

AMH4930: History Research Seminar: Race, Violence, and American Memory

Spring 2026 | 3 credits

NOTE: This course complies with all UF academic policies. For information on those policies and for resources for students, please see UF's "[Academic Policies and Resources](#)" web page.

I. General Information

Meeting days and times: Wednesdays (11:45am-2:45pm)

Class location: Keene-Flint 229

Instructor(s):

Name: William Robert Billups

Office Building/Number: Keene-Flint 224

Phone: (352) 273-3364

Email: wbillups@ufl.edu

Office Hours: M 11:00a-12p, Tu 1:00p-3:00p, W from 3:00p-4:00p

Course Description

This senior seminar explores how major wars and periods of racial conflict have shaped American identities and memory since the late 1600s. Through engagement with primary sources and a growing scholarship on memory in American history, students will learn how to analyze collective memory as a historical phenomenon and consider how settler-indigenous conflict, slavery and emancipation, vigilantism, and traditional warfare have repeatedly transformed Americans' views of their government and themselves. The final outcome will be a major research paper on a topic of the student's choosing.

Prerequisites

HIS 3942 with a minimum grade of C.

General Education Designation: none.

Course Materials

This is a reading-intensive seminar that will introduce you to a wide range of texts, some of which you will need to buy. Below are the three categories of texts for our course:

Required Books that Must Be Purchased:

1. Jill Lepore, *The Name of War* (1999).
2. Michael Hattem, *Memory of '76* (2024).

3. Claire Whitlinger, *Between Remembrance and Repair* (2020).

Required Books That Are Freely Available to UF students:

1. David Blight, *Race and Reunion* (2001).
2. Ari Kelman, *Misplaced Massacre* (2013).
3. Elijah Gaddis, *Lynching and Ordinary Things* (2022).

Supplemental Texts. All other texts, including primary sources and book chapters, will be available through hyperlinks, Canvas, and other digital resources.

Materials Fee: N/A

II. Course Goals and Objectives

In this course we will:

1. Read and synthesize academic works written by historians, social scientists, and scholars in allied disciplines who research violence and American memory.
2. Locate and analyze primary sources in service of a major research project.
3. Craft major research papers that posit evidence-based historical arguments.
4. Incorporate constructive feedback to improve academic writing.

WRITING EVALUATION

This course carries 6000 words that count towards the UF Writing Requirement. You must turn in all written work counting towards the 6000 words (those with a (WR) in the assignment list) to receive credit for those 6000 words. The instructor will evaluate and provide feedback on the student's written work with respect to content, organization and coherence, argument and support (when appropriate), style, clarity, grammar, punctuation, and other mechanics. Specific guidelines for individual assignments will be provided throughout the semester.

Category of Writing Evaluation	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Content	Papers demonstrate deep engage with course content and synthesize multiple sources to construct well-evidenced argument.	Papers demonstrate weak engage with course content and do not synthesize multiple sources to construct well-evidenced argument.
Organization & Coherence	Papers employ a clear organization and topic sentences that support a coherent line of argumentation.	Papers do not employ a clear organization or topic sentences that support a coherent line of argumentation.
Argument & Support	Papers posit a clear argument (thesis statement) and back that argument with germane evidence.	Papers do not posit a clear argument (thesis statement) and/or fail to back that argument with germane evidence.
Style	Papers employ appropriate word choice, sentence structures, and syntax for the discipline. At a minimum, papers use	Papers fail to employ appropriate word choice, sentence structures, and/or syntax for the discipline. Papers use vocabulary

	vocabulary precisely and vary sentence structure to provide a smooth narrative.	imprecisely and do not vary sentence structure.
Mechanics	Papers contain three or fewer mechanical errors and successfully deploy punctuation, citation, and capitalization.	Papers contain more than three mechanical errors and unsuccessfully deploy punctuation, citation, and capitalization.

III. Graded Work

Over the semester, you will complete five written assignments, and a majority of your grade (60%) is in service of your final paper. You will have two early short papers, assignments that will give you practice and feedback before tackling your prospectus and final paper. You will receive more detailed instructions and rubrics for each as we go through the semester.

