

**AMH 5930**

**Readings in 19<sup>th</sup> Century American History:  
Race and Power in Nineteenth Century America**

**Flint 13  
Thursdays, 3-6 pm**

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Fall 2021  
Office hours:  
Thursdays, 2:00-3:00, or by  
appointment

**Required Books:**

Claudio Saunt, *Unworthy Republic*  
William Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*  
Seth Rockman, *Scraping By*  
Elliot West, *The Contested Terrain*  
Manisha Sinha, *The Slave's Cause*  
Eugene Genovese, *Roll Jordan, Roll*  
Tera W. Hunter, *Bound in Wedlock: Slave and Free Black Marriage in the Nineteenth Century*  
Joshua D. Rothman, *The Ledger and the Chain*  
Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*  
Amy Murrell Taylor, *Embattled Freedom*  
Gregory P. Downs, *After Appomattox: Military Occupation and the Ends of War*  
Walter Johnson, *The Broken Heart of America: St. Louis and the Violent History of the United States*  
David Blight, *Race and Reunion*

**Course description:**

This course seeks to expose graduate students to the changing interpretations about the United States during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Although the class is organized chronologically, our

emphasis will be primarily topical and historiographical, including a sampling of social, cultural, intellectual, and political approaches.

In each of the classes, students will be asked to consider important issues and the diverse ways in which historians have attempted to address them.

Students should keep in mind that this is a readings seminar, *not* a research seminar. Our primary focus will be on how the historical literature on particular topics has changed over time and where it might head for the future, how historians have agreed and disagreed, and how compelling their arguments are for us as historians. Necessarily, the class will be entirely discussion in format, based upon a program of readings completed in common and individually. Students must read all of the required books listed above, and there will be additional reading requirements as described below.

**Objectives:**

After completing this course, students should be able to:

1. read and analyze works of history, with particular attention to argument;
2. improve their ability to communicate clearly and concisely, verbally and in writing;
3. understand the broad trends in the historiography of 19<sup>th</sup> century American history;

**Minimal expectations:**

1. Attend all classes. I will allow one excused absence, if students provide notice of the need to miss class for an acceptable reason at least 24 hours in advance. After a first excused absence, I will deduct a full grade for every class missed.
2. Complete the assigned weekly readings before each class.
3. Participate regularly in class discussions.
4. Complete all papers by the deadline. Late papers will be penalized by a full grade for every 24 hours.

**Writing assignments:**

All papers must be emailed to me ([linkwa@ufl.edu](mailto:linkwa@ufl.edu)) no later than noon on the day of class. I will return the papers to you, barring unforeseen circumstances, no later than a week after you have turned them in.

I'm looking for good, crisp writing, clear thinking, tight organization, and general coherency

and cogency. These are NOT “book reports”: instead of summarizing the books, I expect you to identify the author’s argument, show how well that argument is demonstrated, and assess the work against the general literature on the subject.

Writing assignments include the following:

1. **Analytical book reviews:** All students are required to complete *seven* analytical book reviews of 1,000 words each. These will be due during alternative weeks, with the exception of the September 2 class, when everyone will write about the same book. *These are due by noon on Thursdays.*
2. **Historiographical review essay:** Complete a 3,000-word historiographical paper which analyzes one of the topics that we cover in class. The paper should include a mix of six-eight books/articles, approved by me in advance. It will be due at the end of the semester, due date TBA.

### **General discussion responsibilities:**

All students are expected to come to class prepared to engage in dialogue and discussion. This doesn’t mean necessarily dominating the discussion; good discussion very often means listening and reacting to the thoughts and responses of your peers. In whatever form it appears, good discussion means active engagement. I will periodically adopt various strategies to insure wide participation, such as asking students to read their papers or calling on people to speak. Each student should come to class with a brief statement of the book’s thesis and its significance: we will start class by asking everyone to read and discuss these.

