This readings and discussion course introduces you to the historiography of modern America and to some major contemporary debates in the field. With only nine class meetings and much ground to cover, I have been selective in my choices to balance out other regular graduate course offerings in this Department that cover certain modern U.S. subfields in greater depth. The reading load is heavy, and is organized chiefly by theme rather than by chronology. We will be reading both classics as well as recent works that complement and complicate earlier interpretations. Successful participation in the course will give students a solid grounding in the historiography and prepare them for more specialized research in one or more of its subfields and/or in other disciplines. Students will also have an enhanced understanding of how to teach this material to undergraduate students in both general and topical courses.

REQUIRED READINGS

All of these are available for purchase at the University Bookstore.

1. Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform* (1951)

Required articles for this course can be found via the class website. For every week’s subfield, I have listed recommended books that are considered important contributions to the historiography. You are not required to read these books for class but may use the list as a starting point in preparation of bibliographies, exam reading lists, et al. However, if you have already read one of the books listed as required reading for a given week, you should choose a book from the recommended list as a substitute for reading, write-up, and discussion.

ASSIGNMENTS
The assignments in this course are intended to support your professional education and are designed so that they may be repurposed at a later date in your training or your career. Naturally, participation, completion of readings, and collegial and productive participation in discussion are weighed heavily. The requirements are:

1. To assist in close reading of the text and provide some framing questions for class discussion (as well as give you a written summary of each book for future use later in your graduate and professional career), every student will be responsible for typing up one page (per book) of notes on the book for each week. These are for personal consultation during class time, and should be turned in to the instructor at the end of the session as an ungraded assignment that contributes to the participation grade. They do not need to feature gem-like prose, but they should be reasonably coherent and grammatically sound. Notes should include: a succinct restatement of each book’s main argument; the evidence the author uses to support that argument (including major sources); your assessment of whether the author makes the argument successfully; major questions raised by this reading; and relationship to the broader historiography (the author’s own historiographic notes can be useful in this regard). You are not required to type up notes for assigned articles.

2. At least twice during the quarter, every student will give a ten-minute historiographic presentation that outlines major debates within the subfield under discussion that week, situates the week’s required reading within this literature, and provides a brief assessment of how you think the week’s author(s) contributed to, and/or changed the terms of, the scholarly debate. In conjunction with this presentation, the student will draw up a short (one page, double-spaced) bibliography listing 1) key journals in the subfield, 2) important historiographic/theoretical essays about the subfield, 3) monographs in the field beyond the recommended reading list on the syllabus. This bibliography should be emailed to me and to your fellow students by 11AM on the day of your presentation. Students will sign up for these presentations at the first class session on March 28.

3. In order to begin to think about how you might teach this literature to future students, you will write a hypothetical course syllabus for an undergraduate survey course in twentieth century American history. The syllabus should be as substantively detailed and structurally precise as possible, built as if it were to be taught at the UW in Spring Quarter 2012. Although our twentieth-century survey (HSTAA 303) technically begins in 1877, you may begin closer to 1900 if preferred, as this is the more common practice elsewhere. The syllabus should be accompanied by an up to 500-word (one page, single-spaced) narrative describing your choices of readings and assignments. This assignment is due on or before May 23. The syllabus and narrative must be emailed to me and to your fellow students by 11AM that morning.

4. The final assignment is a 10-page (double-spaced) historiographic review essay on one major subfield in twentieth century history that includes discussion of at least four additional books on the “recommended reading” list below. Although shorter than a review article found in a refereed journal such as Reviews in American History, the essay should be similar in spirit and tone of analysis. Identify major works in the subfield and important turning points in the historiographical interpretation of the topic. Contrast/compare sources and methods; contextualize the work in the broader U.S. historiography. The paper topic must be a different subfield from those on which you gave the in-class historiographic presentations. You also may choose to focus on a subfield beyond those discussed in class but to which some course texts also relate (e.g., Western history, environmental history, labor history, intellectual history). Please choose this topic in consultation with me. The essay should be emailed to me by 5PM on June 10 (the Friday of exam week). Extensions or incompletes are strongly discouraged.

