Hist. 80010 Literature of American History (syllabus not finalized--still subject to change)
5 credits
Class nbr: 56539
Class time: Wednesdays 2pm–4pm. Room XXXX
Instructor: Prof. John Dixon
E-mail: john.dixon@csi.cuny.edu
Office hour: Wednesdays 1pm–2pm, and by appointment in room XXXX

Course Description:
This course introduces Ph.D. students to the historiography of the U.S. through the Civil War and is intended to prepare students for the First Written Examination. Covering major historiographical themes, debates, and developments, the course broadly considers how historians have organized, researched, and written pre-1865 American history. Simultaneously, it examines and compares a multitude of specific works, ranging from large narrative histories to specialized monographs and articles. Students will assess methodologies, discuss the geographical parameters of U.S. history, and confront fundamental questions of periodization and historical causation. Recent achievements and trends in the scholarship will be highlighted. The assigned workload for this reading-intensive, five-credit course is hefty. It is designed to prepare students both for the exam and to teach pre-1865 U.S. history at the college level.

Assignments:
Instead of a seminar paper or historiographical essay, your written work for the course will consist of twelve (approx. 1200-word) responses to the readings. Prompting questions will be distributed at least one week in advance. The response papers should demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the readings, offer critical insight, and show some appreciation of the surrounding historiography. Scholarly reviews should be consulted and cited when appropriate. The papers are due Wednesdays via email by 10am. Students will be graded as follows:
- 12 response papers (80% of total course grade).
- Attendance and active participation (20% of total course grade).

Schedule of readings/discussions
Readings marked with an asterisk (*) are available electronically via the GC library. Readings marked with a plus sign (+) will be posted on Blackboard.

8/26: Introduction

9/2: Frontiers, Oceans, Empires, Continents, Hemispheres, Worlds
Required additional readings:

9/9: American Indians, Ecologies, Settler Colonialism


Required additional readings:

9/16: Slavery, Race, Power, Paradoxes


Required additional readings:

9/23: Religion

Required additional readings:
* Perry Miller, “Errand into the Wilderness,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 10, no. 1 (1953), 4–32

9/30: Anglicization, Imperialism, Ethnogenesis


Required additional readings:

10/7: Rebels and Republicans


Required additional readings:
* “Writing To and From the Revolution,” William and Mary Quarterly 74, no. 4 (2017): 619–764;

No class 10/14

10/21: Historians without Borders

For response paper: one of the following:
- Janet Polasky, Revolutions without Borders: The Call to Liberty in the Atlantic World (2016)

10/28: From the Revolution

For response paper: Christopher Grasso, Skepticism and American Faith: From the Revolution to the Civil War (2018)

Required additional readings:
* “Writing To and From the Revolution,” Journal of the Early Republic 37, no. 4 (2017): 597–783;

11/4: Women, Politics, the Early Republic


Required additional readings:
11/11: Slavery, Capitalism, Households


Required additional readings:

11/18: Jeffersonians, Jacksonians, Whigs, the West


Required additional readings:
* Edward Pessen, “We are all Jacksonians, We are all Jeffersonians; or, a Pox on Stultifying Periodizations,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 1 (1981), 1–26

12/2: War, Union, Slavery


Required readings:
Chandra Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over* (2007)


* Stacey L. Smith, “Beyond North and South: Putting the West in the Civil War and Reconstruction,” *Journal of the Civil War Era* 6, no. 4 (2016): 566–591


**12/9: Lincoln**

No response paper due—use time for exam prep

Required readings:

**EXAM DATE:**