### **Discussion facilitators:**

Each student will serve as a discussion facilitator for two class sessions. The discussion facilitator will work ahead of time with the instructor in devising questions. Students should submit their questions and bibliography no later than Wednesday morning, and I will expect a conference in advance of class. Discussion facilitators will shape discussion, but I intend to be very actively involved in interjecting with my own questions. In addition to leading class with questions, facilitators will be specifically responsible for providing 1) an analysis of relevant book reviews about the common readings, 2) an overview of the historiography of the topic, and 3) a one-page bibliography of the most important books on that week’s topic.

### **Grading:**

Class discussion (including serving as discussion facilitator): 20 percent; brief book reviews, 50 percent; historiographical review essay, 30 percent.

**Remote classes:**

The modality of this class is being changed temporarily to increase the probability that students will be able to complete the course. On the following dates—August 26, September 2, and November 11—classes will be taught online rather than face-to-face using the following Zoom link:

<https://ufl.zoom.us/j/91916664836?pwd=R2VmMHdGRG5KLzB0QzJyTUpoS3djQT09>

Meeting ID: 919 1666 4836  
Passcode: 713019

***Class times remain unchanged. Do not go to the scheduled classroom on the dates listed.***

**Course schedule:**

**1. August 26: Introduction to class**

This should be a brief meeting to introduce everyone to each other and to review the requirements of the course.

Please review this syllabus by the time of class.

**2. September 2: Early Republic**

Claudio Saunt, *Unworthy Republic: The Dispossession of Native Americans and the Road to Indian Territory*

**3. September 9: The Second Party System**

William Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*

**4. September 16: Capitalism and Labor**

Seth Rockman, *Scraping By*

Scott Reynolds Nelson, "Who Put Their Capitalism in My Slavery?," *Journal of the Civil War Era*, Volume 5, Number 2, June 2015, pp. 289-310.

**5. September 23: Frontiers**

Elliott West, *The Contested Terrain*

Pekka Hämmäläinen and Samuel Truett, "On Borderlands," *Journal of American History* 98 (September 2011), pp. 338-361.

**6. September 30: The Abolitionists**

Manish Sinha, *The Slave's Cause*

**October 7: NO CLASS, Homecoming**

**7. October 14: Families under the Slave Regime**

Tera W. Hunter, *Bound in Wedlock: Slave and Free Black Marriage in the Nineteenth Century*

Herbert G. Gutman, "Persistent Myths about the Afro-American Family," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 6 (Autumn, 1975), pp. 181-210.

**8. October 21: The Slave Trade**

Joshua D. Rothman, *The Ledger and the Chain*

**9. October 28: The Sectional Crisis**

Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*

**10. November 4: The Civil War**

**NO CLASS THIS WEEK, but papers are due**

Amy Murrell Taylor, *Embattled Freedom*

Thavolia Glymph, "I'm a Radical Black Girl": Black Women Unionists and the Politics of Civil War History," *Journal of the Civil War Era*, Volume 8, Number 3, September 2018, pp. 359-387.

***All students write an analytical essay.***

**11. November 11: Reconstruction**

Gregory Downs, *After Appomattox*

Yael A. Sternhell, "Revisionism Reinvented?: The Antiwar Turn in Civil War Scholarship," *Journal of the Civil War Era* 3 (June 2013), pp. 239-256.

**12. November 18: White Supremacy**

Howard N. Rabinowitz, "More Than the Woodward Thesis: Assessing the Strange Career of Jim Crow," *Journal of American History* 75 (December 1988), pp. 842-856; Woodward, "Strange Career Critics," *ibid.*, 857-68.

Walter Johnson, *The Broken Heart of America: St. Louis and the Violent History of the United States*

**November 25: NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)**

**13. December 2: Civil War Memory**

David W. Blight, "What Will Peace among the Whites Bring?": Reunion and Race in the Struggle over the Memory of the Civil War in American Culture," *Massachusetts Review* 34 (Autumn, 1993), pp. 393-410.

David Blight, *Race and Reunion*

***Final drafts of review essays due***