

HIS 723: Topics in 19th Century U.S. History: American Nationalisms

Fall 2021

Dr. Mark Elliott

Thurs 5:30 -8:20

Office: MHRA 2125

Classroom: MHRA 2211

Office Hours: Thurs 2-4:00

DESCRIPTION:

American nationalism is more obviously constructed than other nationalisms. The motto adopted on the first national seal designed in 1776, "E Pluribus Unum," (Out of Many, One) was not an accomplished fact but a necessary goal. Initially forged in the crucible of revolution, the project of uniting American citizens under a central government was precarious from the start and necessarily generated multiple, conflicting visions of national unity. This class will study both secondary literature and primary sources to explore these conflicts, and the efforts to contain them within a unifying nationalism. Rather than attempt to define the "real" American character or identity, we will approach the topic from multiple perspectives, covering both dominant and dissenting ideas of nationalism, including Confederate nationalism, black nationalism, providential nationalism, and various forms of American exceptionalism in the 19th century. Race, class, and gender have been central to constructions of nationalism, and close attention will be paid to exclusions and inclusions in the definition of nationalism over the course of the 19th century. Special attention also will be given to how "nationalism" has been politicized at specific times for specific purposes by specific groups, and how conflicts over defining nationhood continue to morph and change in each era.

Each class meeting is organized around the discussion of one book and one or two related articles/book chapters as the basis for our classroom discussion that week. Each of the readings been carefully chosen to raise important issues or sample the latest or most influential scholarship on topics related to nationalism in the Nineteenth Century United States. For each reading, students must be able to identify its thesis, to critically evaluate its logic and methodology, and to assess its historiographic importance. Students will share book reviews and summaries with each other and work collectively to broaden their base of knowledge.

GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. Reading secondary sources efficiently, identifying main arguments, and critically evaluating methodologies
2. Reading primary sources analytically, being able to tease out and interpret the meanings both stated and implied while understanding them in their historical context.

3. Participating in sophisticated academic debates and exchanges while maintaining the requisite civility and respect for one's colleagues.
4. Delivering informative and useful oral presentations to peers.
5. Formal writing in specific genres of the profession, including book reviews, reflective essays, and presentations of research findings.

COURSE POLICIES:

Participation:

Attendance is mandatory. You are expected to complete each week's reading before class so that you can participate constructively in a class discussion. Your participation grade will be based on the overall *quality* of your contributions to the class—not the quantity of contributions you make—and the professionalism with which you conduct yourself in scholarly discussion and debate. You can earn up to 8 points per class discussion.

Presentations:

Each student will be assigned three presentations over the course of the semester. Main reading presentations will last from 12-15 minutes (speakers will be asked to conclude at 15 minutes). The presenter will be responsible to introduce the author, **concisely** summarize the argument, discuss the scholarly reception of the book, and assesses its historiographical significance. The student must also craft 5 questions for discussion arising from the reading. Secondary presentations will be based on the accompanying articles or book chapters and will last from 5-10 minutes. In this presentation, the student will introduce the author, summarize the thesis and significance of the reading, and relate it to the main reading. No reviews are expected for the secondary presentations, but you should craft 2-3 questions that connects your reading to the theme of the week.

Written Work:

There will be two significant papers over the course of the semester. The first paper will be a 1200-1500 paper focusing on a primary source. The second paper will be a 2400-3000 word research paper on a topic of interest to the student related to nationalism.

DUE DATES:

Primary Source Paper:

Friday, Oct. 8 at 6 pm.

Annotated Bibliography:

Friday, Nov. 5 at 6 pm.

Final Research Paper:

Monday, Dec. 6 at 6

pm.

Detailed assignment sheets describing the expectations, length, and due dates for the writings assignment will be posted on Canvas. Late papers will be penalized for each day the paper is late. All written assignments must be completed and turned in through Canvas in order to pass the class.

Grading Breakdown:

100 Points:	Participation in class discussion
20 Points	Jill Lepore Discussion Board Posts
60 Points:	Book Presentation #1
60 Points:	Book Presentation #2
20 Points:	Article Presentation #1
20 Points:	Article Presentation #2
100 Points:	Primary Source Paper
20 Points:	Topic thesis/Annotated Bibliography
100 Points:	Research Paper

Final Grade Scale:

A 465-500; **A-** 450-464; **B+** 435-449; **B** 415-434; **B-** 400-414; **C+** 385-399; **C** 365-384; **C-** 350-364; **F** 299 or less.

