Hist. 84900- Seminar in American History I  
Monday, 2:00-4:00 p.m., 5 credits, Prof. David Nasaw

This seminar is designed for and restricted to first year, first semester U.S. history students in the Ph.D. program. Its primary objective is to introduce students to the craft of historical research and writing. Over the course of this semester, each student in the course will be expected to formulate a research topic, prepare of bibliography of primary and secondary sources, and write up and present to the class a proposal for the research paper that will be completed in the spring semester.

While the main purpose and activity of the course is the preparation of a proposal for a potentially publishable research paper, there will be additional reading and writing assignments on theory, historiography, and methodology. We will also read a bit and devote some time to discussing issues that you may confront when you begin your teaching assignments in your second year.

**Some Learning Objectives:**

Formulate a historical research question and frame a topic.

Prepare a 10-15 page proposal for the research paper you will complete next semester.

Prepare a bibliography of primary and secondary sources, for the research paper you will complete next semester.

Identify and consult with a faculty advisor with expertise in the field you chose to write about.

Familiarize yourself with basic theoretical questions in the writing of history.

Develop your voice as a historian.

Interrogate the meaning of “historical imagination.”

**Schedule of class meetings with assignments and timetables**

Aug. 29  
Introductions, Orientation: Selecting a Topic and finding a faculty mentor

Sept. 12  

Sept. 19  
Prepare and hand in a one page discussion of topic/question, with preliminary list of sources and secondary readings

Oct. 6  Prepare and hand in a rather complete list of primary and secondary sources and, in two-three pages, discuss how these sources are central to your paper and will be useful in addressing your research question.


Oct. 24  Prepare and hand in a four page discussion of the historiography (the present state of relevant scholarship) surrounding your topic with a bibliography of important monographs in your area.


Nov. 7  No class; individual appointments instead to discuss progress on paper.


Nov. 21  Discussion of first drafts of proposals (for group A) which have been emailed by Friday Nov. 18, 5 PM to all students.

Nov. 28  Discussion of first drafts of proposals (for group B) which have been emailed by Friday Nov. 25, 5 PM to all students.

Dec. 5  No class; individual meetings

Dec. 12  Papers due; class discussion of “problems” anticipated looking forward.