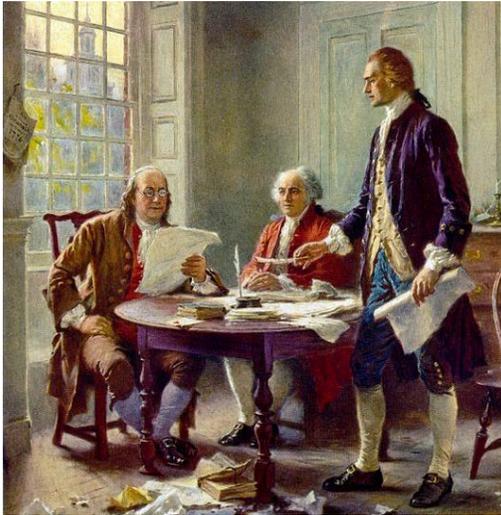


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History 316 Fall 2016: Interpreting American History -- Changing and Competing Explanations and Narratives of the American Past



Interpretations. History is what historians write, right? Or is it what past actors – ordinary folks and powerful elites alike – did and made, with materials and understandings inherited from the past, reworked in the present, oriented with hope and fear toward the future? Everyone has a past and an interpretation of it. People voice historical interpretations that vindicate who they are and what they want or deserve. Their conflicts often express themselves as competing versions of “our” shared past -- of lost national greatness, or democracy sacrificed at the altar of corrupting wealth. The boundaries of “we the people” are themselves contested.

Yet disciplined historical thinking and research can challenge popular and elite “received interpretations” “conventional wisdom,” and ideological thinking, and perhaps save us all from extreme folly. Or at least as

teachers and scholars we can keep alive habits of evidence-based reasoning and interpretation, habits that might help us guide our students with more accurate understandings of how we got here. We will always have to manage a level of conflict as we seek cooperation, including and excluding others in circles of trust and effort. Conflicts often express themselves in dispute over the meaning of keywords: democracy, "the people," progress, war and peace, law and order, equality and hierarchy, liberty and oppression, America as an exceptional or a tragically typical nation. Was America once great and no longer so? Is it still great and exceptional in its promise, its achievements, ideals? Should we innovate and reform, even declare revolution? Should we return to traditions and ways that guided us in the past, to law and order, to middle class security, or to democratic processes that actually work? Can we return, or are we living with nostalgic illusions? What if our cherished traditions have a Revolution at their core? Who is the "we" that gets included in the stories, and what visions of history inform the challengers?

Through a combination of depth examinations of key episodes and theoretically informed surveys of longer-range historical changes, you will develop and refine the analytical skills employed in the study of history. Covering more than four centuries, this course charts the main currents of development in a wide swath of American history. It also digs deep post holes into particular episodes and decisions in the past, shedding light on human agency and its larger contexts of change and continuity. The course is required for students who plan to seek secondary social studies licensure and is open to students seeking licensure in the middle grades social studies. As we think about good historical method, we will never forget how much a vernacular "cultural curriculum" shaped our own and others understandings of the past. As a class centrally concerned with changing and competing interpretations – changing interpretations among historians, as well as competing stories, interpretations, and silences among those who made and make history -- we will also consider how best to teach your future students.

Mainly we will consider the content, concepts, and methods involved in making professional sense of the past, across wide terrains, and in small places. We will consider in some depth how historians' innovative research methodologies, discoveries, analyses of new sources, and changing convictions about who matters and who makes history, all have re-shaped professional interpretations of the past.

Historians continually revise their interpretations. So do citizens, often in heated debate akin to Frederick Douglass, who famously told a white audience in 1852:

The rich inheritance of justice, liberty, prosperity and independence, bequeathed by your fathers, is shared by you, not by me. The sunlight that brought life and healing to you, has brought stripes and death to me. This Fourth [of] July is yours, not mine. You may rejoice, I must mourn. To drag a man in fetters into the grand illuminated temple of liberty, and call upon him to join you in joyous anthems, [would be] inhuman mockery and sacrilegious irony.

We share a conflicted past, but can we move toward a shared interpretation of it? Or at least equip the citizenry with tools of evidence-based reasoning and empathy? How have changing concerns and new evidence led us to revise the pictures we paint of the past? How do we challenge widely held stories that just don't capture life in its fullness or don't include people who matter?

Understanding how we reconstruct and re-interpret the past demands that we understand periodization, causation, and often erroneous notions of progress, decline, or inevitability. How we divide history into periods -- "periodization" -- can vary with who we put at the center of our story. For example, for Indians, 1815 is the true watershed in American history, not 1776 or 1865 (that's when Native Americans lost the ability to play European empires against each other). Similarly, for African Americans, the expansive and optimistic "Progressive Era" is

actually called the "Nadir," the bottom, the worst hard time of racial control and oppression (when society became more segregated, lynching reached its peak, and the system of convict labor most intensively targeted black men).

Here is a sampling of the intellectual content of various "modules" we will consider:

How can *archaeology and ecology* change our understanding of European settlement and Indian displacement and decline in the 16th and 17th centuries? How can a deeper understanding of disease and public health change our appreciation of the extent and richness of pre-contact cultures?

How can *intellectual history*-- close attention to several drafts of the Declaration of Independence, for example-- provide a window into contradictions in the American experiment: how a Republic dedicated to the proposition that all men were equal before God also became an engine for the largest slave system in world history?

How can *oral history* give insight into slaves who left no written records, taking into account ways in which testimony is shaped by hindsight and the passage of time, and the social relationship between interviewer and interviewee?.

How can analysis of *visual culture*, especially photography and film, open up appreciation of urban or wartime experience otherwise not visible to the public?

How can *social historians* use data from the census about migration or occupational mobility to get a fuller picture of how some groups advanced up the social ladder while others stayed working class or poor? How can numbers change our understanding of the multicultural peopling of the continent?

How can *breakthrough theories* fundamentally refocus attention on underappreciated people or causes of change -- what difference does it make to think of the West as a frontier of democracy, a zone of conquest, or a "middle ground" of exchange between cultures?