Assignments are weighed as follows: participation/readings/notes 50%; historiographic presentation and bibliography 15%; syllabus and narrative 15%; final essay 20.

**SCHEDULE**

3/28  I: Finding Modern America

Read:

Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform* (1951)


Bibliography presented by instructor; students will sign up for future bibliographic presentations.

Recommended reading:
Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (1982)

4/4 II: Business and Economic History

Read:


Recommended reading:
William H. Whyte, *The Organization Man* (1949)
C. Wright Mills, *White Collar: The American Middle Classes* (1952)

4/11 III: Race and Ethnicity

Read:
Recommended reading:

4/18  IV: Urban and Suburban History

Read:
Kevin M. Kruse and Thomas J. Sugrue, The New Suburban History (2006): read Introduction and Chapters 3 (O’Mara), 5 (Wiese), and 7 (Self)

Recommended reading:
[Also see Prof. O’Mara’s syllabus and reading lists for HSTAA 590 American Urban History on her faculty website]
John Findlay, Magic Lands: Western Cityscapes and American Culture after 1940 (1991)
Robert Fishman, Bourgeois Utopias (1987)
Greg Hise, Magnetic Los Angeles: Planning the Twentieth Century Metropolis (1993)
Alison Isenberg, Downtown America: A History of the Place and the People Who Made It (2005)
Kenneth T. Jackson, Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of America (1986)
Jane Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American Cities (1961)
Lewis Mumford, The Culture of Cities (1938) and The City in History (1961)
Margaret O’Mara, Cities of Knowledge: Cold War Science and the Search for the Next Silicon Valley (2005)
Saskia Sassen, Cities in a World Economy (1990)
Jon Teaford, The Rough Road to Renaissance: Urban Revitalization in America (1990)
Andrew Weise, Places of their Own: Black Suburbanization in America (2001)

4/25  V: Gender and Sexuality

Read:

Recommended reading:
Elaine Tyler May, Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era (1989)
Stephanie Coontz, Marriage, A History (2005)

5/2  V: State-Building

Read:
William Leuchtenberg, Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal (1963)
Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle, eds., The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930-1980 (1990)

Recommended reading:
[Also see Prof. O’Mara’s syllabus and reading lists for HIST 590 Welfare States on her faculty website]
David M. Kennedy, Freedom from Fear: The American People in the Great Depression and World War II (1999)
Brian Balogh, Chain Reaction (1993)

5/9  VI: America and the World

Read:
Elizabeth Borgwardt, A New Deal for the World
Mary Dudziak, Cold War Civil Rights

Recommended reading:
Penny Von Eschen, Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War (2006)
Paul Boyer, By the Dawn’s Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age (1994)
Ellen Schrecker, No Ivory Tower: McCarthyism and the Universities (1986)
Christian Appy, Cold War Constructions: The Political Culture of Cold War Imperialism (2006)
Odd Arne Westad, The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times (2005)
Kenneth Osgood, Total Cold War: Eisenhower’s Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad (2006)
Louis Warren, Buffalo Bill’s America: William Cody and the Wild West Show (2005)
5/16  VIII: Culture and Consumption

Read:

Sarah Igo, The Averaged American

Meg Jacobs, “Pocketbook Politics” in The Democratic Experiment: New Directions in American Political History


Recommended reading [also includes literature on poverty and inequality]:
James T. Patterson, America’s Struggle Against Poverty (1993)
Arnold Hirsch, Making the Second Ghetto (1983)
Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton, American Apartheid (1993)

5/23  IX: Politics

Read:

Meg Jacobs, William Novak, and Julian Zelizer, “Introduction” to The Democratic Experiment: New Directions in American Political History

Julian Zelizer and Bruce Schulman, eds., Rightward Bound: Making America Conservative in the 1970s

Recommended Reading:
Bruce Schulman, The Seventies (2007)
Rick Perlstein, Nixonland (2008)
E. J. Dionne, Why Americans Hate Politics (1989)
Thomas and Mary Edsall, Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights, and Taxes on American Politics (1992)

5/30  Memorial Day: no class

6/10  Final paper due 5PM via email to the instructor