Spring 2021
HIST 80010
Literature Survey in American History
Wednesday 4:15-6:15pm

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Office Hours: Wed 2-3pm (email for appointment)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a reading-intensive course designed to introduce students to major themes, questions, and historiographical debates in U.S. history—from the end of the Civil War to the late twentieth century. One of the main course objectives is to prepare students for the departmental written exam at semester’s end. Additionally, the course will provide a foundation for students who will teach their own U.S. history courses and expose students to (sub)field-specific methods, modes of inquiry, and bibliographies that will aid in future research. A 5-credit course, Literature Survey is demanding and will require your full commitment and participation. Each week, students will read the equivalent of two book-length monographs and will be expected to actively engage with one another about the books’ core arguments, interventions, contributions to the field, use of source material, periodization, and so forth. Spirited, collegial debate is encouraged. In addition to the departmental exam, assignments will include weekly response papers, short literature reviews, and oral presentations. These assignments will serve as useful study aides as students prepare for the rigorous written exam. The course is organized chronologically as well as thematically and will explore topics/eras ranging from Reconstruction, (im)migration, and American capitalism to the interwar period, social movements, and the rise of the carceral state—by scholars of social, cultural, labor, gender, African American, and sexuality history. Attendance at each class session is mandatory. All students will be expected to participate fully and thoughtfully in class discussions.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

✓ to gain knowledge of key issues and critical debates in the field
✓ to develop a reading list useful for exams in U.S. field
✓ to provide foundational knowledge for teaching U.S. history survey
✓ to improve historical reading and writing skills
✓ to apply knowledge from this course to students’ own research projects
✓ to create a supportive and rigorous learning environment and intellectual community

ASSIGNMENTS
**Weekly Reviews:** Each week, you will be responsible for producing a 2-3pp critical essay about the assigned texts. These essays are **not** book reviews. They are short, analytical pieces that explore the key historiographical interventions, theories, and frameworks that the texts (collectively) introduce. In other words, consider from your perspective: What major themes emerge from the texts? In which major debates in the field do they intervene? How do they (re)think about periodization and/or source material? These pieces will assist us in working toward the writing and analysis that will be expected for the examination. **They should be submitted to be via email by Wednesdays @ 1pm.** We will use these pieces to help launch into our discussions.

**Discussion leader:** You will be expected to lead discussion 2x in the semester. Leaders will **1)** introduce a key idea that they explored in their critical essay. **2)** Choose 3 other book monographs with which the assigned texts are in conversation and briefly explain why you chose them. **These cannot be texts that are already on the syllabus.** **3)** Prepare 2-3 questions to help guide our discussion. The outside texts you select will be added to the “future U.S. oral exams” readings list we craft as a class. Please email the bibliographic info for your 3 selected texts when you send your critical essay on the weeks you lead discussion.

**Written Exam:** There will be a written exam at semester’s end, which will be evaluated by a committee of twentieth-century U.S. history faculty.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**2/3 Course Intro + Reconstruction and its Failures**
**Steven Hahn,** *A Nation Under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles from Slavery to The Great Migration* (Part 2 only)


**2/10 Jim Crow Capitalism & the Gilded Age**
**Swen Beckert,** *Monied Metropolis: New York City and the Consolidation of the American Bourgeoisie, 1850-1896* (Intro, part 1, part 3)

**Shennette Garret-Scott,** *Banking on Freedom: Black Women in U.S. Finance Before the New Deal* (Intro, 1, 3, 4)

**2/17 European Immigration and WWI**
**Matthew Frye Jacobson,** *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race*

**2/24 New Directions in Black Women’s Labor History**

**Tera Hunter**, *To ‘Joy My Freedom: Black Women’s Lives and Labors After the Civil War*


**3/3 Communism and Working-Class Politics in the U.S. South**

**Robin Kelley**, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression*


**3/10 LGBTQ Movement Before Stonewall**

**Julio Capo**, *Welcome to Fairyland: Queer Miami Before 1940*


**3/17 Race, Class, and the New Deal**

**Ira Katznelson**, *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America*


3/24 WWII and Latina/o/x Labor History
Elizabeth Escobedo, From Coveralls to Zoot Suits: The Lives of Mexican American Women on the World War II Homefront

WATCH: The Zoot Suit Riots

3/31  ***SPRING BREAK***

4/7 The (Inter-/Post-War) American Crisis in Cities and Suburbs
Tom Sugrue, The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit


4/14 Race, Capitalism, and the New Right
Lisa McGirr, Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right
Nathan Connolly, A World More Concrete: Real Estate and the Making of Jim Crow South Florida (Intro, 1, 3, 7, 8)

4/21 The “Long Civil Rights Movement” Debate
Charles Payne, I’ve Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle” (Intro, 1, 3, 6, 12, 13)


4/28 Centering Women in Civil Rights History
Danielle McGuire, At The Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance—A New History of the Civil Rights Movement From Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power


**WATCH:** *The Rape of Recy Taylor* (2017)

5/5 **Black Power and the New Left**

Alondra Nelson, *Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight Against Medical Discrimination*


**WATCH:** *The Weather Underground* (2002)

5/12 **Carceral Studies: Freedom For All**

Elizabeth Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America*


5/20 ***WRITTEN EXAM ***

*More details to come*