

**AMH3931/8LN3 (27208)**  
**From Headlines to Histories**  
**Fall 2021**

Course Meets: T/R 7, 7/8 Keene Flint 105  
Instructor: Dr. Louise Newman, [newman@ufl.edu](mailto:newman@ufl.edu)  
Office hours: Remote: Monday, 8-9:30am, in person (Keene Flint 212) Thurs 3:30-4:00

**Description of the course topic**

This course could also be titled “The History Behind the Headlines,” as topics will be drawn from newspaper headlines from August and September 2021 and will include some of the big stories, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, Biden’s efforts to pass legislation, U.S. foreign relations, environmental disasters, racial/gender concerns ranging from mass incarceration to sexual harassment—and other topics that receive media attention in the early months of this semester. The course poses a series of basic questions for reflection: How are current events shaped by the past? Can past events help us understand present-day events? How do current actors-- politicians, journalists, social activists and others-- use (or misuse) historical information? What role might historians play in contextualizing and understanding current events?

**Students will become adept at:**

- Differentiating between reportage and editorials (opinion pieces)
- Differentiating between journalistic and historiographical accounts
- Differentiating among different types of secondary sources
- Interpreting a range of primary sources

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**Course objectives**

- Become comfortable with the kinds of logic and inductive reasoning that historians rely upon in fashioning historical narratives (causes, contingencies, coincidences)
- Learn to work with visual and oral/aural sources-- photographs, oral histories, songs, and other forms of historical evidence in addition to news articles and other written primary sources
- Improve skills in critical reading and analytical thinking (how to identify and assess an author’s thesis argument, how to effectively summarize others’ work, how to participate in historiographic conversations)

**Questions concerning historical argument and methodology encountered in this course**

- Why are primary sources so essential to the writing of historical narratives? How do historians interpret such sources? What might future historians do to cope with the problems of misinformation and false news? What does it mean to contextualize a primary source or an event?
- What are the essential characteristics of a good historical narrative? Do historical accounts need to be objective? neutral? fair? credible? truthful? How do we know if they are these things?
- Does historiography have to be presented in a particular form or genre (i.e. a written text, such as a book or article) in order for it to have validity or authority as a credible account of history?
- What is the advantage of using many different (kinds of) sources? Why do historians value narratives that address the same issue/problem from multiple perspectives? Why do historians value accounts that offer multiple causes to explain why change occurs?

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**Required readings**

In addition to the sources taken from news sites and media publications, the required readings for this course include historical monographs, articles published in anthologies and academic journals, and academic writing that appears on websites (articles, blogs, newsletters).

**Books required of all students**

- **Clark**, Anna. *The Poisoned City: Flint's Water and the American Urban Tragedy*. New York: Metropolitan Books & Henry Holt, 2018; Picador reprint edition, 2019.
- **Oshinsky**, David M. *Polio: An American Story*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

**Articles and PDFs (excerpts from books) to be downloaded from Course Reserves**

IMPORTANT: You may need to be logged into the VPN Client before you will be permitted to access course reserve materials from an off-campus location. For information on installing and using UF's VPN Client, visit <https://it.ufl.edu/ict/documentation/network-infrastructure/vpn/>. For technical assistance with the UF VPN Client, please call the UF Computing Help Desk, at 352-392-4357.

- **Alexander**, Elizabeth. Excerpt from *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*.
- **Bailey**, Beth and Richard Immerman, "Introduction," in Beth Bailey and Richard H. Immerman, eds., *Understanding the U.S. Wars in Iraq & Afghanistan*. New York: New York University Press, 2015, 1-9, 16-17.
- **Hinton**, Elizabeth. "A War within Our Own Boundaries: Lyndon Johnson's Great Society and the Rise of the Carceral State." *Journal of American History* (June 2015): 100-112.
- **Jacobson**, Matthew Frye. Excerpt from *The Historian's Eye: Photography, History, and the American Present*. University of North Carolina Press, 2019. (UF has purchased an e-book that you can download from course reserves.)
- **Reynolds**, Michael A. "The Wars' Entangled Roots: Regional Realities and Washington's Vision," in Beth Bailey and Richard H. Immerman, eds., *Understanding the U.S. Wars in Iraq & Afghanistan*. New York: New York University Press, 2015, 21-53.
- **Students will be choosing many additional articles to read for various assignments.**

