

History 709
U.S. History From the “Bottom Up”

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T 4-6:50
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Course description:

This seminar will explore approaches to U.S. history that emphasize the experiences and agency of ordinary people. We will focus on scholarship that illustrates how looking at history from the “bottom up” changes our understanding of traditional historical narratives. The class will provide students with an opportunity to explore important debates in some of the most rapidly growing fields of U.S. history: African American history, labor history, and women’s history.

Our seminar will be focused around the experience of researching and writing an original research paper based on primary sources. The paper will be approximately 20-25 pages in length. It must have a strong well-supported argument, footnotes, and a bibliography. It should be written in clear and polished prose. Students will choose a topic based on our seminar topic, in consultation with me and with other students.

This class will have a strong collaborative dimension. We will work together to grapple with the secondary literature on our topic. We will also consistently discuss the research process and engage in peer reviews of proposals and papers. Attendance at seminars is mandatory and engaged participation is crucial to your success in the course.

E-mail Policy and Blackboard:

E-mail is the best way to reach me. I always confirm receipt of messages and try to respond quickly. If you do not receive a response from me within 48 hours, you should assume that I did not receive your message and try again. If you do not receive confirmation of my receipt of your message, it means that I did not receive it and you will not be credited for any information that you communicated.

I will use e-mail to contact you, so it is imperative that you check your UNCG email account regularly. Note that I will be sending class e-mails only to UNCG accounts.

The course will have a blackboard website, which will have copies of the syllabus and handouts.

Required Texts:

(available at the UNC-G bookstore and Addams bookstore on Tate St.)

Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, *The Craft of Research*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995, 2003.

Lizabeth Cohen, *Making A New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990, 1995.

LuAnn Jones, *Mama Learned Us to Work: Farm Women in the New South*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002.

Robin D.G. Kelley, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class*. New York: The Free Press, 1994, 1996.

All other readings available on Jackson Library's e-reserves.

Grading:

Participation and Class Citizenship 20%: Everyone is expected to come to class prepared to discuss the week's readings and assignments. You will be graded on the depth and insight of your contributions, your small research assignments, and your participation in the peer review process. Attendance is mandatory. Absences will hurt your grade.

Response Papers 20%: During the first part of the semester, you will write a weekly response to the common readings. Papers should demonstrate that you read and understood the books or articles, engage with the main arguments, and offer a critical perspective. Papers must be e-mailed to me on the Monday before class before noon. This is an important deadline. Late papers will be penalized.

Proposal 10%: This is a detailed explanation of your topic and how you will pursue it. It will include a primary and secondary source bibliography. You will have to conduct a considerable amount of research to write the proposal.

Draft 10%: This is a full draft of your research paper, including footnotes and bibliography. You will receive comments from me and from your peers.

Final Paper 40%: Your final paper should be significantly different from your draft, illustrating that you have thought carefully about the suggested changes (and sometimes conducted additional primary source research). The paper should be well-organized, the prose should be clear and convincing, and there should not be any typos or spelling

mistakes. Footnotes and bibliographies should be complete and correct. Proofread carefully.

I use the following grading scale: 93 and above A, 90-92 A-, 88-89 B+, 83-87 B, 80-82, B-, 78-79 C+, 73-77 C, 70-72 C-, 68-69 D+, 63-67 D, 60-62 D-, 59 and below F.