How can "*psychohistory*," the application of contemporary psychological understanding and theory, help us understand controversial figures such as the accusers of witches in Salem or the violent anti-slavery martyr John Brown?

How could *legal history and famous murder cases* (such as the Sacco-Vanzetti trials of the 1920s) become lightning rods for conflicting ideas and mass anxieties about what America should be, who should belong, and how we should resolve conflicts between public order and the rights of suspect, marginal, or radical people?

How can differing *models of decision making* re-focus our understanding of world-changing events like the use of the atomic bomb against Japan. What happens when we relocate aspects of "the decision" from the "rational actors" -- Harry Truman and his immediate advisors -- and consider the international history of air war and competition among large military bureaucracies?

How can *placing our heroes and symbols back in the collective contexts that made them possible and human* change our appreciation of leadership in history-- Teddy Roosevelt, the champion the "public interest" against corporate greed; Martin Luther King, the visionary strategist of nonviolence; Woodrow Wilson, the defeated champion of international cooperation; Rosa Parks whose "tired feet" and quiet dignity started a revolution?

Roadmap: We will explore a variety of primary sources and methods for studying American history. Much of the common discussion will revolve around assigned readings for everyone. But each of you will do a “source dive” and report to the class. This can include reviewing one of the proliferating digital history sites that have revolutionized teaching and research in the last few years. And you’ll dive into the historiography of the Atomic Bomb controversy. Then you will “do history” exclusively with primary sources, to gain a fuller picture of the mass coalition that made up the 1963 March on Washington.

Doing history involves assessing the role of ideas, economic forces, individuals, and large organizations in making change. We will spend a great deal of time analyzing primary sources and addressing their use as tools for teaching. At the end, each of you will design a history learning module as a final project, building on a question presented in the class, assembling primary and secondary sources into a useful and enlightening learning experience, and justifying your choices for a skeptical supervisor and peer teacher.

Student Learning Objectives [With Appropriate Key Words]

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able demonstrate skills of historical analysis and interpretation including:

- **Describe with a combination of fact and theory broad patterns of change** in American history – social, economic, cultural, and political – and identify **key watersheds** and transformations. Thereby discuss **ways to “periodize” the past**, based on your evolving understanding of how dominant or popular narratives are challenged by new people, stories, and evidence. **Key Words: change, continuity, revolution, watersheds, periods, political and social structure, BIG history**
- **Interpret, compare, corroborate, and place in historical context various partial and competing primary sources.** Extract evidence and make inferences based on prior knowledge or your reading of scholarship, understanding the range of primary sources: oral evidence, photographs, cartoons, diaries, speeches, journalism, films and television programs. **Key Words: Primary Source Analysis; inferences, contextualization, corroboration, inconsistency, “reading the silences.”**
- **Analyze and evaluate debates among historians in light of available evidence**, new discoveries, new questions, new social movements, new burning political issues. Compare these versions of the past to widely shared cultural beliefs in the citizenry, social movements, or elites (the “cultural curriculum”). **Key Words: Historiography; cultural curriculum; ideology; evidence and interpretation.**
- **Identify and evaluate popular, dominant, and insurgent historical narratives within our culture** and explain why they changed over time. **Key Words: Memory and Ideology.**
- **Challenge arguments of historical inevitability** – “it happened because it was bound to happen.” This is a common fallacy of hindsight. It often assumes that past actors exercised no choice or agency within their admittedly constrained circumstances and hard choices. It also minimizes the role of contingent, unpredictable events and irrational actions that changed the course of history. **Key Words: Agency and Structure. Contingency.**
- **Analyze and explain cause-and-effect relationships;** distinguish among and evaluate the relative weights of multiple causes in any given historical explanation. Appreciate that much of the difference among historians has to do with the relative importance they attach to different events, trends, and players. You will do this with events as diverse as the Salem witch craze, the Civil War, and the nuclear arms race. **Key Words: Multiple Causation; POV point of view.**
- Commensurate with your vital future vocations as social studies educators, we hope you will begin to **develop a repertoire of teachable history**, as well as a sense of **civic purpose and inclusive understanding** as you integrate your knowledge of past actors. To that end: locate, identify, and organize in a teachable form a cluster of sources in a teaching “module” that might be useful in a high school

classroom. Good examples of this kind of module design are available on the web, and students will evaluate several in terms of clarity, richness, as they prepare their own modules. **Key Words: Vocation**

Electronic Devices:

Because some our class period will be devoted to the evaluation of web sites and online information, I encourage you to bring your laptops and tablets. Put away all phones and don't text. "Lids down" should signal: "time to give the face to face class 100% attention." I have seen over my 14 years at UNCG class members increasingly bury their heads in their laptops and fail to engage in real time ideas of the professor and other students.

Email Etiquette and Efficiency – Required Subject Line “HIS 316 Question”

Please address questions to me via email regarding assignments, appointments, mishaps. **Subject line:** “HIS 316 question.” I have a filter and deal with them all at once. If you don't hear back from me in 24 hours (weekends excepted), please try me again.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is a serious offense of the academic code and is treated as such by faculty. Do your own work and clearly cite any sources you rely upon for your information. You may view the university's academic integrity policy for further information. Familiarize yourself with the responsibilities of the instructor and the options I have: <http://sa.uncg.edu/handbook/academic-integritypolicy/> I will report violations of the honor code to the Dean of Students through one of the two paths explained on the website, both of which involve conferences with me, agreed penalties or mediation of the Academic Integrity Board.

Watch: Plagiarism 2.0: Information Ethics in the Digital Age [Plagiarism 2.0 Video](#)

(Beware specifically "Patch Writing" a form of plagiarism that plagues undergraduates, starting at 4:30).

Required Reading:

Davidson, James West and Mark Hamilton Lytle. *After the Fact: the Art of Historical Detection*, 6th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010. Available for purchase in the campus bookstore. **The 5th edition is acceptable**, no need to get the CD . You will also need to read the new chapter 1 “Contact” that is contained in the 6th edition and has been digitized and uploaded to Canvas.

Selections from James Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me: What Your American History Textbooks Got Wrong* (1995, 2007). We will read a few chapters from this book. As it is available for 5 cents plus shipping on Amazon, it is well worth owning, reading and pondering.

