History 6353: Literature and Methodology of the United States
Spring 2020

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 have 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 12), and an annotated bibliography that you should be working on throughout the semester and will be due May 5. 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 complementary 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:

Stephanie Jones-Rogers, *They Were Her Property: White Women as Slave Owners in the American South.*

Schedule

**Week 1: January 21**
Introduction

**Week 2: January 28**
Early American Slavery

Readings:

Complementary Readings:
Gary B. Nash, *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia’s Black Community, 1720-1840*

**Week 3: February 4**

**The American Revolution**

**Readings:**

**Complementary Readings:**

**Week 4: February 11**

**The Aftermath of the American Revolution/The New Nation**

**Readings:**


**Complementary Readings:**

**Week 5: February 18**

“Jacksonian America”

**Reading:**

**Complementary Readings:**

**Week 6: February 25**

19th Century Slavery

**Reading:**
Stephanie E. Jones-Rogers, *They Were Her Property: White Women as Slave Owners in the American South.*

**Complementary Readings:**

**Week 7: March 3**

**Women's History: Issues of Citizenship**
**Guest Facilitator: Dr. Susan Stanfield**

**Readings:**

**Week 8: March 10**

**The Civil War and Reconstruction**

**Readings:**
Eric Foner, *The Second Founding: How the Civil War and Reconstruction Remade the Constitution*.


**Complementary Readings:**

**Spring Break: March 16-20**

**Week 9: March 24**

**A New New Western History**

**Readings:**

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

**Week 10: March 31**

**The New Empire**

**Readings:**

**Complementary Readings:**
Week 11: April 7
Gender/Women/Race

Reading:

Complementary Readings:

Week 12: April 14
Chicano/a-Mexican American History

Readings:

Complementary Readings:

Week 13: April 21
Rethinking the 1920s

Reading:

Complementary Readings:

Week 14: April 28
Sexuality in U.S. History

Reading:

Complementary Readings:

**Week 15: May 5**

**The 1970s and Beyond**

**Reading:**

**Complementary Readings:**