HSTAA 522
Readings in American History: Late-Nineteenth Century to the Present
University of Washington
Spring 2013 – Tues 2:30-5:20
http://facultyl.washington.edu/momara/HSTAA522.html

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HSTAA 522 is the second in a two-quarter sequence whose primary goal is to introduce the variety of methods and conceptual and theoretical approaches that shape U.S. history scholarship. Without pretending to provide a comprehensive survey of U.S. history, the sequence aims to establish a bibliographic foundation for the research and teaching you will undertake as you move through the graduate program and beyond. (Students outside the History Department do not have to have taken HSTAA 521 as a prerequisite for this course.)

The temporal focus of HSTAA 522 is the late nineteenth century to the present. With only ten 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. Assignments are geared towards professionalization and preparation for comprehensive examinations and dissertation work – i.e., all are intended to have a useful application beyond this class.

Each week we will use the third hour of class to discuss issues related to the state of academe and the practice of history. These “H3 Discussions” can include pedagogy, multidisciplinarity, academic publishing, and different methods and modalities for the practice of history, including digital and public/applied scholarship.

REQUIRED READINGS

All of these are in paperback and available for purchase at the University Bookstore. I strongly encourage you to add as many of them to your personal libraries if financial circumstances allow.

Richard White, Railroaded: The Transcontinentals and the Making of America (2011)
George Sanchez, Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945 (1994)

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), every student will be responsible for posting a 400-500 word entry of notes and questions on the week’s assigned reading on GoPost the night before class every week (including the first week). Notes should include a succinct restatement of each reading’s main argument; your assessment of whether the author makes the argument successfully; and at least two meaty questions raised by this reading that you would like to see discussed in class. Keep archived copies of your GoPost entries so that you can consult them during exam preparation, etc.

2. At least once during the quarter, each student will serve as a discussion leader and co-teacher. Responsibilities of the discussion leader are to read and synthesize the major questions posed by colleague’s GoPost entries that week, to map out a discussion facilitation plan in email consultation with the professor the morning of class, and to join the professor in leading discussion. You will sign up for discussion leadership on the first day of class.

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 2014. 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 a 300-500-word narrative describing your choices of readings and assignments, challenges encountered, etc. This assignment should be submitted to me via email no later than 11am the day of the last class meeting.

4. In order to think about your public presentation of yourself, I ask that you create a personal web page that presents you and your scholarly interests and accomplishments to an online audience. The page serves as a way to introduce to you peers, colleagues, prospective employers, students, and the general public. You may use any platform you wish, including simply setting up a profile on Academia.edu; we will discuss different examples and platforms in class. I strongly encourage you to take advantage of the Departmental web page redesign process and link this page to the UW History website. This is a pass/fail assignment. These pages should be created and accessible online no later than the ninth week of the quarter so that we can discuss them in class.

5. The end-of-term assignment is a historiographic review essay of about 3000 words entitled “New Directions in ____ History.” The essay should begin by discussing the origins of the field (referencing seminal works), then present the current state of the field, then conclude by offering some promising new directions for the field. 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. Your topic could be a disciplinary subfield (labor history, urban history, Western history, business history, etc.) or scholarly methodology (digital history, public history). Please choose this topic in consultation with me. The essay should be emailed to me by 5PM on the Friday of exam week. Extensions or incompletes are strongly discouraged.

Assignments are weighed as follows: engaged, rigorous, verbal class participation and GoPost 40%; discussion leadership 15%; syllabus and narrative 15%; web page 5%; final essay 25%.
SCHEDULE

Week 1: Progressivism(s)

Read:


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

H3 Discussion: becoming part of the professional community – associations, networks, and conferences

Recommended reading:
Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform (1951)
Beverly Gage, The Day Wall Street Exploded (2009)
Roy Rosenzweig, Eight Hours for What We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870-1920 (1983)
Michael Katz, In the Shadow of the Poorhouse (1986)
Alan Trachtenberg, The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age (1982)
Robert Wiebe, The Search for Order, 1877-1920 (1967)

Week 2: Business history

Read:
Richard White, Railroaded: The Transcontinentals and the Making of America (2011)


H3 discussion: spatial history and visualization; digital history

Recommended reading:
Sharon Strom, Beyond the Typewriter: Gender, Class, and the Origins of Modern Office Work, 1900-1930 (1994)
Clark Davis, Company Men: White Collar Life and Corporate Cultures in Los Angeles, 1892-1941 (2001)
William H. Whyte, The Organization Man (1949)
C. Wright Mills, White Collar: The American Middle Classes (1952)
David Farber, Sloan Rules: Alfred P. Sloan and the Triumph of General Motors (2005)
**Week 3: Race and ethnicity**

Read:


H3 discussion: teaching strategies

Recommended reading:


**Week 4: Urban history**

Read:


H3 discussion: writing reviews and topical essays

Recommended reading:

[Also see Prof. O’Mara’s syllabus and reading lists for HSTAA 590 American Urban History on her faculty website]


Alison Isenberg, *Downtown America: A History of the Place and the People Who Made It* (2005)


Lewis Mumford, *The Culture of Cities* (1938) and *The City in History* (1961)


Week 5: Gender and sexuality

Read:

Chauncey, *Gay New York*


H3 discussion: public/applied history

Recommended reading:

Week 6: Policy and state-building

Read:


H3 discussion: the research and writing process

Recommended reading:
[Also see Prof. O’Mara’s syllabus and reading lists for HIST 590 Welfare States on her faculty website]
Week 7: America and the world

Read:

Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*

H3 discussion: transnational/comparative history

Recommended reading:

Week 8: Poverty and inequality


H3 discussion: interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinarity

Recommended reading:
James T. Patterson, *America’s Struggle Against Poverty* (1993)
*American Journal of Sociology*
*Social Science History*
*Urban Studies*

Week 9: Political history

Personal web page must be completed and accessible online before the start of class.

Read:

Philips-Fein, *Invisible Hands*

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

H3 discussion: presenting yourself online and beyond

Recommended Reading:
Week 10: Postindustrial America

Syllabi and narrative must be completed and emailed to instructor before class.

Read:


Cowie, Stayin’ Alive

H3 discussion: the future of History

Recommended reading:
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)
Suleiman Osman, The Invention of Brownstone Brooklyn (2010)

6/7 Final paper due 5PM via email to the instructor