Supplemental primary sources, scholarly articles and links to websites related to doing and teaching history will be posted on Canvas. Check the Modules in CANVAS.

To my mind, nothing beats using paper for quick reference, unless you are very nimble with bookmarking and annotating e-books and pdfs. So a printed Course Reader will be available at **Copy King**, 611 W. Lee St., Greensboro, ph. 333-9900 (I will announce when this is ready).

Strategic Reading with a Purpose

Expect to read about 60-80 pages per week— allow for careful preparation and focused analysis. The class will rise and fall on the common fund of insight and individuals' willingness to share, agreed, and disagree. **Please make that commitment to reading, preparing, and collaborating on answering weekly questions.**

How to Read: Use the guiding questions at the end of textbook chapters and in each of the CANVAS modules. Employ your skills of **previewing, reading, highlighting, note taking,** and of course, **writing.** Good writing consists of accurate **paraphrase, summary, and selective quotation.** Then you aim for **grammatical sentences, coherent paragraphs** (each with one controlling idea), and **overall essay coherence** (this is frequently evident in good **transitions** between paragraphs). The University and I assume that every 3 credit hour course will involve 6 hours of reading and writing and preparation outside of class.

Graded Requirements:

- I. Participation, Peer Support, and Peer Reviews of Final Projects (ongoing) (20%).**
- II. Quizzes on Canvas (10%):**
- III. Weekly journal reflections before and after discussions on focused questions. (25%) (Due any time of the week).**
- IV. Primary Source Essay and "Show and Tell" 5%. SIGN UP SOON FOR WHAT INTERESTS YOU**
- V. Historiographical Analysis: Changing Interpretations and Evidence in the Atomic Bomb Controversy (10%) 4-5 pp. DUE November 3**
- VI. Primary Source Analysis, or "Doing History": Constituencies and Perspectives at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom August 28, 1963 4-5 pp. (10%) DUE NOVEMBER 22 WITH IN CLASS REPORT**
- VII. Final Research Project. High School Teaching Module, with Essay Explaining and Justifying Your Source Choices – On the Same Theme: Changing and Competing Interpretations of the Past, from Historians and Historical Actors Due Dec 2 at 3:00 PM (20%)
Peer Reviews Due 24 hours later.**

I. Participation, Support, and Peer Reviews of Final Projects (20%)

Regular and punctual *attendance* is required. More than three absences for whatever reason will affect your grade. I evaluate the clarity, pertinence, and conciseness of your comments and questions during the general class discussion. Quality is as important as quantity. *Preparation*, active speaking, cooperation, and respectful debate, is essential. I will lecture, but most of the time I will set up context and a framework of questions, then orchestrate – support small group discussions, help with presentations, synthesize and counterpoise your statements, spur you to deeper reflection. Since you all plan to be teachers, I'm not thinking anybody will be too shy to speak! Each of you will write up helpful peer evaluations of one of your peers' final projects, which you will support with suggestions, questions, and feedback as your peers seek to put them together.

Keeping Track: Each student will hand in at the end of class a 4x6 card (last name_first name on upper left, date on upper right, topic in center). These serve three purposes: attendance; reminding me of participation for crediting points; and affording you regular opportunity to raise questions. After you say something, just label the subject of your thoughts after the letters "PP" for participation point. Leave a few lines blank for my notes after class. Then at the bottom of the card, pose a question related to the subject and controversies of the day, if you are so moved. Use both sides if needed, but put an arrow→ to let me know there is something on the reverse.

II. Quizzes on Canvas (10%)

Outside of Class, I will work up about 10 quizzes on course content, to take the pulse of student understanding. These will be quick "formative" assessments, no more than 20 minutes, outside of class through the CANVAS quiz function. NO MIDTERM OR FINAL. These will be short answer, identification, and multiple choice quizzes. I will open them Thursday evening or afternoon, and close them Sunday at midnight. (Do them early when your thoughts are still fresh and to allow time for preparation). Academic Integrity applies, of course:

these are your responses alone. *Open book, open note.* (I will never give meaningless “facts and dates” questions — the questions will ALWAYS reflect important themes and ideas.

III. Weekly journal reflections before and after discussions on focused questions about changing and competing interpretations of the past. (25%) 1-2 pages a week, 400-500 words.

Keep a journal of reflections and responses, describing and analyzing ways in which historians change their interpretations of the past, and ways in which past actors express their conflicts with their own interpretations, narratives, omissions, keywords. Pick up one of the questions that has to do with changing and competing interpretations and try to understand or explain *why* such change occurs. What for example, was the most interesting piece of evidence or line of new inquiry a scholar employed to cast the past in a new light? Or contrast the perspectives of past actors on the same events. Be selective, not exhaustive, but be substantial!

IV. Primary Source Essay and “Show and Tell” (5%). One short paper, and an oral presentation to the class. Summarize extra research and analysis of one additional substantial primary source in context, contrasting or supplementing viewpoints in one of the day’s readings. 3-4 pages. Present insights in 5-8 minutes. [NB: this could be your first effort in your final project].

DUE on a day of your choosing and not after, because the whole point is to aid discussion and enrich the class’s appreciation on that specific topic. **SIGN UP SHEETS ON GOOGLE DOCS THROUGH CANVAS.**

Find a source that complements and enriches one day’s class, and present it to the class in 5-8 minutes. What are its explicit and hidden meanings? How do you explain it in terms of its context? How does it shed light on human experiences and bias in these larger contexts?

Guidelines for this and final assignment: *Information literacy is a crucial 21st century skill. Learn it by doing it. Individuals will sign up for a day in advance so think about which one you want to plunge into a bit deeper. After doing the reading a week in advance, after seeking my approval and advice, or the advice of a reference librarian,* you will have discovered additional primary sources — any speeches, letters, recordings, news reports, Congressional Testimony, whatever — reflecting specific views by past actors on a focused controversy. You will probably consider several, but one of these will be especially compelling and teachable, providing evidence or counter evidence for a major analytical claim from the readings. You may list those you considered and rejected, because this assignment could mushroom into the final one easily.

“Additional Reading” in *After the Fact* is a great place to start. I have put an enormous bibliography of primary source collections available in Jackson Library up on Canvas. Scholarly edited and curated digital collections are also fair game (NOT .com websites or high school curriculum sites that do not involve professional documentary editors). You are looking for clear, concise documents or visual or audiovisual materials that are *primary sources* that would be especially useful in a high school or college class.

I will also list leads and links in the Module for that day in Canvas, to documents in my Google Drive folders. **Objective:** evaluate several sources, choose the best, justify the choice, show and tell why it is so interesting and valuable, complementary or distinctive.

See guidelines and rubric for finding and *evaluating* primary sources on Canvas. If you need help with presenting your ideas, the University speaking center provides excellent tutorials and how to structure informal remarks as well as formal presentations.

V. Historiographical Analysis: New Interpretations and Evidence in the Atomic Bomb Controversy (10%) 4-5 pp. 10% DUE NOVEMBER 3 IN CLASS FOR DISCUSSION AND DEBATE

These papers examine in greater depth the ways in which historians have interpreted and re-interpreted the decision to defeat Japan with the atomic bomb. In the “module” on the Bomb, we will be talking about various historians’ ideas and evidence, and referencing whose ideas they revised. This asks you to go a step further and to identify a historian who has made a significant contribution since 1995 to “middle ground” discussion between extreme positions that no longer do justice to the complexities of the event. The Walker

summary historiography article and its footnotes, together with seven subtopics I post, will make this process less overwhelming. Obviously you won't be able to write about the whole controversy, just a piece, such as the assertion that the US was waging "atomic diplomacy" against the Soviets at the same time it was defeating Japan. (Follow Walker's footnotes, or look up reputable historians who have made contributions since 1995). You need only represent the views of one scholar, but your search will expose you probably to several —book chapters, or journal articles—representing extra points of view (beyond the assigned scholars). You need not read an entire book (indeed you should not) in order to understand the contribution a scholar made, the important evidence she unearthed, or the most productive line of questioning he opened. Students will discuss and debate positions.

On Historiography: Getting on top of historiography is an *absolutely essential core skill* you must acquire if you are to be an effective history teacher. As James Loewen amply demonstrates, textbooks cannot be relied upon to give you the freshest material for effective pedagogy. Hint: the *OAH Magazine of History* is perhaps the most accessible and important scholarly journal for history teachers. But don't neglect websites with scholarly articles and links, such as BackStory With the American History Guys, or PBS Video's "American Experience."

VI. Primary Source Analysis, or "Doing History": Constituencies and Perspectives at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom August 28, 1963. 4-6 pp. (10%). DUE November 22 for discussion.

The March on Washington is commonly commemorated as the mass platform for Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" Speech, almost as if there were not there a quarter million people, and 30 other speakers, each bringing common but distinctive demands for civil rights and racial equality and economic justice. On the Google Drive you will find folders with a range of primary sources I have collected. (See the bibliography that accompanies this assignment on Canvas). What you want to find and capture is the March on Washington in two or three **dimensions**, because the March of the Dream Speech has become one dimensional in our culture. Several **constituencies** had different reasons for coming to Washington, different levels of satisfaction with the outcome, different understandings of whether the March was supposed to "support" John Kennedy's civil rights Bill, or propose radically more far-reaching legislation and action. Compare and contrast them. (See Canvas Guidelines).

VII. Final Research Project. (20%) Due Dec 8 at 3:00 PM [Specifics on Canvas]

A High School Teaching Module, with Essay Explaining and Justifying Your Source Choices — On the Same Theme: Changing and Competing Interpretations of the Past, from Historians and Historical Actors — With Peer Reviews 24 hours later

Using various document collections available in the library, edited online sources referenced in the books, or various links to *scholarly, curated* websites, put together a lesson plan on the model of Sam Wineburg's and Roy Rosenzweig's online work for high school history teachers. These generally involve excerpts from the most thoroughly informed historians, and then at least three primary documents that pose problems of interpretation for students. Look at a few of these, and share with the class which you think are most effective to use as a model.

Your accompanying essay should explain the possible interpretations and key ideas or key words that students will be asked to focus on. An annotated bibliography should include the scholars and primary sources you considered and rejected (just as important), their contents and arguments, and a short note on why they did not rise to the level of compelling and teachable source.

Models: Consider the structure of some assignments for this course, model your historical thinking module on one of the best modules on the [Historical Thinking Matters website](#), a project of the [Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media](#), George Mason University, and School of Education, Stanford University. For a bit more rib entry modules as possible examples, see Sam Wineberg's "Document Based Lessons" on the [Reading Like A Historian website of the Stanford History Education Group](#).

Grading Scale:

A (93 and above), A- (90-92); B+ (87-89), B (83-86), B- (80-82); C+ (77-79), C (73-76), C- (70-72); D+ (67-69), D (63-66), D- (60-62); F (less than 60, unacceptable work). We will assign points on a 1000 point scale to comprise the several components of assessment that follow.

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS AND ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES
ALWAYS CHECK CANVAS FOR FULL READINGS AND REFINED QUESTIONS
The first few are full assignments.

8/23: Introductions

Reviewing the Syllabus – Discussing structure and learning activities. Student introductions. Please make sure your CANVAS profile is up to date with a photograph, and tells us something of your goals, background, and academic interests.

8/25: How We Think, Write, and Teach: Academic Disciplines and the “Cultural Curriculum”

Wineburg, Sam, and Susanne Wilson. "Peering at History through Different Lenses: The Role of Disciplinary Perspectives in Teaching History." In *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts: Charting the Future of Teaching the Past*, edited by Sam Wineburg, 139-54. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001. (15)

Questions: Anyone you identify with? How do Wineburg and Wilson want us to teach history?

Wineburg, Sam, and Chauncey Monte-Sano. "'Famous Americans': The Changing Pantheon of American Heroes." *Journal of American History* 94, no. 4 (2008): 1186-202. (14 pp.)