Assignments:

1. Participation – 25%
2. *Metamora* Reflection (**WR**) – 7.5%
3. Revolution Commemoration Mini-Paper (**WR**) – 7.5%
4. Oral Presentation – 10%
5. Prospectus – 10%
6. Draft Pages (at least 5 pages) – 5%
7. Final Paper (**WR**) (15-25 pages) – 35%

TOTAL: 100%

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Number Grade
A	100-92.5
A-	92.4-89.5
B+	89.4-86.5
B	86.4-82.5
B-	82.4-79.5
C+	79.4-76.5
C	76.4-72.5
C-	72.4-69.5
D+	69.4-66.5
D	66.4-62.5
D-	62.4-59.5
E	59.4-0

*Note: All assignments marked with **WR** must be finished to satisfy the 6,000-word requirement.*

IV. Calendar¹

1. **Wednesday, Jan. 14** – Discuss the Syllabus, Course, and State of the Field
 - a. Reading: The syllabus.
2. **Wednesday, Jan. 21** – King Phillip’s War, Part 1
 - a. Jill Lepore, *The Name of War*, Prologue–Chapter 5.
 - b. Mary Rowlandson, *A Narrative of Captivity and Restoration* (1682),
<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/851/851-h/851-h.htm>
3. Wednesday, Jan. 28 – King Philip’s War, Part 2
 - a. Jill Lepore, *The Name of War* (Part 2), Chapter 6–Epilogue.
 - b. John Augustus Stone, *Metamora; or, the Last of the Wampanoags* (1828):
<https://meyerfit271.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/john-augustus-stone-metamora.pdf>
 - c. NOTE: Read the play carefully, and bring either a digital or printed copy of it to class. We may or may not do a table reading...
 - d. Additional Resources: King Phillip’s War additional primary sources:
<https://historyofmassachusetts.org/king-phillips-war-primary-sources/>
4. Wednesday, Feb. 4 – Remembering the American Revolution, Part 1
 - a. Michael Hattem, *Memory of '76* (2024), Introduction–Chapter 12.
 - b. Shawn Thompson, “The Violence and Trauma of Loyalist Revolutionary Memory,” Chapter 2 in *Excavating the Historical Memory of the American Revolution* (2025).
 - c. Frederick Douglass, Address on the Fourth of July, 1852
 - d. **Due on Friday, Feb. 6 at noon:** *Metamora* reflection paper (7.5%).
5. **Wednesday, Feb. 11** – Remembering the American Revolution, Part 2
 - a. Michael Hattem, *Memory of '76* (2024), Chapter 13–Epilogue.

¹ Subject to change due to severe weather, administrative matters, new publications, etc.

b. **Additional assignment:** select and research any post-1860 commemoration of the American Revolution. Come to class with two primary sources and prepared to explain what you found.

6. **Wednesday, Feb. 18** – Civil War Memory, Part 1

- a. David Blight, *Race and Reunion* (2001) Introduction–Chapter 4.
- b. Frederick Douglass, Address on Remembering the Civil War (1878).
- c. Henry Grady, Address to the New England Society (1886).
- d. **Due on Friday, Feb. 20 at noon:** Revolution Commemoration Paper (7.5%)

7. **Wednesday, Feb. 25** – Civil War Memory, Part 2

- a. David Blight, *Race and Reunion* (2001), Chapter 8–Epilogue.
- b. Daniel A. Pollock, “Spectacles of American Nationalism,” *Southern Spaces*, 2021, <https://southernspaces.org/2021/spectacles-american-nationalism-battle-atlanta-cyclorama-painting-and-birth-nation/>.

8. **Wednesday, March 4** – Civil War Memory, Part 3

- a. Ari Kelman, *Misplaced Massacre* (2013), selected chapters.

9. **Wednesday, March 11** – Material Culture and Lynching Memory

- a. Elijah Gaddis, *Lynching and Ordinary Things* (2022).
- b. “The Death of Emma Hartsell,” transcript, <https://mudcat.org/@displaysong.cfm?SongID=1507>.

10. **Wednesday, March 18** – No class (Spring Break)

11. **Wednesday, March 25** – The Sociology of Commemoration

- a. Claire Whitlinger, *Between Remembrance and Repair* (2020).
- b. Assignment due on Friday, March 27 at noon: Prospectus (10%)

12. **Wednesday, April 1** – No class, individual meetings to discuss final papers

13. **Wednesday, April 8** – Oral Presentations, Part 1

14. Wednesday, April 15 – Oral Presentations, Part 2

- a. Assignment due on Friday, April 17 at 11:00am: Draft Pages (5%)

15. Wednesday, April 22 – In-Class Peer-Review Workshop

Final Paper (35%) due Wednesday, April 29, at noon EDT via Canvas.

V. Policies, Procedures, and Resources

University Assessment Policies. Requirements for extensions and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the [Catalog](#).

