

University of Florida  
History Department  
Spring 2021

**AMH 6290: Modern America**

Dr. Lauren Pearlman

Email: lpearlman@ufl.edu

T: 3:00-6:00pm, period 8-10

Office: 224 Keene-Flint Hall

Phone: 352-273-3364

Office Hours: Tues 1:00-3:00pm  
and by appointment

**COVID-19 Statement**

This class is being taught in the midst of a global pandemic that could impact you and/or your friends and family if it has not already. Within the syllabus you will find a set of course expectations and guidelines. At the end of the day, we are all just trying to do our best during this unprecedented spring semester. If you find yourself having trouble completing assignments, participating in discussion, or focusing on class, please discuss it with me. I am aware of the strain that this semester is going to place on graduate students and truly care about your mental and physical health. All classes will be held synchronously over Zoom. All class resources, announcements, updates, and assignments will be made available through Canvas.

**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 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 1-2 periods 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 and encouraging critical thinking about the existing historical literature.
- 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.

## Class Assignments

**Everyone:** Each week, class members will read one book in common (the core text) and post to Canvas a discussion question about the core text by 3:00pm on the Monday before class. The class leader will use 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 presentation and handout on the text for their classmates. Subfields will be assigned during the first two weeks of class.

**Class Leader(s):** 1-2 times 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 to the Historiography discussion thread on Canvas.

In class you will use your annotated bibliography to discuss the historiography of the issue (briefly), spending a few 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 select a subfield in which to work all semester. Past subfields have included Race and Ethnicity, U.S. and the World, Labor/Economics, and Gender/Sexuality. We will work together in the first two weeks to determine your subfield book list. Every other week (6 times total) you will read the core text and your subfield book. That week, you will 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. Post this to the Subfield discussion thread on Canvas after class.

**Written Assignments:** Three times during the semester, you will submit 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 one essay submitted by March 1. 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, you will formulate a twentieth century “quals” list of roughly 40 books 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.

Note: if a Quals List does not help you with your academic goals, I am happy to discuss an alternate assignment. Please discuss this with me no later than March 29.

**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	15%
Class presentation and annotated bibliography (1-2)	10%
Subfield presentations and handouts (6)	10%
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	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

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

### **Attendance and Assignment Policies**

- Attendance is required, expected, and central to your learning experience – and to the functioning of this seminar. Class will begin and end on time each week unless otherwise noted. Please make sure to log in to our Zoom session promptly. I will not require you to turn your camera on, but it would certainly help me get to know you better if you do so. If you have technology limitations, please reach out to me. In general, please be considerate of your colleagues and avoid disrupting their online learning experience. In addition to showing up for class on time, be ready to articulate and defend your ideas, as well as to listen to and work with the ideas of others.
- If for some reason you need to miss class, please try to notify me ahead of time. When you return, please email me a book review on the core text. A student with more than one unexcused absence may have their grade reduced a full letter grade.

### **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 accommodations must first register with the Dean of Students Office (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting an accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

### **Academic Honesty**

The University, as well as your instructor, values and expects academic integrity. Ethical violations include cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, and academic misconduct (including turning

in the work of others as your own and reusing old assignments). These will not be tolerated and will result in an automatic failing grade in the course. Plagiarism is defined in the University of Florida's Student Honor Code as follows: "A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to): a. Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution. b. Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student." Students found guilty of academic misconduct will be prosecuted in accordance with the procedures specified in the UF honesty policy

To avoid plagiarism, you must not copy the words, phrases, arguments, ideas, or conclusions of another person or source (including Internet sources) without properly crediting the person or source with both quotation marks and a footnote. Make sure that you properly cite direct quotations, paraphrased information, and facts that are not widely known. I will provide you with guidelines for proper citations and formatting prior to your submission of all written work, but you may contact me at any time for clarification. For more information on UF's honest policy, see <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/conductcode.php>. For more information on how UF's Judicial Affairs processes cases of plagiarism, see <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.php>.

### **Student Evaluations**

Students in this class are participating in the pilot evaluation of the new course evaluation system called GatorEvals. The new evaluation system is designed to be more informative to instructors so that teaching effectiveness is enhanced and to be more seamlessly linked to UF's CANVAS learning management system. Students can complete their evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/so-eng.htm?Themes/blue.css&images/Explorance-Logo.gif&seed=bd86c681-cca4-4c28-abc9-0b4cf542e5c4&University+of+Florida> Please note your other classes this semester may be evaluated in the current GatorRater online evaluation system at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Thank you for serving as a partner in this important effort.

### **U Matter, We Care**

Your well-being is important to the University of Florida. The U Matter, We Care initiative is committed to creating a culture of care on our campus by encouraging members of our community to look out for one another and to reach out for help if a member of our community is in need. If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) so that the U Matter, We Care Team can reach out to the student in distress. A nighttime and weekend crisis counselor is available by phone at 352-392-1575. The U Matter, We Care Team can help connect students to the many other helping resources available including, but not limited to, Victim Advocates, Housing staff, and the Counseling and Wellness Center. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, call 9-1-1.

### **Writing Studio**

The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at

<http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> or in 2215 Turlington Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.

## **Course Schedule**

Please Note: the schedule is provisional and may be changed as needed by the instructor.

### **Week 1, Jan 12: Introductions**

Find and read 2-3 recent op-eds by scholars in outlets like the *New York Times*, *Washington Post* (see especially their Made By History page), *The Atlantic*, etc. Come to class prepared to discuss them.

### **Week 2, Jan 19: Making America**

Core Text: Kelly Lytle Hernandez, *City of Inmates: Conquest, Rebellion, and the Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles, 1771-1965* (2017)

### **Week 3, Jan 26: The Progressive Era**

Core Text: Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920* (2003)

### **Week 4, Feb 2: The Expansion of the American Empire**

Core Text: Emily Rosenberg, *Financial Missionaries to the World: The Politics and Culture of Dollar Diplomacy, 1900–1930* (2003)

### **Week 5, Feb 9: Jim Crow**

Core Text: Sarah Haley, *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity* (2016)

### **Week 6, Feb 16: 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* (2008)

### **Week 7, Feb 23: The Great Depression**

Core Text: Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (2008)

### **Week 8, March 1: Catch Up Week**

No reading

### **Week 9, Mar 8: The New Deal**

Core Text: Ira Katznelson, *Fear Itself: The New Deal and the Origins of Our Time* (2014)

### **Week 10, Mar 15: World War II**

Core Text: James T. Sparrow, *Warfare State: World War II Americans and the Age of Big Government* (2013)

### **Week 11, Mar 22: Postwar America**

Core Text: Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (1996)

### **Week 12, Mar 29: The Civil Rights Movement**

Core Text: 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* (2011)

**Week 13, Apr 5: The Cold War**

Core Text: Stuart Schrader, *Badges without Borders: How Global Counterinsurgency Transformed American Policing* (2019)

**Week 14, Apr 12: 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* (2017)

**Week 15, Apr 19: Modern Conservatism**

Core Text: Nancy MacLean, *Democracy in Chains: The Deep History of the Radical Right's Stealth Plan for America* (2017)

\*Mock Oral Exams and Qualls Lists Due