

University of Florida
Department of History
Fall 2016

AMH 6290: Modern America

Professor Lauren Pearlman
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M: 8-9 (3-6pm)
Room: FLI 0013

Office Hours: Mon 1:30-3:00, Wed 2:30-4:00
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Course Description

This seminar introduces graduate students to major themes and core literature in twentieth-century United States history. We will read a mix of standard texts and newer monographs, with a focus on recent conceptualizations, interpretations, and problems in the field. Particular attention will be paid to making connections between the economy, politics, and social life. We will also integrate the experiences of diverse social groups—African Americans, immigrants, women, LGBTQ people—into broader historical context and larger historical problems. The course will also allow you to explore certain issues in depth by following a single subfield throughout the course. In addition, you will explore one period more rigorously during the semester by reading widely in the literature on a single historiographical issue. Assignments are designed to 1) assist you with professional development, 2) provide you with a rich foundation for qualifying exams, and 3) help prepare you to teach a course in twentieth-century U.S. history.

Course Objectives

- To provide students with a chronological and thematic introduction to the historiography of modern America.
- To prepare students for oral examinations.
- To prepare students for teaching by identifying major issues in American history.
- To practice the book review format.
- To enable students to explore the historiography of a topic in depth as a basis for the dissertation prospectus.

Required Readings

There are thirteen (13) required core texts that everyone will read available for purchase at the UF Bookstore or from an online retailer and six (6) supplemental texts that you will read with your subfield. Note: Amazon.com offers competitive pricing on many of these books, including the option to rent books and purchase used copies. Copies are also available at the library, though I encourage you to make these texts part of your personal library if and when cost permits.

Class Assignments

Everyone: Each week, all class members will read one book in common (the core text) and post to Canvas a discussion question about the core text by 5:00pm on the Sunday before class. The class leaders will prepare a handout of these questions to guide the class discussion. Note: these questions should reflect a serious engagement with the text. You must read previously posted questions before posting your own. Please avoid repetition.

Every other week, subfield members will complete an additional reading and offer a brief (15-20 minute) oral presentation and handout on the text for their colleagues. The four subfields are: (1) Race and Ethnicity, (2) U.S. in a Global Context, (3) Economics/Labor History, and (4) Gender and Sexuality. You will receive your subfield assignment during the first week of class.

Class Leader(s): Once during the semester you will be responsible for leading class. In addition to guiding discussion, you will provide an annotated bibliography to the class on the major works on the topic (roughly 5-8), based on your own historiographical review of the topic. These are due in class and should also be posted on Canvas.

When you are class leader, you will meet with me prior to class to discuss how you will frame the issues for the week and set up the questions. In class you will use your annotated bibliography to discuss the historiography of the issue (briefly), spending about 3-5 minutes on each additional reading. Then you will frame the class discussion of the core text and lead discussion based on the questions that each seminar member has posted to Canvas.

Subfield Presentations: At the beginning of the course, you will be assigned a subfield in which to work all semester. Every other week (6 times total) you will read the core text and the book listed under your subfield. That week, you will meet with other members of your subfield before class to prepare a short discussion of your book that compares it to the core text. You will prepare for class members a one-page synopsis that summarizes its argument and contextualizes its intervention in the field. Bring this to class as a handout and post it to Canvas after class.

Written Assignments: Three times during the semester, you will submit to me a review essay (4-5 pages) comparing the core text and your subfield book for that week. You may choose the weeks in which you do this. These are due in class the day the book is assigned, with at least essay submitted before October 10.

For good examples of the sort of review essay I am expecting, sample those in *Reviews in American History*. Your review essay should have three elements: summary, assessment of contribution to field, and criticism, with a balance among the three.

Qualifying Exam List: At the end of semester, everyone will formulate a twentieth century “quals” list of roughly 40 books within one of the four subfields, divided into 5 chronological sections, each of which answers a set of historiographical questions (2-3).

While you are certainly not expected to have read all of the books on your list, you should be able to provide a very brief summary of the subject matter for each text. Include the books that you have read with an *, so that you are adding to the foundation you have built in this course. This is due on the last day of class, December 5.

Mock Oral Exam: On the last day of class, we will conduct mock oral exams based on the books that you read in class. This will be graded pass/fail.