Questions: If the pantheon of American heroes speaks to the “cultural curriculum” about the past that schools play only a small part in promoting, what do the popular choices and common understandings of these heroes tell us about how ordinary Americans think? The authors think the students could teach professor Arthur Schlesinger something about consensus. But how would historians be useful in explaining the heroes and those who chose them?

Martin, Daisy, and Sam Wineburg. "Seeing Thinking on the Web." *The History Teacher* 41, no. 3 (2008): 305–19.

Questions: How can historians model historical thinking? Make sure you check out Sam Wineburg's “Document Based Lessons” on the [Reading Like A Historian website of the Stanford History Education Group](#).

Finally, read about at least one of the three Black women who made it into the pantheon of the most famous Americans. And consider what historians have said about them. Choose (you may skim for main ideas): Packer, George, “Her Own: **Oprah Winfrey**,” from *The Unwinding* (2014) (6) (Packer's magnificent National Book Award Winner).

Theoharis, Jeanne. “The Northern Promised Land That Wasn't: **Rosa Parks** and the Black Freedom Struggle in Detroit.” *OAH Magazine of History* 26, no. 1 (January 2012): 23–27. Listen to Professor Theoharis summarize her thesis: the radical life is not something most Americans honor or would be comfortable honoring. *All Things Considered*: “No Meekness Here: Meet Rosa Parks, 'Lifelong Freedom Fighter',” November 29, 2015

Or on **Harriet Tubman** and the Underground Railroad: Kathryn Schulz, “The Perilous Lure.” *New Yorker*, August 22, 2016: <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/08/22/the-perilous-lure-of-the-underground-railroad>

8/30: Before Written Records: Archaeology, Demography, and Ecology in the “Columbian Exchange”

Davidson and Lytle, *After the Fact*, 1. Contact, 1-30 (28)

You must read the final pages to solve the mystery of the pigs and buffaloes!! *The English encounter with the New World's “pristine” and “unspoiled” ecology is only revealed at the end.* See John Smith's *Historie* excerpted for a description of the American cornucopia. What suggests this may not have been the norm for the last millennium?

Documents: Bernal Diaz del Castillo, *The Conquest of New Spain*, (1632), *Mexican Accounts of Conquest from the Florentine Codex*, (c. 1547) (9 pages total, but read carefully for consistencies and inconsistencies)

Questions for Discussion: Hernando de Soto expected a Christian burial but died ignobly in Arkansas in 1541 after ransacking Indian villages. That's the familiar story. But Davidson and Lytle authors ask: why a century and a half later, when LaSalle made it down the Mississippi, had thousands of villages disappeared? What does this have to do with early English reports from John Smith of an abundance of wildlife in the New World? How did learning about the ecological changes made by native peoples, and what happened when they disappeared, change how our authors understood the "Columbian exchange"? How are historians and archaeologists able to reinterpret, not just reconstruct, the past?

On Diaz and Accounts from the Florentine Codex: Between 1492 and 1547, Caribbean and Mexican Indian societies changed more dramatically than perhaps any other generation in human history. What can we learn from these ambiguous and conflicting primary accounts? How must we marshal other knowledge to understand them in context? Is there anything we can say with confidence that can be considered factual about both Spanish and Native cultures and societies? That is, are there common themes in these documents, borne out by corroborating evidence from very different accounts?

9/1: "Nasty, British, and Short": Surviving Colonial Virginia

Davidson and Lytle, *After the Fact*, 2 Serving Time in Virginia, 31-50 (19)

Earle, Carville. "Environment, Disease and Mortality in Early Virginia." *YJHGE Journal of Historical Geography* 5, no. 4 (1979): 365–90. Core of story is on pp. 370-1, 373-4. *Skim* this piece and note where I've highlighted Earle's focus on deadly Jamestown and his credit to John Smith for saving lives before his policies were reversed in 1610.

Dr. Simmons account of the "Starving Time" in October 1609 Virginia, excerpted from John Smith *General Historie of Virginia, 1624: The Fourth Booke* included in *Narratives of early Virginia, 1606-1625*. Edited by Lyon Gardiner Tyler. New York, Barnes & Noble [1907] Highlighted for you.

Report of Nathaniel Butler, Governor of Bermuda, 1622, and "The Virginia Planters' Answer to Captain Butler, 1623," in *Narratives of early Virginia, 1606-1625*. Edited by Lyon Gardiner Tyler, ed. New York, Barnes & Noble [1907] Gov. Butler's allegations are quoted verbatim before the Planters' self-defense. What insights?

Questions: Why is the story of Pocahontas' rescue of John Smith the most enduring narrative from the Virginia colony? What about Smith's rescue might have eluded him? What did he learn from the Indians? What were the causes of such extraordinary mortality rates? John Smith included a harrowing account of Virginia's "Starving Time" in 1609 in his *General Historie*, written by an ally who lamented his return to England. What inferences can we make about what caused this starvation (other than Smith's departure, which he clearly would like us to think)?

As you skim Dr. Earle's article, don't overlook: Controversial as was John Smith, he did two wise things for which he was not always given credit: he dispersed the population out of the estuarial zone (between fresh and salt water) of Jamestown, which was the worst kind of stagnant open sewer in Summer. And he maintained alliances with the natives, so that the dispersed population was not so vulnerable.

BIG history: The romance of Pocahontas and John Smith aside, what choices, values, and power relations fueled the Atlantic commodity boom in sugar, slaves, and tobacco? How were black slaves and white servants and sailors caught up in this economic whirlwind? How were they treated by their "masters" and the environments of plantation agriculture? Why did Virginia move from principal reliance on indentured servants to reliance on racial slavery?