**"How to" Handouts**

- "How to Read a Primary Source," <https://courses.bowdoin.edu/writing-guides/reading/how-to-read-a-primary-source/>
- "Predatory Reading" <https://www.bowdoin.edu/profiles/faculty/prael/pdf/predatory-reading.pdf>
- "How to Write a Book Review," <https://hist.ucalgary.ca/atimm/writing-advice/howtos/bookrev>
- "Advice on Book Reviews," <https://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/types-of-writing/book-review/>
- <https://hist.ucalgary.ca/atimm/writing-advice/useful-writing-links>
- 'How to introduce a quote "Lead in": [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/using\\_research/quoting\\_paraphrasing\\_and\\_summarizing/signal\\_and\\_lead\\_in\\_phrases.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/using_research/quoting_paraphrasing_and_summarizing/signal_and_lead_in_phrases.html)

**Graded assignments (1000 total points)**

- Written instructions for major assignments (those worth more than 100 points) will be distributed several weeks before the assignment is due.
- Students should keep electronic copies of all their work in case any problems arise in the submission, grading, or the recording of assignments.

The final course grade is based on 1,000 points, determined as follows:

- **What Kind of News Junkie are you? 0 points, but required to continue in the course**
- **Photograph & Commentary, 100 points**
- **Editorial/Opinion Piece, 100 points**
- **Midterm Assignment, 300 points**
- **Final Assignment, 500 points**

### Grading Scale

Letter grades for the course will be assigned according to the following point scale:

Please note that in this course, to receive a full A, you must earn at least **950 out of 1000 points**.

Letter Grade	Total Points	GPA Equivalent
A	950-1000	4.0
A-	900-949	3.67
B+	875-899	3.33
B	850-874	3.0
B-	800-849	2.67
C+	775-799	2.33
C	750-774	2.0
C-	700-749	1.67
D+	675-699	1.33
D	650-674	1.0
D-	600-649	0.67
E	<600	0

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### Policies regarding participation and assignments

- Students are expected to have completed all reading and writing assignments by the beginning of class on the date specified on the syllabus. Whenever possible, students should have hard copies of the readings (books, articles, photographs, book reviews, etc.) in front of them.
- In general, no late work will be accepted unless accompanied by documentation from the Dean of Students or Health Services of a serious illness. However, in the case of exceptional or unforeseen circumstances, students needing an extension of a deadline may request one from the instructor, in advance of the deadline.

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### General course policies

- Students requesting accommodation must register with the Dean of Students Office (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/>) and obtain proper documentation to be submitted to the instructor. **Instructors are not obligated to grant accommodations after the first week of the semester.**
  - All students must adhere to the University of Florida's standards of academic honesty. UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge, which states: "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code." A copy of the student code of conduct/honor code may be found at <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>  
The student code of conduct forbids plagiarism, which includes the following:
    - Turning in a paper that was written by someone else (i.e., papers written by another student, a research service, or downloaded off the Internet); or written by you for another course.
    - Copying work written by another author without using quotation marks and without acknowledging the source through a commonly accepted style of footnoting.
    - Paraphrasing text written by another author without referencing that author within the text and by using a commonly accepted style of footnoting.
    - Using someone else's idea or concept without acknowledging the original author and source in the text and by using a commonly accepted style of footnoting.
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## Weekly Schedule of Readings and Assignments

### Week 1. How History (via the Media) Shapes/Reflects our World Views

**Asst 0.** What kind of News Junkie are You? 0 points but required for continuation in the course  
Due Aug 29 (Sunday) by midnight

