘询，甚至知道一个特定的源。   
  
这一点进入到重要的历史进程当前正在着手进行。我提出我所组织您的材料。所有这些材料进行上述限制。特别是我主要限于在英文资料。我大概有一个什么样的现有英语来源的大多数人都更丰富的知识，但我还没有充分咨询，甚至在我的所有自己的图书馆现有材料！   
  
这种特殊的限制，表明为什么它是非常历史的学生与导师（即小学的历史，你喝酒的创造者）互动的重要。如果学生有能力并愿意协商来源，教员（创建者或历史学家）没有，并提出项目已被“沉默”，因为这个限制，那么，历史的结果将有此限制少沉默比它本来。   
  
然而，又是另一种“沉默”所必须面对过去的重要意义。人们可能知道的来源，甚至不知道它是什么，他们说，但他们自觉地保持沉默，明知。为什么会一做呢？永不原因必然是有害的，但我认为原因是以往任何时候都好危险的历史。   
  
考虑到一些原因：   
  
1.它只是没有明白了历史学家的重要性或某些源的含义。   
2.历史学家可能相当来源可疑，怀疑其可靠性。   
3.历史学家可能会认为他或她的观众特别是创造，不希望或无法处理这个特殊的复杂性。

注：这不一定是一种有害的动机。我写了一个简短的介绍对你的历史，我所谓的“短期和简单化海地的历史。”这对我来说似乎是恰当的。我假设你们很多人都知道几乎没有任何关于海地。为了更放到特定的历史背景的问题，在我看来，你有宝贵的一记一些概念的概述。但是，通过定义本概述必须很短，简单 - 那就是严重压制。   
  
即使这样，移动一直以来，我们要做的海地历史上16周。这是一个最起码的课程。很多人来说，海地历史，数百，其中的许多方面将数百甚至从未被提及。几乎每一个问题，而我做的发挥将有意识地沉默只是因为我没有时间来提高每个细节都充分的问题，连我，我的知识有限，可能会知道的。   
  
1. 历史学家认为，一些消息来源可能根本不是很合适。   
这是该地区，我觉得最麻烦的。假如我是小学一写的美国历史。好吧，我把所有的上述限制，我必须出示了国家简单化的图片，和我自己的历史知识，可能不那么具有创造性的学者，因而失去了太多的知识是不够的，简单化和一个沉默的来源。   
  
但超过这个，我可以决定（甚至责令由发布者或任何人）写在其中美国被描绘成在道德上正面绝大多数即使我可能来源，建议相反的东西的历史。   
  
这是我最关心沉默排序。也就是说，案件在那里我有意识的思想的看法，让我感动，选择特定来源和沉默的人，并创建一个图片是从有限的数据，当我自己觉得这个数据流量的限制知道。   
  
不过在这里，有一个复杂性。也有两个这样的沉默甚至某种类别。该情况下，我指出，在上述各段立即在某些情况下这一个历史学家，是自觉意识到，他或她选择了一个特定的思想观点，自觉地沉默的来源已经知道。   
  
1.它只是作为历史学家可能这样做，但我做不自觉地意识到这一点 - 至少在一定的水平。历史学家，像所有的人，来到他们的物质具有不同程度的智力，培养探究精神，自觉意识，怀疑，洞察力和道德勇气等东西。   
2.历史学家可能会沉默过去自觉或不自觉，不自觉的沉默，但不是所有的人是无害的。我认为，严重的宗旨和意图，其中包括历史学家，人们有责任不使自己有意识的重要数据不知道自己的企业，尤其是当他们在别人打断，对信息的作用的。 

托马斯阿奎那提出了两种类型的无知的区别：   
  
1.不该责备的无知。这是愚昧的地方，是合理和可以理解的人是无知的。阿奎那认为，伴随着这种无知不怪。   
2.有罪的无知。这种无知，另一方面，是那种在一个人应该有更好的认识和不知道这样是对能知部分或不以认真的事情，因为它应有的道德弱点。这种无知，即使它是真正的无知，是没有阿奎那的论点可以原谅的。   
因此，所有这一切结果的人谁是你要与我出去创业的历史任务是：要小心。   
  
科尔韦特正在组织，并提出了海地历史。这是充满了每样沉默。我希望，我会赢得您的信任，我提出了海地历史上非常认真负责的帐户。但是，我不抱有幻想，这是完全足够，我知道有各地的地方张开的沉默。令人不安的沉默的大多数都是那些我什至不知道是那里！   
  
因此，我要求你的方法我有些怀疑和一些责任感，超越我，超越我要约。我知道这是很多要求。你们大部分人会来到这个项目，因为你知道的关于海地很少。我已经在这个学习，甚至重建海地的海地多年历史任务。有，而且应该是我们之间的差距。只是不要太相信别人，太不加批判。不要太懒惰超越理智的地方我带你出去。最后，帮帮忙，让大家看的东西，益智沿途你的学生同事。   
  
我们没有足够的时间（也没有得到的知识）做了惊人的海地详细历史。另一方面，我们并不满足于只需要一个单一的语音或单一来源的选择，无论设置。让我们一起前进，希望每一个来到了海地历史的国家和她的距离更丰富的观点，以及对伟大的沉默笼罩了图片的领域更加清醒的认识。