

**AMH3931/24980/8LN1**  
**History–Special Topics**  
**From Headlines to Histories**  
**Fall 2022**

Course Meets: T 11:45-1:40, R 12:50-1:40 in Flint 111  
Instructor: Dr. Louise Newman, [lnewman@ufl.edu](mailto:lnewman@ufl.edu)  
Office hours: In person, Keene Flint 212, Tues 3-4pm

### **Course Description**

This course could also be titled, “The History Behind the Headlines,” as topics will be drawn from newspaper headlines from July through September 2022 and will include some of the big stories from the summer, such as recent Supreme Court Rulings, Inflation & Economic policies, the Senate’s investigation of attack on the Capitol on January 6, 2021; and the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, we’ll look at stories that have received significant coverage over the past several years: U.S.’s relationships to China and Russia; the Black Lives Matter movement, climate change and environmental concerns; and racial/gender issues ranging from mass incarceration to sexual harassment. Finally, we will be on the look out for other topics that receive media attention in the early months of this semester.

The course poses three basic questions for sustained reflection:

- How can past events help us understand present-day events?
- How do contemporary actors-- politicians, journalists, social activists and others-- use (or misuse) historical information?
- What role might historians play in helping journalists and the public contextualize and understand current events?

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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)
- Understand why dates, facts and details matter so much to historians and how they go about interpreting such information to make an argument about the significance of events
- Be able to identify and explain some of the different approaches and methodologies that historians use in trying to make sense of historical information
- Continue to work with visual and oral/aural sources-- photographs, films, oral histories, songs, and other forms of historical evidence
- 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)
- Develop the skills needed in argumentative academic writing (how to compose an original thesis-argument; how to structure formal academic essays—whether

historiographical and/or grounded in primary sources; how to sequence sentences to compose cohesive (focused) paragraphs; how to introduce evidence from primary and secondary sources to support the thesis, etc.

### Required readings

The required readings for this course include books, articles published in anthologies and academic journals, and writing that appears on websites (articles, blogs, newsletters).

Students will need to activate their free subscription to the *New York Times* (MyUFL) and sign up to receive **Heather Cox Richardson's free newsletter, "Letters from an American"** available from Substack.com.

**Required books and articles-- unless otherwise indicated, these readings are available, at no charge, from Course Reserves, which you can access from the course's website on e-learning.**

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

- **Campbell**, Donald J. *America's Gun Wars: A Cultural History of Gun Control in the United States*. 2019.
- **Clark**, Anna. *The Poisoned City: Flint's Water and the American Urban Tragedy*. New York: Metropolitan Books & Henry Holt, 2018; Picador reprint edition, 2019. \$15.87 on Amazon Prime.
- **Jacobson**, Matthew Frye. *The Historian's Eye: Photography, History, and the American Present*. University of North Carolina Press, 2019, selected pages.
- **Netherland**, Julie and **Hansen**, Helena B. "The War on Drugs that Wasn't...Race in Media Coverage of Opioid Misuse." *Culture of Medical Psychiatry* 40.4 (December 2016): 664-686.
- **Reagan**, Leslie. *When Abortion was a Crime*, selected pages.
- **Ziegler**, Mary. *Abortion and Law in America*, selected pages.

Other readings will be added during the course of the semester.

### Recommended Material from Websites -- "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)

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### Graded assignments (1000 total points)

- Written instructions for major assignments (those worth 200 points or more) will be distributed at least one week before the assignment is due.
- Assignments must be submitted online through the course website on Canvas, located at [lss.at.ufl.edu](http://lss.at.ufl.edu).
- Students should keep electronic copies of all their work in case any problems arise in the submission, grading, or the recording of assignments.

### Three short Assignments (600 pts) will help students develop the following skills

- **Interpreting Visual Sources:** Identify a recent photograph that you think will have historical significance
- **Interpreting Written Primary Sources:** Analyze the meaning/value/usefulness of a journalistic article
- **Identifying/Locating relevant primary and secondary sources** for an historical topic and citing them in a bibliography using appropriate and consistent formatting (Chicago Manual of Style is the preferred format for all history papers.)
- **Structuring an Argument:** Assessing how an historian organizes an academic essay, setting forth a problem or question, answering the question or solving the problem by assembling and assessing evidence, and explaining the significance of the topic (i.e. answering the “So what?” question)
- **Thinking Skills--Placing Secondary Sources in a larger context:** Analyze a conversation among historians, journalists, lawyers, policy makers and other actors
- **Reading Skills-- (close reading, predatory reading, active reading, reading from the “outside in”):** Restate thesis arguments from historical monographs of different lengths (articles and books)
- **Writing Skills-- Quoting, Paraphrasing, Citing Sources:** Introducing a quotation into a text and citing the source, using one of the three accepted forms (parenthetical notes, footnotes, endnotes)
- **Writing Skills—Organizing an Essay so that it has an effective Introduction, detailed body of evidence, and a satisfying conclusion**

### Segments of the Final Assignment (400 pts)

- **Prospectus/Proposal** (Research Question, Primary Source Analysis, Timeline/Chronology, Preliminary Annotated Bibliography)
- **First Draft**, Figuring out the Thesis Argument—Moving Toward a Perfect Introductory Paragraph
- **Peer Review**—Commenting in a helpful way on a fellow student’s writing
- **Final Version**, formatted correctly (Title Page, Abstract, 5-page paper with footnotes, Bibliography)

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### Grading Scale

**Please note that in this course you must earn at least 950 out of 1000 points to receive a full A. The instructor will not round up, so please do not ask her to do so.** Letter grades for the course will be assigned according to the following point scale:

| 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

- This course has a significant “workshop” component, which requires students’ presence in every session.
  - 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 the case of exceptional or unforeseen circumstances, students needing an extension of a deadline may request one from the instructor, so long as the request occurs in advance of the deadline. **Students who simply miss or skip deadlines will not be allowed to make up work.**
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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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Class will **NOT** be held on the following dates:

Sept 6 (Tuesday following Labor Day)

Oct 4, Oct 6 (Yom Kippur, Homecoming)

Nov 22, 24 (Thanksgiving break)

**Schedule of Readings and Assignments is available on the course website on E-Learning/Canvas.**