

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



Dr. Mark Elliott

Office: MHRA 2125

Office Hours: T 1-3:00

HIS 723 Meetings:

Spring 2020

TUE 3:30-6:20

Bryan Building 202

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

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 community. 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 nationhood continue to morph and change in each era.

Each class meeting is organized around the discussion of either one book and one short reading, or several articles/book chapters, as the main reading for the week. Each of the readings been carefully chosen to represent important issues or the latest scholarship on topics related to nationalism in the United States. For each main 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. Each absence after the first one will cause a 20 point deduction to your final 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. You can earn up to 6 points per class discussion. Each class discussion will be graded as follows: No constructive contributions to discussion = 0 points. Minimal participation = 1-3 points. Strong participation = 4-5 points. Outstanding participation = 6 points.

Presentations:

Each student will be assigned three presentations over the course of the semester. Main 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 3-5 questions for discussion arising from the reading. Two 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.

Discussion Forum

The Canvas site allows for class discussion to continue beyond the normal time/place constraints of the classroom. You are required to make at least ONE substantial thoughtful comment *week of at least 200 words*, and ONE constructive/observational reply to another student's posting each week. Your substantial comment must be posted by 12:00 noon on Monday so that your classmates can read and respond to it before the class meets on Tuesday. But you do not have to wait until Monday! In fact, you are encouraged to post early in the week. You need not have finished the reading when you post—you may post your reaction to any aspect of the book. Then, you must read the other student's and respond to one of them. You may do that by noon on Tuesday. 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). Please make your comments ORIGINAL. If someone has made a point you wanted to make find something else to say.

Your grade will be based on the substance of your posting which includes the thought and effort you put into it as well as whether it meets the minimum word 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.

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, Feb. 21 at 6 pm.
	Annotated Bibliography:	Friday March 21 at 6 pm.
	Final Research Paper:	Friday, May 4 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:

75 Points:	Participation in class discussion
75 Points	Discussion Board contributions
75 Points:	Book Presentation

- 25 Points: Article Presentation #1
25 Points: Article Presentation #2
100 Points: Primary Source Paper
25 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; **D+** 335-349; **D** 315-334; **D-** 300-314; **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 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.

Daniel T. Rodgers, *As a City on a Hill: The Story of America's Most Famous Lay Sermon*

*Benjamin Park, *American Nationalisms: Imagining Union in the Age of Revolutions, 1783-1833.*

*Rosemarie Zagarri, *Revolutionary Backlash: Women and Politics in the Early American Republic*

*Martha Jones, *Birthright Citizens: A History of Race and Rights in Antebellum America*

Robert E. Bonnor, *Mastering America: Southern Slaveholders and the Crisis of American Nationhood*

Steven Hahn, *A Nation Without Borders*

*Cecilia O'Leary, *To Die For: The Paradox of American Patriotism*

Thomas Brown, *Civil War Monuments and the Militarization of America*

Stephen Kinzer, *The True Flag: Theodore Roosevelt, Mark Twain, and the Birth of American Empire*

* Kenyon Zimmer, *Immigrants Against the State: Yiddish and Italian Anarchism in America*

Jill Lepore, *This America*

Week 1. INTRODUCTION

Jan. 14 Main Reading: Politico Magazine editorial on American Exceptionalism

Week 2. MYTHIC NATIONHOOD

Jan. 21 Main Reading: 1. Daniel T. Rodgers, *As a City on a Hill*

PRESENTATION _____

Article: 2. Selection from Greg Grandin, *The End of the Myth: From the Frontier to the Border Wall in the Mind of America*

PRESENTATION _____

Week 3. THEORIZING NATIONALISM

Jan. 28 Main Readings: 1. Jasper M. Trautsch, "The Origins and Nature of American Nationalism."

PRESENTATION _____

2. David Waldstreicher, "Rites of Rebellion, Rites of Assent: Celebrations, Print Culture, and the Origins of American Nationalism."

PRESENTATION _____