### Week 2. Thinking Historically about What You See (Happening) Around You

- Read (for Tues 8/31): **Jacobson**, *The Historian's Eye* (download from Course Reserves), pp. 153-157. Print out the following 4 photographs & commentary and be prepared to discuss in class.
  - Give the Brother More Time, Washington, DC., 2010 (pp. 24-25)
  - Abandoned Shopping Center in Lexington, Kentucky, 2010 (p. 101)
  - Chinga la Migra, Phoenix Arizona, 2010 (pp. 116-117)
  - Dog Tag Garden Memorial, Boston, Massachusetts, 2011 (pp. 118-119)
- **Subscribe to *The New York Times*** (it's free for UF students, sign up from One.UF) and begin following news stories, keeping track of the stories that most interest you. By week 4, you should be honing in on one story that you intend to make the basis of your final project.
- **Subscribe to "Letters from an American,"** a daily newsletter written by historian Heather Cox Richardson. Available free from Substack.com

**Asst 1.** Photographic Analysis. 100 points due Sunday, Sept 5 by midnight.  
Be prepared to discuss in class on September 7.

**Take a photograph** of something that has recently occurred that you feel is historically significant or will have historical significance in the future; then explain why you have chosen/taken it (300 words)

### Weeks 3-4 Reportage versus Opinion—Is there any difference?

In advance of class, look over the following website, <https://historynewsnetwork.org/> and catch up on the last week of newsletters by Heather Cox Richardson (Letters from an American, from Substack.com)

- Heather Cox Richardson, "Letter...." August 11, 2021 on Charlottesville in 2017 and the emergence of fascism in the U.S. (PDF/link to be distributed)

**Asst 2.** Writing an Editorial Informed by History (100 points due Sept 19 (Sunday) by midnight.

### Weeks 5-6. Thinking about Recent History: Historiographic Argumentation

**Headline:** Withdrawing Troops from Afghanistan  
**History:** The Wars Against Terror in Afghanistan and Iraq

For Tuesday, Sept 21

- Bailey & Immerman, "Introduction," pp. 1-9 and footnotes on pp. 16-17. Keep track of how long it takes you to read these ten pages; and when you are finished, **take some notes for yourself and be prepared to discuss them in class.** What were the most important things you learned? What questions do you have?

Using the OneSearch search engine on Smathers' library home page, locate Kyle Longely's book review titled "The New Forgotten Wars," which was published in *Diplomatic History* in 2016, and then find one more review of Immerman and Bailey's anthology on your own, using library/internet search engines, such as OneSearch, J-Stor, Google Scholar, etc. Bring a hard copy of these two reviews to class and be prepared to discuss what academic reviewers are obligated to do in a book review; and what these two reviews have in common.

For Thurs, Sept 23

- Handout: "Predatory Reading" <https://www.bowdoin.edu/profiles/faculty/prael/pdf/predatory-reading.pdf> Then applying the tips you learned from the Handout, read Reynolds, "The Wars' Entangled Roots," pp. 21-53. Keep track of how long it takes you to read these thirty pages; and when you are finished, **take some notes for yourself**, but this time imagine that you are going to be tested on this material and that you may use your notes during the test, but not the original source material. What questions do you think your instructor will ask you? (Write a few of them down.)

### Weeks 7-8. Midterm Assignment: From Convict Labor to Mass Incarceration

**Headline: Critical Race Theory (CRT)**

**History behind the headline: Systemic Racism since the Civil War**

- **Ibram Kendi**, editorial
- **Michelle Alexander**, *The New Jim Crow* (excerpt)
- **Scott Reynolds Nelson**, *Steel Drivin' Man* (excerpt)
- **Elizabeth Hinton**, "A War within Our Own Boundaries"

### Weeks 9-10. Environmental Crises of Human Origin

**Headline:** NYT article on Newark's success in replacing lead pipes  
[https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/11/nyregion/newark-lead-pipes-drinking-water.html?campaign\\_id=2&emc=edit\\_th\\_20210812&instance\\_id=37588&nl=todaysheadlines&regi\\_id=58946868&segment\\_id=66036&user\\_id=fe721ba34ed6328cda171a223ebd33c5](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/11/nyregion/newark-lead-pipes-drinking-water.html?campaign_id=2&emc=edit_th_20210812&instance_id=37588&nl=todaysheadlines&regi_id=58946868&segment_id=66036&user_id=fe721ba34ed6328cda171a223ebd33c5)

- Clark, *The Poisoned City*

### Week 11-12. Public Health Crises & Vaccines

- Oshinsky, *Polio: An American Story*

Weeks 13-15.

**Final Assignment due Sunday, December 5.**