CUNY Graduate Center Spring 2021
Hist. 84900 - Seminar in American History II  Prof. Thomas Kessner
Tuesdays, 11:45-1:45  Tkessner@gc.cuny.edu

There are two essential responsibilities for this seminar: the preparation of the article length research paper and fully engaged participation in the discussions and critiques of work submitted by other participants.

The objective of this Seminar is for students to expand and refine their skills in research and historical writing by carrying out the research project they proposed in the Fall semester. The required research paper must be a piece of original work on American history, substantially based on primary sources. It should address a clearly defined historiographical problem, be engagingly written, effectively organized and cogently argued.

In class, we will workshop in-progress drafts and discuss craft related topics, research methods and writing strategies. Students will review and critique the works in progress submitted by their colleagues.

For the first two sessions we will discuss the proposals, focusing on methodology, conceptualization and how the proposed work engages the available historical literature. Thereafter we will move to submitting drafts of work in progress for discussion and critique.

Final versions of the paper are due the first week in May. There is a one week grace period.

Course Schedule

Feb 2  Orientation and discussion of proposals and the main suggestions received for the projects in the first semester; course timelines

Feb 9  Discuss your research question, your sources and the present state of your progress in research and writing.

Feb 16 Three page discussion of how your project engages the historiography


Discuss your methodology (research strategy) and any unforeseen problems that you are encountering.
March 2. Submit a segment of your work for critique.
   Critique of two submissions.

March 9. Discuss your work with primary sources – any surprises? Critique of two submissions.

March 16. Discuss possible significance of your findings in light of your research. Critique of two submissions.

March 23. Discussion of secondary sources with which you are in conversation; begin second round of submissions. Critique of two submissions.

April 6. Discussion of relevant research issues; critique of two submissions.

April 13. Discussion of relevant research issues; critique of two submissions.

April 20. Meet individually; review of progress to date.

April 27. Discussion of relevant research issues; critique of two submissions.

May 4. Submit one to two page discussion of provisional conclusions

May 11. Lead discussion of paper and submit final draft.

May 18. Lead discussion of paper and submit final draft.