9/6: New England – Conflict and Transformation – Through Indian Eyes

Davidson and Lytle, *After the Fact*, 3: The Visible and Invisible Worlds of Salem 52-73 (21)

Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, "The Truth About the First Thanksgiving," 74-79, 84-92. (13)

John Winthrop, "Reason to be Considered for Justifying the Undertakers of the Intended Plantation in New England," 1629; and "A Modell of Christian Charity," 1630

Questions: How do certain facts about the interaction of the "Pilgrim Fathers" and native peoples force a re-telling of the Thanksgiving story? Who did the British who settled in Massachusetts -- especially Winthrop -- thank most often, and for what? What kind of community did John Winthrop envision? Of the many interpretations and causes of the Salem witch craze -- rapid social change and commercialization; gender; religious diversity; legal abuse; the Indian Wars -- which seem the most compelling to you? How would you test the thesis? What larger context is necessary to explain why Salem became possessed? **What can understanding developing historiography and multiple historians' perspectives tell us about how to understand and teach causation in history? Be prepared to explain which one seems most persuasive and why, if only as something worthy of further investigation.**

9/8: Republicanism and Independence from All Sides

Davidson and Lytle, *After the Fact*, 4. Declaring Independence, 75-96 (20) Is intellectual history or political history more important for explaining Jefferson's word choices in the Declaration?

Documents: "Dunmore's Proclamation, 7 Dec 1775" "Sir Henry Clinton's Proclamation, 30 Jun 1779" Why was Clinton's so much more effective in achieving its goal?

Internet document: Jefferson's "original Rough draught" of the Declaration of Independence, in *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, Volume 1: 1760-1776* (Princeton University Press, 1950), 423-8

This is an interim draft, fairly similar to what you read, except: examine grievance #25, the last one, deleted from the final draft. **"He has waged cruel war against human nature itself. ."**

Also: Selections from Massachusetts slave memorials 1775, 1777. From *Documentary History of the Negro People*

Read an excerpt from Simon Schama's *Rough Crossings* about Black loyalists and the promise of British liberty that white men flung in the face of British tyranny during the Revolution:

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5530130>

Consider Frederick Douglass' July 5, 1852 [Speech](#) as read by James Earl Jones: 1:40 start "The blessings" . . . end with "must be denounced." 4:48 Find the speech and understand this famous quote.

Questions: How have different scholars endeavored to interpret, explain, contextualize the words of the Declaration? Which is persuasive to you? How did the Founding Fathers reconcile liberty and slaveholding? Why do you think Jefferson's attempt to do so was omitted from the Declaration?

9/13: Westward Expansion – Jacksonian Democracy and its Advantages and Vantages

Davidson and Lytle, *After the Fact*, 6. Jackson's Frontier-and Turner's, 124-146 (22)

Additional readings TBA

The many personas of Andrew Jackson reflected through different generations of historians.

9/15: From "Middle Ground" to "Conquest" – Cherokee Acculturation and Cherokee Removal

Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, 4. "Through Red Eyes."

Scholarship and documents on the Cherokee Removal and Trail of Tears.

9/20: Anti-Slavery and Sectional Crisis

Davidson and Lytle, *After the Fact*, 7. The Madness of John Brown, 148-169 (21)

Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, 4. "John Brown and Abraham Lincoln: The Invisibility of Antiracism in American History Textbooks," 172-195 only.

John Brown's speech at the gallows. Lydia Maria Child, Governor Wise, and Edmund Ruffin on the raid on Harpers' Ferry.

Past and Present: Historian David Reynolds says Obama should pardon John Brown

<http://historynewsnetwork.org/article/120932>;

Questions: How have judgements of sanity and insanity dovetailed with political positions on the war and slavery? Is Loewen right, not only in the textbooks but the culture, that the idealism of white anti-racists has been obscured by the imputation of insanity? How did politics and ideas affect each other in the course of the Civil War and arming of African Americans?

9/22: Recovering Slavery and Emancipation from Below, Through Oral History

Before you look at anything, I'd like you to read two interviews with ex-slaves in their original typescript.

WPA slave narratives from The Library of Congress website, *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1938*.

Click on "view page images" in the second line.

"Interview with Ex-Slave."

"Ex-slave 101 years of age has never shaken hand since 1863."

Citation for both: Library of Congress, American Memory Project, *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1938*, South Carolina Narratives, Volume XIV, Part 2

THEN READ: Davidson and Lytle, *After the Fact*, 8. The View from the Bottom Rail, 171-199 (28)

How did your approach to primary sources change as a result of this exercise? Explain how the concept "economy of deception" is absolutely crucial to understanding issues of "authenticity" and the kind of inferences you can make from any primary source. **Again here, the last couple pages are the KEY(STONE) to understand everything they want us to take away.**

9/27: 19th Century Class Formation and Its Legacies

Loewen, *Lies*, 7 "The Land of Opportunity," 194-207. (14 pp.).

Primary Documents:

Andrew Carnegie, *Triumphant Democracy* (London, 1886), 11-15.

Andrew Carnegie, "Wealth" *North American Review* (June 1889), 653-5. Better known as "The Gospel of Wealth."

Henry George, *Progress and Poverty* (New York, 1935, 1885), 3-8, 544-6.

BIG history questions for today: What "hidden injuries of class" have afflicted Americans, in Loewen's view?

How real was the "rags to riches" story in the late 19th Century, or even the "rags to respectability" story? How has class mobility varied in different eras, across national boundaries, and with respect to race and ethnic group membership?

On Carnegie and George: The late 19th century is probably when the debate about wealth and poverty was most stark, and most widely debated. Compare Carnegie and George: Where does wealth come from? Does progress produce poverty, or is inequality the precondition for the advancement of everybody? Are concentrations of wealth consistent with democratic government? How does each author understand the progress of "the race"? Find out about these guys: What about the biographies of Carnegie and George might help account for their different analyses?

9/29: The Immigrant City and the Scope of the Middle Class Conscience

Davidson and Lytle, *After the Fact*, 9. The Mirror with a Memory, 203-228 (25)

Primary Source Analysis Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives*, excerpts text and images allocated to different teams. **Riis excerpts and teams on Canvas.**

Questions: What (who) causes poverty? Tenements and slumlords; exploitative employers; bad characters; warped cultures; degraded "races"; immigrant co-ethnic exploitation; saloons and politicians; mis-guided charity givers? All of these show up, but who are the offenders, who the victims? How does Riis slice up the victims and the victimizers, the deserving and undeserving poor, those poor by dint of the cruel urban environment or exploitation, vs. those poor by dint of their own individual or ethnic-based flaws?

10/4: Progressive Symbolism and the Political Process

Davidson and Lytle, *After the Fact*, 10. USDA Government Inspected, 229-253.

