

**To Students –**

**Shopping for history courses? How can you make an informed choice?**

**You should look at SYLLABI.** Due to recent rules at Rice, all syllabi are available for you, as a member of the Rice community, to see. Many are also available for anyone, anywhere to see. Go to [registrar.rice.edu](http://registrar.rice.edu), choose “Course Schedule,” and search for Subject = History.

Note, however, that syllabi are rarely ready before the first day of class, because faculty continue to tweak them right up to the first day of class. So if you are looking ahead to the coming semester, your best bet is to look at older syllabi from the same class, or from the same professor, being aware that it is likely that the new syllabus will be different. Choose an earlier semester in “Course Schedule” and look there. Some of the syllabi are completely public and you can go straight to them; for others, you need to show that you are a Rice person by logging onto Esther. Once you log on to Esther, you can reach the syllabi through the “Course Schedule” site.

Of course, if you have trouble finding a current or older syllabus, email the professor directly; if you are not sure who the professor is, email [hist@rice.edu](mailto:hist@rice.edu).

**You should also look at STUDENT EVALUATIONS.** Go to [esther.rice.edu](http://esther.rice.edu) and choose “Course and Instructor Evaluation Results.” If you want to know about a specific course, be sure to look at both the Course Evaluation and the Instructor Evaluation. If you are curious about a specific professor, start with the option for Instructor Evaluation. Regarding numerical cores, remember that the lower the number, the better the professor or course – scoring lower than the Rice mean is good. The written comments can help you steer away from irresponsible instructors or from courses that did not challenge or engage students. Read all of the comments for a given class, rather than stopping with the first negative comment – sometimes it becomes clear that a student, not the professor, was the problem.