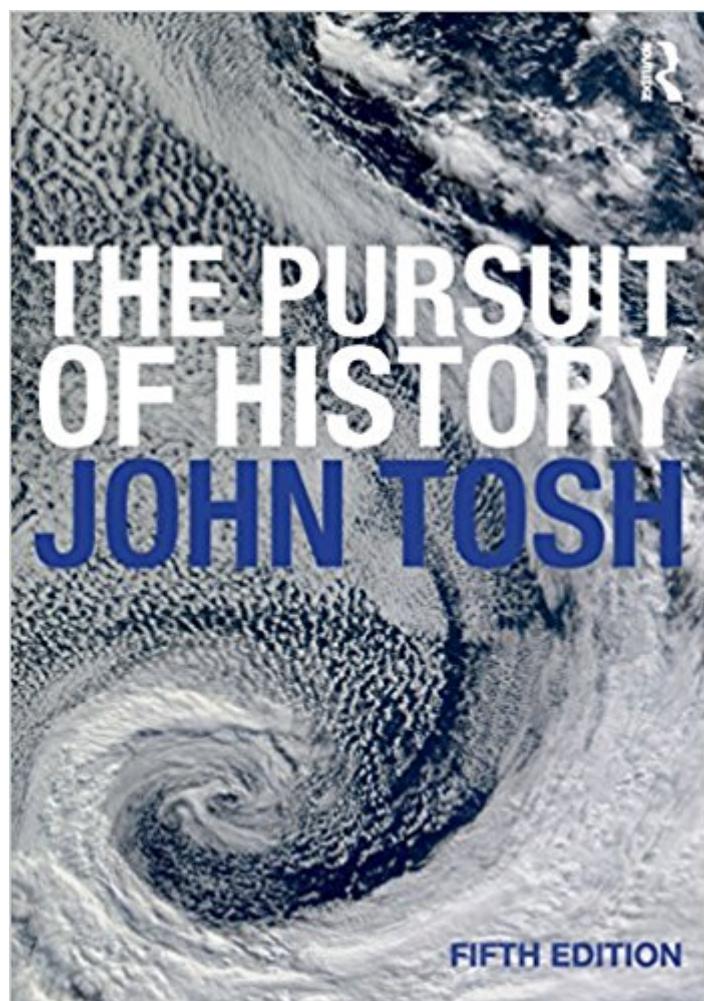


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The Pursuit Of History



Synopsis

This classic introduction to the study of history invites the reader to stand back and consider some of its most fundamental questions - What is the point of studying history? How do we know about the past? Does an objective historical truth exist and can we ever access it? In answering these central questions, John Tosh argues that, despite the impression of fragmentation created by postmodernism in recent years, history is a coherent discipline which still bears the imprint of its nineteenth-century origins. Consistently clear-sighted, he provides a lively and compelling guide to a complex and sometimes controversial subject, while making his readers vividly aware of just how far our historical knowledge is conditioned by the character of the sources and the methods of the historians who work on them. The fifth edition has been revised and updated throughout, with the addition of new sections on: Global history Comparative history Postcolonialism Women's and gender history Oral history and memory Lucid and engaging, this new edition retains all the user-friendly features that have helped to make this book a favourite with both students and lecturers, including marginal glosses, illustrations, suggested further reading and boxed guides to key events and people.

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Customer Reviews

John Tosh's, *The Pursuit of History* is a good introduction for both advanced undergraduate students and graduate students wishing to gain a global view of history as a profession and the

diverse methods used in the field. In its fifth edition, Tosh expands the present historiography and details the impact past works have had on the thoughts and methods of today. Covering the historiography from the professionalization of the field in the 1880s through the Annales school of thought, Marxist theory and postmodernism, Tosh is able to touch upon the origins of each style and introduce the social histories of the 1960s and 1970s and the postcolonialist writing of the 1990s. As a historian's history, Tosh contributes to a global view of the study of history and asks if it is a science or a craft. The Pursuit of History is divided into eleven chapters. The first three chapters covered oral histories and the didactic approach for studying history "for its own sake." By introducing different methodologies in the interpretation of history and its purpose, Tosh was able to approach the topic of mapping the field in chapter three. He divided the field into political, social, economic, religious, world, global, local, and microhistory. As a justification for all the diverse subfields he stated, "[e]very work of history strike some kind of balance between the individual and society, between the material and the mental, and between the local and the global" (p. 84). These chapters shed light onto the function and rationale of the professional historian and the contributions the field offers. Chapters four through six described the process in which information is attained. Sources were the focus as they led to the type of interpretation the historian used to bring out their content.

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