Sinclair, Upton, *The Jungle* (New York: Viking, 1906, 1946), 91-105 (14).

Neill-Reynolds Report, 4 Jun 1906: U.S. Congress. House of Representatives. *Conditions in the Chicago Stock Yards*. Message from the President transmitting the Report of James Bronson Reynolds and Commissioner Charles P. Neill. 59th Congress. 1st Session. Doc 873 (June 4, 1906) (EXCERPTED BY TJ 6)

Questions: Upton Sinclair's lurid exposé of horrible working and sanitary conditions in the new mass-produced meatpacking facilities in Chicago lead to a defining crusade of the Progressive Era. President Theodore Roosevelt's charismatic style transformed an expose into a moral crusade in the public interest. How much was the Meat Inspection Act of 1906 the result of potent symbolism manipulated by muckraking journalists and the colorful popular celebrity president Theodore Roosevelt? Why is more tedious research into Congressional process and interest group pressure essential to unravelling the mysteries of why the Act's greatest champions saw it as fatally compromised? Why is it equally important to pay attention to little known Senators and Congressmen, to divisions within the Republican Party, and to the enduring power of decidedly *not* progressive House Committee members? How would Roosevelt's and Senator Beveridge's initial reform proposal have changed the balance of power between the federal government and private corporations? What did the Meatpackers fear most? How did the final legislation differ, and bear the imprint of the meat industry itself? From what angle of vision could the meatpackers be said to be "revolutionaries," in the view of some historians? Compare my excerpts from Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* to my excerpts from the Reynolds-Neill Report that President Roosevelt regarded as his "ace in the hole" in promoting the Meat Inspection Act. What do we know of these three men? What were their main concerns in portraying the meat industry and its social impact? Who were they concerned with protecting? Hint: "I aimed at the public's *heart* and by accident hit its *stomach*." .. -- Upton Sinclair.

10/6: Inside National Heroes: Radicals and Reactionaries in the Progressive Era

Loewen, *Lies*, 1. "Handicapped by History: the Process of Hero-Making," 11-30 (19).

Speeches by Woodrow Wilson and excerpts from Hellen Keller's autobiography.

10/11: NO Class – USE this day to read ahead and DECIDE on your final project. We will discuss these in conferences next week.

FALL BREAK

10/20: Americanization and Nativism

Davidson and Lytle, *After the Fact*, 11. Sacco and Vanzetti, 256-280 (24).

Calvin Coolidge, *Whose Country Is This?* 1921

Representative Lucian W. Parrish, Democrat Texas, "A Congressman Calls for Restriction," 1921, *Congressional Record*

Questions: The trial of the century, pitting civil libertarians and immigrant advocates against defenders of an older Anglo-Saxon America. How could a murder trial of two obscure radical Italian immigrants become an

international cause célèbre? What social divisions, and conflicting ideas about America, did such a highly publicized trial reveal about the country in the 1920s? Why were Representatives Parish and Raker of Texas, and Vice President Calvin Coolidge, so motivated to exclude and deport un-naturalized immigrants? On what terms did Randolph Bourne defend multi-ethnic America a decade earlier?

10/25: Acts of God and Man – The Dust Bowl and the Great California Migrations

Davidson and Lytle, *After the Fact*, 12. Dust Bowl Odyssey, 284-308 (24).

John Steinbeck, "The Harvest Gypsies," *San Francisco News*, Oct 6-12, 1936.

Questions for class: How does social history based on the census and a broader knowledge of the international migrations that shaped California gleaned from *After the Fact* change our picture of the Okies whose legendary exodus from the Dust Bowl defines California of the Great Depression in popular imagination? What can we learn from Steinbeck's journalism that we can't learn from his novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*, the film, or the social historians that Lytle and Davidson synthesized: James Gregory and others, whose work is based on census data?

On Mexican American Repatriation (Deportation) in the 1930s:

Hernandez, Kelly Lytle. "Mexican Immigration to the United States." *OAH Magazine of History* 23, no. 4 (October 2009): 25–29, esp. 25-26. Compare Hernandez' summary of the Mexican American labor and repatriation situation in the 1930s to Lytle and Davidson's discussion of "the other migrants." (304-308). *This is a great example of a short but very informative historiographical article, intended for high school teachers, but very rich as an introduction to issues and scholarship.*

View the Short PBS film from "Latino Americans," "[Deportations](#)," about repatriation, including an interview with someone who was deported.

10/27: Introduction to the Atomic Bomb Debate—Professor at Conference—Caucus in Groups

Assignment: 1. Davidson and Lytle, *After the Fact*, 13. The Decision to Drop the Bomb, 310-334 (24).

2. Read Harry Truman's diary entries for July 17-18, and July 25, 1945, on Blackboard. From "Notes by Harry S. Truman on the Potsdam Conference, July 17-30, 1945," Harry S. Truman Presidential Library,

11/1: Atomic Bomb Historiography and the Search for Middle Ground

Robert James Maddox, "Why We Had to Drop the Atomic Bomb," *American Heritage* (May/June 1995). Defense of the orthodox explanation.

Gar Alperovitz, "Hiroshima: Historians Reassess," *Foreign-Policy* 99 (Summer 1995). Still making the case for "atomic diplomacy."

John W. Dower, "Three Narratives of Our Humanity," in *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past*, edited by Edward T. Linenthal and Tom Engelhardt. New York: Holt Paperbacks, 1996, 63-96.

Questions: In the argument between Alperovitz and Maddox, what pieces of evidence seem most compelling in their making their case? Be aware of how your own affinities--in this case, nationalism--may shape your interpretations. Be aware of your own opinion going in. And don't shrink from letting one author change your mind. Was it necessary? Was it a real decision? Where does Dower fall on the issues of atomic diplomacy, the options for Japanese surrender without nuclear weapons, and the importance of placing any narrative in a "tragic" rather than a "triumphalist" frame?

Read ahead into Walker's synthesis of the "middle ground" between these two positions.