Resources for Students with Disabilities:

Students with recognized disabilities should register with the Office of Accessibility Resources & Services (OARS). OARS is located on the second floor of the Elliott University Center (EUC) in Suite 215 and maintains a webpage at <http://ods.uncg.edu/>. ([Links to an external site.](#)) The mission of OARS is to provide, coordinate, and advocate for services which enable undergraduate and graduate students with disabilities to receive equal access to a college education and to all aspects of university life.

Academic Integrity Policy:

All work submitted in your name must be your own original work for this class with proper citation or credit given to all sources. All papers will be turned in using the “Turn It In” function on Canvas which automatically scans your paper for plagiarism. Each student should be familiar with the Academic Integrity Policy, and the penalties for plagiarism. Refer to this address on the UNCG website for more details: <http://studentconduct.uncg.edu/> ([Links to an external site.](#))

Required UNCG syllabus language

Approved by Faculty Senate on July 29, 2021

As we return for fall 2021, the campus community must recognize and address continuing concerns about physical and emotional safety, especially as we will have many more students, faculty, and staff on campus than in the last academic year. As such, all students, faculty, and staff are required to uphold UNCG's culture of care by actively engaging in behaviors that limit the spread of COVID-19. Such actions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- [Following face-covering guidelines \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- Engaging in proper hand-washing hygiene when possible
- Self-monitoring for symptoms of COVID-19
- Staying home if you are ill
- Complying with directions from health care providers or public health officials to quarantine or isolate if ill or exposed to someone who is ill.

Instructors will have seating charts for their classes. These are important for facilitating contact tracing should there be a confirmed case of COVID-19. Students must sit in their assigned seats at every class meeting and must not move furniture. Students should not eat or drink during class time.

To make it easier for students to hear their instructor and/or read lips and if conditions permit, instructors who are fully vaccinated and who can maintain at least six feet of distance from students may remove their masks while actively teaching if they choose, but will wear a mask at all other times while in the classroom, including during the periods before and after class

A limited number of disposable masks will be available in classrooms for students who have forgotten theirs. Face coverings will also be available for purchase in the UNCG Campus Bookstore. Students who do not follow masking requirements will be asked to put on a face covering or leave the classroom to retrieve one and only return when they follow the basic requirements to uphold standards of safety and care for the UNCG community. Once students have a face covering, they are permitted to re-enter a class already in progress. Repeated issues may result in conduct action. The course policies regarding attendance and academics remain in effect for partial or full absence from class due to lack of adherence with face covering and other requirements.

For instances where the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) has granted accommodations regarding wearing face coverings, students should contact their instructors to develop appropriate alternatives to class participation and/or activities as needed. Instructors or the student may also contact OARS (336.334.5440) who, in consultation with Student Health Services, will review requests for accommodations.

Useful Websites:

History Department Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/UNCGDepartmentofHistory/>

History Department Website: <https://his.uncg.edu/>

REQUIRED READING (available at UNCG's Bookstore):

The books listed below are available for purchase at the bookstore. Other readings can be accessed on Canvas. *Free access to e-book is available through Jackson Library on-line catalog.

- 1, *Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*
2. Jill Lepore, *This America*
3. Colin Woodard, *American Nations: A History of the Eleven Rival Regional Cultures of North America*
4. Benjamin Park, *American Nationalisms: Imagining Union in the Age of Revolutions, 1783-1833.*
5. *Nicholas Guyatt, *Bind Us Apart*
6. *Martha Jones, *Birthright Citizens: A History of Race and Rights in Antebellum America*
7. *Ann Tucker, *Newest Born of Nations: European Nationalist Movements and the Making of the Confederacy*
8. *William Blair, *With Malice Toward Some*
9. "Greg Downs, *The Second American Revolution*
10. *Charles Postel, *Equality: An American Dilemma, 1866-1896*
11. Cecilia O'Leary, *To Die For: The Paradox of American Patriotism*
12. *Byrd, *The Black Republic*
13. Stephen Kinzer, *The True Flag: Theodore Roosevelt, Mark Twain, and the Birth of American Empire*

Week 1. INTRODUCTION

Aug. 19 Main Reading:

1. Nikole Hannah-Jones, "Ur Democracy's Founding Ideals Were False When they Were Written," *1619 Project*.
2. Griffin, "The Case for a Vast 1776"
3. Bracevich, "Reframing American History"

Week 2. NATIONALISM AND HISTORIANS

(No Classroom Meeting)

Main Reading: Jill Lepore, *This America*

Due: Posting of 500-800 word reflection on Lepore to Discussion Board.