History 6353: Literature and Methodology of the United States  
Spring 2017

This course examines U.S. historiography by focusing on its content and the reason for its production. The writing of U.S. history is unique. As opposed to other fields, U.S. history is much more contingent on, and reflects, the social, cultural, and political environment of the nation. "American" historians' visions of the past have changed over time and has attempted to be more inclusive. Yet there is still a notion that the United States has an "essence" and that it is somehow "exceptional." Given this historiographical reality, this course will concentrate on the "building blocks" of U.S. history, both chronologically and thematically. It will interrogate the writing of distinct periods in U.S. history, but also take into account those projects that have attempted to "write" various groups into the tapestry that is America and in so doing bring about more complexity, nuance, and diversity to the field. Ultimately, this course is designed to help you compile the materials you will need for your portfolio.

Class requirements: In addition to MADATORY class attendance (this is graduate school, you don't miss class) and participation you will have three writing assignments based on the readings—a short historiographical essay (6-7 pages long, due according to topic), one long synthetic essay (15-20 pages, due May 11), and an annotated bibliography that you should be working on throughout the semester and will be due May 2. These papers should be thought of as the beginning of the essays for your portfolio. For the historiographical paper you want to make large connections among the works in a given field. Rather than cover many readings, the essay should strive for coherence and make connections between ideas. The synthetic essay should be viewed as your interpretation of a given subject based on the known historiography. Again, this should be looked up as a draft for an essay that will be expanded and eventually included in your portfolio. Your annotated bibliography will also be the draft for the larger piece that will go into your portfolio. It should include the books read in this class and those you will use for your papers. Finally, you will also be required to make an in class oral presentation on a book (on the supplementary list) of your choice. I will provide you with instructions for all the writing assignments.

Grade Distribution: Class attendance and participation: 20%; short paper: 20%; long paper: 30%; annotated bibliography: 20%; oral presentation: 10%. 
Required Texts:

Jim Downs, Sick From Freedom: African-American Illness and Suffering During the Civil War and Reconstruction.
Neil Foley, Mexicans in the Making of America.
Elizabeth Hinton, From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America.
Nancy Isenberg, White Trash: The 400-Year Old Untold History of Class in America.
Benjamin Madley, An American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe, 1846-1873.
Kariann Akemi Yokota, Unbecoming British: How Revolutionary America Become a Postcolonial Nation.

Schedule

Week 1: January 17
Introduction

Week 2: January 24
Early American Slavery

Readings:

Supplemental Readings:
Philip Morgan, Slave Counterpoint: Black culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry
Week 3: January 31
The American Revolution

Readings:

Supplemental Readings:


Week 4: February 7
The Aftermath of the American Revolution/The New Nation

Readings:
Kariann Akemi Yokota, Unbecoming British: How Revolutionary America Became a Postcolonial Nation.


Supplemental Readings:

**Week 5: February 14**

**The Construction of White Identity**

**Reading:**


**Supplemental Readings:**


**Week 6: February 21**

**19th Century Slavery**

**Reading:**


**Supplemental Readings:**


**Week 7: February 28**

**The Civil War and Reconstruction**

**Readings:**
Jim Downs, *Sick From Freedom: African-American Illness and Suffering During the Civil War and Reconstruction.*


**Supplemental Readings:**
Week 8: March 7
History of Sexuality and the State

Reading:

Supplemental Readings:

Spring Break: March 13-17

Week 9: March 21
Gender/Women/Race

Reading:

Supplemental Readings:

Week 10: March 28
Rethinking Immigration History

Readings:


Supplemental Readings:
Hasia Diner, Hungering for America: Italian, Irish, and Jewish Foodways in the Age of Migration (2003).

**Week 11: April 4**

**Chicano/a-Mexican American History**

**Readings:**

**Supplemental Readings:**

**Week 12: April 11**

**Western History/Indian History**

**Readings:**
Benjamin Madley, *An American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe, 1846-1873*.

**Supplemental Readings:**
Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West.*

**Week 13: April 18**

**The Great Depression**

**Reading:**

**Supplemental Readings:**

**Week 14: April 25**

**Cold War America**

**Reading:**

**Supplemental Readings:**
Week 15: May 2
The Origins of the Carceral State

**Reading:**

**Supplemental Readings:**