Evaluation

You will be graded according to the following scheme:

Participation and prompt question submission	10%
Class presentation & annotated bibliography	10%
Subfield presentations and handouts (6)	15%
Review essay #1	15%
Review essay #2	15%
Review essay #3	15%
Qualifying exam list	10%
Mock oral exam	10%

UF Grading Scale

Letter Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E	WF	I	N	G	S	U
Grade Points	4.0	3.67	3.33	3.0	2.67	2.33	2.0	1.67	1.33	1.0	.67	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

A100-94, A-: 90-93

C+: 77-79, C: 74-76, C-: 70-73

B+: 87-89, B: 84-86, B-: 80-83

D+: 67-69, D: 64-66, D-: 60-64

F: below 64

Expectations

- This seminar will only function properly if everyone is in attendance. Please attend all classes. If for some reason you need to miss class, you must notify me at least 24 hours in advance and provide a book review on the core text. After one excused absence, I will deduct a full letter grade for every class missed.
- Complete the readings before class and turn your work in on time. Late papers will be penalized by a full grade for every 24 hours late.
- Come to class prepared to engage in active discussion.
- Conduct yourself in a professional manner at all times (more on this during the semester).

Students with Disabilities

Please do not hesitate to contact the instructor during the semester if you have any individual concerns or issues that need to be discussed. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

Student Evaluations

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>.

Course Schedule

Week One (August 22): Introductions

Start reading.

Week Two (August 29): The Expansion of the American Empire

Core Text: Mary Renda, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915-1940*

Race and Ethnicity: Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917*

U.S. and the World: Paul Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines*

Week Three (September 5): Labor Day – No Class

Continue reading.

Week Four (September 12): Populism and Modernization

Core Text: Charles Postel, *The Populist Vision*

Economics/Labor: Thomas G. Andrews, *Killing for Coal: America's Deadliest Labor War*

Gender and Sexuality: Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917*

Week Five (September 19): The Progressive Era

Core Text: Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920*

Race and Ethnicity: Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemic and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown*

U.S. and the World: Daniel Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*

Week Six (September 26): World War I and the 1920s

Core Text: Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen*

Economics/Labor: Joseph McCartin, *Labor's Great War: The Struggle for Industrial Democracy and the Origins of Modern American Labor Relations, 1912-1921*

Gender and Sexuality: Linda Gordon, *Pitied but Not Entitled: Single Mothers and the History of Welfare, 1890-1935*

Week Seven (October 3): The Great Depression and the New Deal

Core Text: Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939*

Race and Ethnicity: Robin Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Black Communists in Alabama during the Great Depression*

U.S. and the World: Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*

Week Eight (October 10): The End of the New Deal

Core Text: Alan Brinkley, *The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession & War*

Economics/Labor: Meg Jacobs, *Pocketbook Politics: Economic Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America*

Gender and Sexuality: Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America*

Week Nine (October 17): World War II

Core Text: James T. Sparrow, *Warfare State: World War II Americans and the Age of Big Government*

Race and Ethnicity: Eduardo Obregon Pagan, *Murder at the Sleepy Lagoon: Zoot Suits, Race, and Riot in Wartime L.A.*

U.S. and the World: John Dower, *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*

Week Ten (October 24): Postwar America

Core Text: Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*

Labor/Economics: Elizabeth A. Fones-Wolf, *Selling Free Enterprise: The Business Assault on Labor and Liberalism, 1945-60*

Gender and Sexuality: Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*

Week Eleven (October 31): The Cold War

Core Text: Ellen Schrecker, *Many Are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America*

Race and Ethnicity: Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy*

U.S. and the World: Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times*

Week Twelve (November 7): The Civil Rights Movement

Core Text: Akinyele Omowale Umoja, *We Will Shoot Back: Armed Resistance in the Mississippi Freedom Movement*

Labor/Economics: Gavin Wright, *Sharing the Prize: The Economics of the Civil Rights Revolution in the American South*

Gender and Sexuality: Danielle McGuire, *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance—A New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power*

Week Thirteen (November 14): The High Tide of Liberalism?

Core Text: Elizabeth Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America*

Race and Ethnicity: Nancy MacLean, *Freedom Is Not Enough: The Opening of the American Workplace*

U.S. and the World: Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East since 1945*

Week Fourteen (November 21): Right Turns

Core Text: Joseph Crespino, *In Search of Another Country: Mississippi and the Conservative Counterrevolution*

Labor/Economics: Kim Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands: The Making of the Conservative Movement from the New Deal to Reagan*

Gender and Sexuality: Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right*

Week Fifteen (November 28): Into the Present

Core Text: Bethany Moreton, *To Serve God and Wal-Mart: The Making of Christian Free Enterprise*

Week Sixteen (December 5): Mock Oral Exams and Quals Lists Due