Instructions for Submitting Written Assignments.

All written assignments should be submitted as Word documents (.doc or .docx) through the “Assignments” portal in Canvas by the specified deadlines. Do NOT send assignments as PDF files, which can freeze the Canvas grading system.

Digital Version History Requirement

The growing use of large language models (LLMs) in student writing poses challenges for faculty trying to provide fair evaluations and feedback on student work. To ensure I am evaluating student work fairly, I will require a digital draft history to accompany all written assignments. This could be in the form of GoogleDocs, Google Assignments, OneDrive Version History, Grammarly draft history, or another form of draft history that I can access. I will not grade your draft history. This is simply to verify the authenticity of your work and to provide me an additional way to identify areas for writing feedback.

Late Submissions

Unless an extension is granted, small assignments, such as the *Metamora* paper, will incur a 20-point penalty for every day it is late, beginning the minute after the deadline passes. You may not submit the final paper late without a documented emergency.

Extensions

All extension requests, which I will be hesitant to grant, must be supported by documentation from a medical provider, Student Health Services, the Disability Resource Center, the Dean of Students Office, or a similar official body. Requirements for attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Extra Credit

The professor will announce in class if other extra credit opportunities arise during the semester. Extra credit points will be added to your participation grade, and under no circumstances will a student have an extra credit opportunity that is not available to other students in the class.

UF course evaluation process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <http://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <http://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <http://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Students requiring accommodation

Students who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

University Honesty Policy

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. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. [See the UF Conduct Code website for more information](#). If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Plagiarism and Related Ethical Violations

Ethical violations such as plagiarism, cheating, academic misconduct (e.g. passing off others' work as your own, reusing old assignments, etc.) will not be tolerated and will result in a failing grade in this course. Students must be especially wary of plagiarism. The UF Student Honor Code defines plagiarism 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." We will go over this in greater detail prior to the first written assignment. Students are encouraged to reach out with any additional questions regarding what constitutes plagiarism. Note that plagiarism also includes the use of any unauthorized use of artificial intelligence programs, such as ChatGPT. If Dr. Billups has not explicitly authorized it, it is unauthorized.

In-class recording

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the

instructor.

A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or guest lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party-note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Canvas

Class announcements will be made through Canvas, and all papers **must** be turned in via Canvas. Class handouts, lecture slides, assignment rubrics, readings, study guides, a writing sample, and a copy of this syllabus are on our Canvas site. Check your Canvas inbox daily, and read all AMH 4930 Canvas announcements, which is how I communicate with the class.

Technology in the Classroom

To respect a wide range of learning styles, I will permit the use of tablets and laptops in class so long as they do not distract you or your fellow students. However, abuses of this technology policy will be taken seriously. Students disrupting the lecture may be asked to leave, and anyone caught using tablets or laptops for purposes unrelated to the course during a discussion section will receive an unexcused absence and a failing participation grade for that meeting. No computers or laptops are allowed on exam days, and those who repeatedly violate the technology policy will be barred from bringing laptops and tablets. Cellphones should be on vibrate and out of sight.

Procedure for conflict resolution

Any classroom issues, disagreements or grade disputes should be discussed first between the instructor and the student. If the problem cannot be resolved, please contact Seth Bernstein (Associate Chair) (sethbernstein@ufl.edu, [352-273-3399](tel:352-273-3399)). Be prepared to provide documentation of the problem, as well as all graded materials for the semester. Issues that cannot be resolved departmentally will be referred to the University Ombuds Office (<http://www.ombuds.ufl.edu>; [352-392-1308](tel:352-392-1308)) or the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu>; [352-392-1261](tel:352-392-1261)).

Campus Resources

- U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the [Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
- Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the [Student Health Care Center website](#).
- University Police Department: Visit [UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the [UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).
- GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the [GatorWell website](#) or call 352-273-4450.
- Student Success Initiative, <https://studentsuccess.ufl.edu/>.
- [Field and Fork Pantry](#). Food and toiletries for students experiencing food insecurity.
- [Dean of Students Office](#). 202 Peabody Hall, 392-1261. The DSO assists students who are experiencing situations that compromises their ability to attend classes. This includes family emergencies and medical issues (including mental health crises).

Academic Resources

- E-learning technical support: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.
- [Career Connections Center](#): Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.
- [Library Support](#): Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
- [Teaching Center](#): Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.
- [Writing Studio](#): 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
- Student Complaints On-Campus: Visit the [Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage](#) for more information.
- On-Line Students Complaints: View the [Distance Learning Student Complaint Process](#).