Hist. 80010-01 Literature of American History
5 credits
Class nbr: 56539
Class time: Wednesdays 2pm–4pm (classes online via the Zoom platform)
Instructor: Prof. John Dixon
E-mail: john.dixon@csi.cuny.edu
Online office hours: Mondays 3pm–4pm (via Zoom) or by appointment.

Please note: due to Covid-19, this course will run entirely online. Weekly seminar meetings and office hours will be conducted via Zoom.

Course Description:
This course introduces Ph.D. students to the historiography of the U.S. through the Civil War. 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 First Written Examination and to teach pre-1865 U.S. history at the college level.

Assignments and grading:
Instead of a seminar paper or historiographical essay, your written work for the course will consist of twelve responses to the readings (each response should be approx. 1,000-words in length). Prompting questions will be posted on the class Blackboard site 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 by 10am. They must be emailed to the instructor at: john.dixon@csi.cuny.edu.

Students will be graded for the course 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 online or 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), 3–32

9/30: Anglicization, Imperialism, Ethnogenesis


Required additional readings:
10/7: Rebels and Republicans


Required additional readings:

No class 10/14

10/21: Historians without Borders

For response paper 7: one of the following:
**10/28: From the Revolution**


Required additional readings:
* Serena R. Zabin, “Conclusion: Writing To and From the Revolution,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 37, no. 4, Writing To and From the Revolution: A Joint Issue with the *William and Mary Quarterly* (2017): 771–783

**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, no. 1 (1981), 1–26

12/2: War, Union, Slavery


Required readings:
* 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: