Course Description

This course focuses on foundational issues in United States history. It is designed to introduce graduate students to key works, both classic and recent, in the history of the late nineteenth-and twentieth-century United States. We will explore the historiographical debates and paradigms that have shaped scholarly discussions and evaluate how historians have applied diverse methods and theoretical frameworks to the study of history. Weekly topics reflect standard as well as current trends in the literature.

Course Texts


**Course Requirements**

***All requirements must be completed to receive credit for this course.***

**Participation:** Graduate students are expected to contribute actively to class discussions. Attendance at all meetings is therefore crucial. I expect everyone to be completely respectful of the opinions of others.

Each week, a different student will be responsible for running the discussion of the common readings. The student should open the discussion with a brief explanation of the monograph author and his/her background, including the author’s training and where the work under review fits within the author’s career trajectory. Second, the student leader should identify what historiographical debates the author is engaged in. Who are the major players in those debates? What are the central issues? Third, the student should summarize how other reviewers have evaluated the book under discussion—are the reviews mostly positive? Negative? What criticisms are offered? For the rest of the discussion, the student should lead his/her colleagues through a detailed discussion of the book’s major arguments, evidence, and strengths and weaknesses.

**Book Reviews:** Each student will write reviews of two additional books from the “recommended” readings listed on the syllabus. Reviews should run from 600-900 words in length and should (1) establish the historiographical context in which the book was written; (2) summarize the author’s argument/thesis; and (3) evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of that argument. See the *Journal of American History* or *American Historical Review* for examples.

Reviewers will make copies of their reviews available to the professor and his/her classmates no later than the Friday before we will be discussing the review. The reviewer will then present that review to the class and will lead a discussion on how the book under review relates to the common reading(s) for the week.

**Historiographical Essay:** Students will each be required to pick a different topic and set of readings from the supplemental reading list and will write a ten-to-fifteen page analysis of the literature on that topic. Students will provide copies of their essays to each member of the class.

Essays should: (1) include a clear thesis that states the overall significance of the body of literature under review; (2) establish the historiographical context in which these books were
written; (3) summarize the major arguments of each of the books; (4) evaluate the strengths and the weaknesses of the books; and (5) tie the essay together with a qualitative summary of what these readings tells us about the state of the field of that topic in modern United States history (in other words, what trends, issues, or themes are emerging from this particular body of work?). Students are also encouraged to include their own analysis and/or quotes of reviews of the books (especially from the Journal of American History, American Historical Review, and Reviews in American History) as appropriate in their discussions.

Papers should be carefully documented with citations made in either endnotes or footnotes (not parenthetical notes in the body of the paper). For a guide to proper citation style, see The Chicago Manual of Style or Kate Turabian, A Manual for Writers (both from the University of Chicago Press).

**Grade Breakdown:**

Participation: 20%
Book Reviews: 30% (15% each)
Historiographical Essay: 50%

Graduate Student Grades: To receive graduate credit for this course, your work must meet the highest standards. An “A” grade means that your work is excellent; an “A-” means that your work is fine; a “B+” means that your work is acceptable. A “B” or below means that you are not doing adequate graduate level work and that improvements must be made immediately.

**Students with Disabilities:**

Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and may need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please visit the Disability Resource Center (DRC). All accommodations MUST be approved through the DRC (Admin Annex Bldg, Room 205). Please stop by or call 509-335-3417 to make an appointment with a disability specialist. If you have questions, please contact Rosie Pavlov at pavlovr@wsu.edu or 335-3417. Additional information is available on the DRC website at www.drc.wsu.edu.

**Campus Safety:**

Washington State University is committed to maintaining the safety of the students, faculty, staff, and visitors to the Pullman campus. As part of this commitment, the university has prepared this Campus Safety Plan, containing a comprehensive listing of university policies, procedures, statistics and information relating to campus safety, emergency management and the health and welfare of the campus community. For more information see: http://safetyplan.wsu.edu/ and http://oem.wsu.edu/emergencies.
**Academic Honesty:**

All members of the academic community at WSU are expected to practice and uphold standards of academic integrity and honesty. Academic integrity means representing oneself and one’s work honestly. Misrepresentation is cheating since it means the student is claiming credit for ideas or work not actually his or her own and is thereby seeking a grade that is not actually earned.

Plagiarism is using someone else’s work or ideas without giving that person credit. By doing this, a student is, in effect, claiming credit for someone else’s thinking. Whether the student has read or heard the information used, the student must document the source of information. When dealing with written sources, a clear distinction should be made between quotations, which reproduce information from the source word-for-word within quotation marks, and paraphrases, which digest the source of information and produce it in the student’s own words. Both direct quotations and paraphrases must be documented. Even if a student rephrases, condenses or selects from another person’s work, the ideas are still the other person’s and failure to give credit constitutes misrepresentation of the student’s actual work and plagiarism of another’s ideas. Buying a paper or using information from the Internet without attribution and handing it in as one’s own work is plagiarism.

Any student who plagiarizes will receive a failing grade for this course and will face additional discipline from the Office of Student Conduct.

**Course Schedule:**

**WEEK 1 (8/25): RECONSTRUCTION**
Blum, *Reforging the White Republic*.
*Interpretations of American History*, chapters 1 and 2.

**WEEK 2 (9/1): PROGRESSIVISM**
Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*.

Recommended:

**WEEK 3 (9/8): WORLD WAR I**
Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You*.

Recommended:

**WEEK 4 (9/15): RACE AND IMMIGRATION**

Recommended:

**WEEK 5 (9/22): THE NEW DEAL**

Recommended:

**WEEK 6 (9/29): WORLD WAR II AND CIVIL RIGHTS**

Recommended:

**WEEK 7 (10/6): THE FIFTIES**

Recommended:
WEEK 8 (10/13): THE COLD WAR
Borstelmann, _The Cold War and the Color Line_.
_Interpretations of American History_, chapter 8.

Recommended:

MacAlister, _Epic Encounters_.

Recommended:

WEEK 10 (10/27): VIETNAM
Logevall, _Choosing War_.

Recommended:

WEEK 11 (11/3): CIVIL RIGHTS, II
Sugrue, _Sweet Land of Liberty_.
_Interpretations of American History_, chapter 9.

Recommended:

WEEK 12 (11/10): THE SEVENTIES
Perlstein, _Nixonland_.


Recommended:

WEEK 13 (11/17): THE NEW ECONOMY

Recommended:

WEEK 14 (12/1): THE NEW RIGHT
Kruse, White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism.

Recommended:

WEEK 15 (12/8): THE EIGHTIES
Troy, Morning in America: How Ronald Reagan Invented the 1980s.
Interpretations of American History, chapter 11.

Recommended: