

# COLLOQUIUM IN AMERICAN HISTORY

## 1865-PRESENT

**History 702-02**  
**TH 6:30-9:20**  
**MHRA 3209**  
**Spring 2011**

**Dr. Mark Elliott**  
**Office: MHRA 2125**  
**Office Hours:**  
**MW 10:30-11:30 or by**  
**appointment**

### **DESCRIPTION:**

This course examines the main currents of scholarship on the history of the United States from 1865 to the present. The purpose of this reading-intensive course is to introduce graduate students to some of the major historiographical debates and the latest trends in scholarship that fall into this period. Because the scholarship on this period is vast, it is impossible to address all of the important debates that exist. Thus, students should approach this course as an opportunity to work on the skill of mastering historiographical debates as well as covering a selection of historical topics. In order to pass comprehensive exams, Master's and Ph.D students will need to employ the techniques learned in this class to engage with many more historiographical controversies and master many more important works of scholarship on their own.

Each class meeting is organized around the discussion of one book as the main reading for the week. Each of the main books have been carefully chosen to represent the latest scholarship on a topic of broad interest among scholars and to introduce students to a particular approach to writing history. Political, social, cultural, legal, and intellectual topics are represented; regional, national and transnational approaches are sampled; categories of analysis and perspectives on the past that include labor and class, economics and consumerism, built and natural environments, race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, and other important themes are explored. For each main reading, students must be able to identify its thesis, to critically evaluate its logic and methodology, and to assess its historiographic contribution. To assist in the process of placing a book in dialogue with the historiography, students will also read short companion articles and make presentations from the supplementary reading lists. Students will share book reviews and summaries with each other and work collectively to broaden their base of knowledge. All students will be expected to treat opposing viewpoints fairly without distortion or oversimplification and engage in historiographic debates with professionalism. Students should strive not only to grasp the major debates accurately, but also to figure out where they stand personally within these debates.

There will be a cumulative final exam to mimic the conditions of the qualifying exams for MA and Ph.D students. This exam will be made up of two essay questions on which students will write for 90 minutes each.

### **GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- Reading secondary sources efficiently, with an ability to identify main arguments, critically evaluate methodology, and assess historiographic contributions.
- Participating with professionalism in sophisticated academic debates and intellectual exchanges.
- Delivering informative and useful oral presentations to peers.
- Formal writing in specific genres of the profession, including book reviews and historiographic essays.
- Establish a foundation for scholarly expertise on post-1865 American historiography.
- Preparation for qualifying exams on American history post-1865.

### **COURSE POLICIES:**

#### **Participation:**

Attendance is mandatory. Absence from class may have an adverse impact on your participation grade. 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.

#### **Presentations:**

Each student will be assigned two presentations over the course of the semester. Presentations will last from 12-15 minutes (speakers will be asked to conclude at 15 minutes). One of these will be a presentation of the main reading for the week. 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 3-5 questions for discussion arising from the reading. The second presentation will be based on one of the books from the supplementary reading list. In this presentation, the student will summarize the book in more detail for the other students in the class who have not read it, and make comparisons and connections between the book and the main reading for the week. See

“Presentation Guidelines” on the “Assignments” page of the Blackboard website for a full description of the assignment.

### **Blackboard Discussion Forum**

The Blackboard site for the course will allow for class discussion to continue beyond the normal time/place constraints of the classroom. You are required to make at least ONE substantial comment, and ONE constructive/observational reply to another student’s posting each week. A “week,” for our purposes, begins and ends at 12:00 midnight on Wednesday. Your forum postings will be read by the entire class, and you will receive a grade for the quality of your postings at the end of the semester.

Your “substantial comment” must address the course material in some way. It may address the upcoming week’s reading. It may be a comment you wanted to make in class, but did not have the opportunity to make. Otherwise, it may be a reflection on an issue discussed in class, on something you read for this class, or another class, or on your own that relates to the course material in some way. Your response to another student’s posting must be a thoughtful and constructive response (such as if you were having a conversation in the same room with them). The rules for use of the forum is as follows:

1. Your grade will be based on the substance of your posting which includes the thought and effort you put into it as well as the length. You can post more than twice a week, but make sure that you have at least *one substantial posting each week of at least 200 words*, and one reply.
2. You will receive a zero for the week if you fail to post before 12:00 midnight on Wednesday of each week. Therefore, you have a full week, including the weekend, to read the forum comments and respond to them or create new postings (Note: you do not have to be finished with your reading to make a substantial post. A reflection on any aspect or part of the reading will do fine). I will check the forum each Thurs. morning to record who posted an entry for that week and I will monitor the board all week.
3. Maintain academic civility, use respectful language and avoid rude remarks. Even *more* than in face-to-face debate, caution must be exercised in “virtual” debate to avoid insulting or offending others. Nothing derogatory may be said about any student or faculty member on the forum. Misuse of the forum will result in the removal of the offender from the forum discussion list, and a Failing grade for the assignment.
4. Do not use the forum to communicate private questions to me, or anyone else in the class (such as “When is the paper due?”). Send me a private e-mail for that.

## Written Work:

There will be two significant papers over the course of the semester. Each paper will be a detailed review of two or more books assessing their contributions to the larger historiographic issues to which they speak. One book must be one of the main readings of the week on the syllabus, and the other(s) must come from the supplementary reading list from the same week as the main reading chosen. Detailed assignment sheets describing the expectations, length, and due dates for the writings assignment will be given out in class and posted on blackboard. Late papers will be penalized 1/3 of a grade for each day the paper is late. All written assignments must be completed and turned in through Blackboard in order to pass the class.

## Final Grade:

- 40% Class participation (including presentations).
- 15% Blackboard Discussion
- 15% Historiographic Paper #1
- 15% Historiographic Paper #2
- 15% Final Exam

## Readings:

- Couvares, Francis, et al. *Interpretations of American History: Patterns & Perspectives, Volume 2: From Reconstruction to the Present*.
- Blight, David. *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (2001).
- Lears, T.J. Jackson, *Rebirth of Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877-1920*
- Andrews, Thomas, *Killing for Coal: America's Deadliest Labor War*
- Hale, Grace Elizabeth. *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940*.
- Kramer, Paul, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States and the Philippines*
- Murphy, Kevin. *Political Manhood: Red Bloods, Mollycoddles, & the Politics of Progressive Era Reform*
- Sutton, Matthew Avery, *Aimee Semple McPherson and the Resurrection of Christian America*.
- Kennedy, David M., *The American People in the Great Depression: Freedom From Fear*.
- Melvyn Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind: The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War*.
- Pascoe, Peggy. *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America*
- Ngai, Mae, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*
- Levenstein, Lisa. *A Movement Without Marches: African American Women and the Politics of Poverty in Postwar Philadelphia* (2009).
- McGirr, Lisa. *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right*

**Additional readings can be found on Blackboard under “Course Documents.”**

**Week 1. INTRODUCTION**

- Jan. 13. Main Reading:** Couvares, *Interpretations of American History*, 1-24.  
Bender, “Historians, the Nation, and the Plentitude of Narratives” (on Blackboard).

**Week 2. THE ENDURING CIVIL WAR**

- Jan. 20 Main Reading:** Blight, David. *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (2001).  
Couvares, *Interpretations of American History*, 25-54.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Blum, Edward. *Reforging the White Republic: Race, Religion, and American Nationalism*  
Baker, Bruce, *What Reconstruction Meant: Historical Memory in the American South*  
Brown, Thomas, ed. *Reconstructions: New Perspectives on the Postbellum United States*  
Farmer-Kaiser, Mary. *Freedwomen and the Freedmen’s Bureau: Race, Gender & Public Policy in the Age of Emancipation* (2010)  
Foner, Eric. *A Short History of Reconstruction* (1988)  
Hahn, Stephen, *A Nation Under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration*.  
Masur, Kate. *An Example for All the Land: Emancipation and the Struggle for Equality in Washington, DC*  
Schwalm, Leslie. *Emancipation’s Diaspora: Race and Reconstruction in the Upper Midwest*

**Week 3. REDEFINING THE GILDED AGE AND PROGRESSIVE ERA**

- Jan. 27 Main Reading:** Lears, Jackson, *Rebirth of Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877-1920*  
Couvares, *Interpretations of American History*, 165-187.  
Robert Johnson, “Re-Democratizing the Progressive Era: the Politics of Progressive Era Political Historiography.”

**Supplementary Reading:**

Calhoun, Charles, ed. *The Gilded Age: Perspectives on the Origins of Modern America*  
Cohen, Nancy. *The Reconstruction of American Liberalism, 1865-1914*.  
Edwards, Rebecca, *New Spirits: Americans in the Gilded Age*  
Goodwyn, Lawrence. *The Populist Moment: A Short History of the Agrarian Revolt in America*  
Hofstadter, Richard. *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.*

Postel, Charles. *The Populist Vision*  
Richardson, Heather. *West from Appomattox*.  
Rodgers, Dan T. *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age*  
Sanders, Elizabeth, *Roots of Reform: Farmers, Workers and the American State, 1877-1919*  
Trachtenberg, Alan. *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age*  
Wiebe, Robert. *The Search for Order 1877-1920*.

**Week 4. LABOR, ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY AND THE WEST**

**Feb. 3 Main Reading:** Andrews, Thomas, *Killing for Coal: America's Deadliest Labor War*

Couvares, *Interpretations of American History*, 55-72.

Rome, Adam. "What Really Matters in History?: Environmental Perspectives on Modern America," *Environmental History* 7 (2002) and Crosby, Alfred. "The Past and Present of Environmental History," *American Historical Review* (1995).

**Supplementary Reading:**

Cronon, William, *Nature's Metropolis*  
Fink, Leon. *Workingmen's Democracy: The Knights of Labor and American Politics*.  
Hine, Robert V. and John Mack Faragher, *The American West: A New Interpretive History*  
Montgomery, David, *The Fall of the House of Labor*  
Rosenzweig, Roy, *Eight Hours for What We Will*  
Worster, Donald, *Rivers of Empire*

**Week 5. AMERICAN IMPERIALISM**

**Feb. 10 Main Reading:** Kramer, Paul, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States and the Philippines*

Couvares, *Interpretations of American History*, 96-126.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Bederman, Gail, *Manliness and Civilization* (1995).  
Dawley, Alan, *Changing the World: American Progressives in War and Revolution*  
Jacobson, Matthew Frye. *Barbarian Virtues*  
LaFeber, Walter. *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898*.  
Love, Eric T. *Race Over Empire: Racism & U.S. Imperialism, 1865-1900* (2004)  
Newman, Louise. *White Women's Rights: The Racial Origin of Feminism in the United States* (1999).  
Rosenberg, Emily, *Spreading the American Dream*  
Sneider, Allison, *Suffragists in an Imperial Age: U.S. Expansion and the Woman Question*  
Williams, William Appleman, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*

**Week 6. GENDER AND THE POLITICS OF PROGRESSIVISM**

**Feb. 17**      **Main Reading:**      Murphy, Kevin. *Political Manhood: Red Bloods, Mollycoddles, & the Politics of Progressive Era Reform*

Bryce Traister, “Academic Viagra: The Rise of American Masculinity Studies” (2000), and Joanne Meyerowitz, “A History of ‘Gender’” (2009).

**Supplementary Reading:**

Capozzola, Christopher. *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern Citizen*

Chauncey, George. *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940*

Hoganson, Kristen. *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars*

Kloppenber, James T. *Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought, 1870-1920*

Menand, Louis. *The Metaphysical Club*.

McGerr, Michael. *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920*

Rodgers, Dan T. *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age*

**Week 7.      THE ERA OF JIM CROW**

**Feb. 24**      **Main Reading:**      Hale, Grace Elizabeth. *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940*.

Eric Arneson, “Whiteness and the Historian’s Imagination” (2001).

**Supplementary Reading:**

Ayers, Edward. *The Promise of the New South: Life after Reconstruction*.

Blackmon, Douglas. *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II* (2008).

Gilmore, Glenda, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920*.

Higginbotham, Evelyn Brooks, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920*

Kantrowitz, Stephen, *Ben Tillman and the Reconstruction of White Supremacy*

Kelley, Robin D.G., *Race Rebels : Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class*

Litwack, Leon, *Trouble in Mind*

Woodward, C. Vann, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*

Wood, Amy. *Lynching and Spectacle: Witnessing Racial Violence in America, 1890-1940*.

**Week 8.      RELIGION AND COMMERCIAL MASS CULTURE**

**March 3**      **Main Reading:**      Sutton, Matthew Avery, *Aimee Semple McPherson and the*

*Resurrection of Christian America*

Jon Butler, "Jack-in-the-Box Faith: The Religion Problem in Modern American History"

Warren Susman, "Personality and the Making of Twentieth Century Culture."

**Supplementary Reading:**

Beckert, Sven. *The Monied Metropolis: New York City and the Consolidation of the American Bourgeoisie*

Leach, William, *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power and the Rise of a New American Culture*

Lears, T.J. Jackson. *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America.*

Lerner, Michael, *Dry Manhattan: Prohibition in New York* (2007)

Marchand, Roland, *Advertising the American Dream*(1986)

Peiss, Kathy. *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York*

**SPRING BREAK MARCH 7-11**

**Week 9. THE NEW DEAL**

**March 17 Main Reading:** Kennedy, David M., *The American People in the Great Depression: Freedom From Fear.*

Couvares, *Interpretations of American History*, 207-245.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Brinkley, Alan, *The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War.*

Brinkley, Alan. *Voices of Protest: Huey Long, Father Coughlin, and the Great Depression.*

Cohen, Lizabeth. *Making a New Deal*

Dawley, Alan. *Struggles for Justice: Social Responsibility and the Liberal State*

Gordon, Colin. *New Deals: Business, Labor, and Politics in America 1920-1935.*

Gordon, Linda. *Pitied But Not Entitled: Single Mothers and the History of Welfare 1890-1935.*

Pells, Richard. *Radical Visions and American Dreams: Culture and Social Thought in the Depression Years.*

Skocpol, Theda. *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States.*

Sullivan, Patricia, *Days of Hope: Race and Democracy in the New Deal Era*

**Week 10. THE COLD WAR**

**March 24 Main Reading:** Melvyn Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind: The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War.*

Couvares, *Interpretations of American History*, 246-286.

**Supplementary Reading:**



Borgwardt, Elizabeth. *A New Deal for the World*  
 Fousek, John, *To Lead the Free World*  
 Gaddis, John Lewis, *The Cold War: A New History*  
 Jeffries, John W., *Wartime America: The World War II Home Front*  
 Kaiser, David E., *American Tragedy: Kennedy, Johnson, and the Origins of the Vietnam War*  
 LaFeber, Walter, *Inevitable Revolutions*  
 Osgood, Kenneth, *Total Cold War: Eisenhower's Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad*  
 Schrecker, Ellen, *Many are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America*  
 Smith, Tony, *America's Mission* (1994).  
 Whitfield, Stephen, *Culture of the Cold War*

**Week 11. IMMIGRATION AND AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP**

**March 31 Main Reading:** Ngai, Mae, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*

Couvares, *Interpretations of American History*, 127-164.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Bodnar, John. *The Transplanted*  
 Daniels, Roger, *Guarding the Golden Door* (2004)  
 Higham, John, *Strangers in the Land*  
 Jacobson, Matthew Frye. *Whiteness of a Different Color*  
 King, Desmond, *Making Americans: Immigration, Race, and the Origins of Diverse Democracy*  
 Roediger, David. *Working Toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White*  
 Sanchez, George. *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945*.  
 Zaragosa Vargas, *Labor Rights are Civil Rights: Mexican-American Workers in Twentieth-Century America*

**Week 12. CIVIL RIGHTS STRUGGLES**

**April 7 Main Reading:** Pascoe, Peggy. *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America*

Couvares, *Interpretations of American History*, 287-315.

Tomlins, Christopher. "Expanding Boundaries: A Century of Legal History."

**Supplementary Reading:**

Bolton, Charles, *The Hardest Deal of All: The Battle of School Integration in Mississippi, 1870-1980*  
 Dudziak, Mary. *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy*  
 Gerstle, Gary, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century*  
 Gilmore, Glenda, *Defying Dixie: The Radical Roots of Civil Rights, 1919-1950*

Goluboff, Risa. *The Lost Promise of Civil Rights*  
Jackson, Thomas, *From Civil Rights to Human Rights*  
Klarman, Michael. *From Jim Crow to Civil Rights: The Supreme Court and the Struggle for Racial Equality*  
Sokol, Jason. *There Goes My Everything: White Southerners in the Age of Civil Rights, 1945-1975*  
Sugrue, Thomas, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North*  
Tyson, Timothy, *Blood Done Sign My Name: A True Story*  
Tyson, Timothy, *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power*

**Week 13. RACE, GENDER AND THE URBAN CRISIS**

**April 14 Main Reading:** Levenstein, Lisa. *A Movement Without Marches: African American Women and the Politics of Poverty in Postwar Philadelphia* (2009).  
  
Thomas Sugrue, “Crabgrass-Roots Politics: Race, Rights, and the Reaction Against Liberalism in the Urban North, 1940-1964”  
  
Couvares, *Interpretations of American History*, 325-365.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Baxandall, Roslayn Fraad and Elizabeth Ewen, *Picture Windows: How the Suburbs Happened*  
Cohen, Lizabeth, *A Consumer’s Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*.  
Jackson, Kenneth. *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*.  
Sugrue, Thomas J., *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*  
Kessler-Harris, Alice. *In Pursuit of Equity: Women, Men, and the Quest for Economic Citizenship in 20th Century America*.  
Cott, Nancy. *The Grounding of Modern Feminism*  
Gerhard, Jane. *Desiring Revolution: Second-wave Feminism and the Rewriting of American Sexual Thought, 1920 to 1982*.  
Rosen, Ruth, *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women’s Movement Changed America*

**Week 14. THE SIXTIES AND SEVENTIES: REVOLUTION AND COUNTER-REVOLUTION**

**April 21 Main Reading:** McGirr, Lisa. *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right*  
  
Couvares, *Interpretations of American History*, 366-408.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Carter, Dan, *The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the Origins of the New Conservatism, and*  
Kruse, Kevin M., *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism*  
Maurice Isserman and Michael Kazin, *America Divided: The Civil War of the 1960s*  
Lassiter, Matthew, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South*

Sokol, Jason, *There Goes My Everything: White Southerners in the Age of Civil Rights, 1945-75*

**Week 16. FINAL EXAM**

**May 3 Final Exam, 6:30-9:20 pm. (TUESDAY)**