11/3: A Piece of the Puzzle: Using Historiography to Explore Researchable Questions on the Atomic Bomb Decision -- 4-5 pp. Atomic Bomb Historiography Paper Due

This assignment calls for a critical evaluation of a scholar who you identify using footnotes in Samuel Walker's historiographical article (Walker's book is fair game too however). "Follow the Footnotes!" Don't quote Walker but read for yourself the scholar he cites and summarizes. What is the strongest line of argument, best evidence, and how does it compare to other scholars we have read?! Be prepared to support and debate.

Walker, J. Samuel. "Recent Literature on Truman's Atomic Bomb Decision: A Search for Middle Ground." *Diplomatic History* 29, no. 2 (April 2005): 311-34 (23 pages).

11/8: Women and Popular Culture: The Power of the Media

Davidson and Lytle, *After the Fact*, 14. From Rosie to Lucy, 339-363 (24).

Very Short Selections from Nancy A Walker, ed., *Women's Magazines: 1940-1960: Gender Roles and the Popular Press* (New York, Bedford St. Martin's: 1998)

View Segments of "Betty: Girl Engineer" a famous *Father Knows Best* episode.

Questions: How did gender norms for women change from World War II to the Cold War? Do you think the popular media reflected or shaped popular attitudes toward motherhood, housework, and women's paid work outside the home? How can we know? Women were certainly torn between old norms and new imperatives. Just at the time the culture seemed to reinforce domesticity (identification of women as wives and mothers first) in the 1950s unprecedented numbers of married women entered the labor force and stayed there. Why? Within the dominant patriarchal norms of the time, how much room could women like Lucy Ricardo carve for autonomy, even rebellion? Was Cold War culture uniformly down on married women's work, as reflected in the women's magazines and TV shows?

11/10: Feminism in the 1960s: the Challenge to Gender Inequality

John Hollitz, "From Mystique to Militance: Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem," in *Contending Voices*, volume 2 (NY: Houghton Mifflin, 2003), 247-65.

The National Organization for Women 1966 Statement of Purpose

Tillmon, Johnnie. "Welfare Is a Women's Issue." *Liberation News Service* (415) February 1972, in Linda Gordon, ed., *America's Working Women* (1976), 355-358.

The Politics of Housework by Pat Mainardi of Redstockings

Questions: What kinds of "rights" were Betty Friedan, Gloria Steinem, Pat Mainardi, Johnnie Tillmon, principally interested in? What was the difference between women's rights and women's liberation? What changes did they think needed to happen before women could enjoy equality, and how did each think that gender equality was related to other struggles for peace and justice? How can anything so trivial as housework be considered "political"? Were the airline stewardesses fighting for inclusion, or equality, or both?

11/15: The Greensboro Sit-Ins and the Diffusion of Protest

Davidson and Lytle, *After the Fact*, 15. Sitting In, 366-387 (last part of chapter for next class).

Questions: Were the sit-ins that spread rapidly from the Greensboro epicenter in February 1960 spontaneous eruptions of protest or deeply rooted in past strategies, prefigured in ways hidden to us? Try to sort through all the sociological theory to pick those concepts that really explain why 1960? Why Greensboro? Why did the protests spread so quickly?

Selected black and white newspaper articles on the Greensboro sit ins:

11/17: Black Revolution and Martin Luther King, Jr. (To Be Refined)

Davidson and Lytle, *After the Fact*, 15. Sitting In, 387-394, for a synopsis of protest up to the "Revolution of 1963."

Thomas F. Jackson, "Bread of Freedom: Martin Luther King Junior and Human Rights," *OAH Magazine of History* (April 2008), 14-16.

Thomas F. Jackson, *From Civil Rights to Human Rights* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), chapter 6, "Jobs and Freedom."

Tom Kahn, "March's radical demands point way for struggle," *New America*, 9/24/63. Kahn was a democratic socialist close to Bayard Rustin who organized the March on Washington, AND was a member of SNCC, a white who went to historically black Howard University. How are Kahn's issues different from those summarized in ATF?

Martin Luther King, Jr., "The Unresolved Race Question," District 65 of the Retail, Department Store Union, October 23, 1963, in Michael Honey, ed., *All Labor Has Dignity* (Boston, Beacon, 2011)

Malcolm X vs. MLK on the "glorious day"

11/22: Constituencies and Perspectives at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom August 28, 1963 "Doing History" 4-5 pp. paper is DUE

See Canvas and Google Drive Folder for a range of sources – Jackson's digital archive, if you will – on the planning and execution of the March on Washington. Your paper may not focus on Martin Luther King!

11/29: Vietnam and American Memory

Davidson and Lytle, *After the Fact*, 17. Where Trouble Comes, 420-446 (26).

Hal Wingo and Ronald Haeberle (Photographer), "The Massacre at Mylai: Exclusive Pictures, Eyewitness Accounts," *Life* (December 5, 1969) pp. 36-45. Google Books accessed November 11, 2014. Click [here](#).

PBS Frontline Documentary: "Remember My Lai"

Part 1: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OcDa5IIFSMQ>: Varnado Simpson and Truong Thi Le, at 14:40-20:25

Part 2: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eN_gEAAGwfw: Ron Ridenhour and Varnado Simpson, 21:40-26:48

Questions: Why did it take over 15 years to have a realistic film made about Vietnam combat? What does the progression from *The Green Berets* to *Rambo: First Blood* to *Apocalypse Now* to *Platoon* say about our capacity to confront our own history? How was the Army able to keep details of the 1968 Son My massacre from the public for a year and a half, and how did it come to light? Does the story have any heroes and where did ultimate responsibility lie for the killing of over 300 unarmed civilians? Do the actions of Hugh Thompson and Ron Ridenhour and Ronald Haeberle vindicate the open-ness of the system? Was Son My (My Lai) an aberration, an extreme exception of what can happen in warfare? What enduring consequences did this kind of warfare entail for Vietnamese and Americans like Varnado Simpson, who is featured in both the Life Magazine story that broke the massacre and coverup, and the Frontline Documentary "Remember My Lai."

12/1: Discussion of Approved Plans for Final Project

See Rubric in Canvas

12/8: FINAL PROJECT IS DUE IN MY OFFICE AT 3:00 PM! CONGRATULATIONS!!