

History 716
Introductory Colloquium in United States History Since 1865
Spring 2012, Mondays 1:00–3:50 PM
Hamilton 570

Professor Benjamin Waterhouse
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Hamilton 422

Office Hours: Wednesday and Friday, 12–1 and by appointment
(NB: At noon I will be coming from Manning Hall)

Course Description:

This course introduces graduate students in history to the major historiographical trends, themes, and debates that animate the historical profession and the study of the history of the United States since the Civil War. The primary purpose of the course is to survey a representative, yet far from complete, sampling of both recent and classic historical monographs, providing graduate students with a foundation in the field. The readings address major questions of political, social, economic, cultural, and intellectual history, and they challenge students to position their own interests within broader debates. Although the course is designed for Americanists, it is also appropriate for graduate students from other fields who are looking for an introduction to modern U.S. history. The assigned readings are certainly not exhaustive, but the course should provide a foundation upon which students can build when conducting future research, preparing for comprehensive exams, and writing lectures for undergraduate surveys.

History 716 is the second semester of the two-course sequence for first-year graduate students in U.S. history. The course will be conducted in a seminar/discussion format with weekly discussions of shared assigned readings as well as presentations and reviews by students of relevant supplementary readings.

Reviews and Discussion Leading:

Each week, one student will have the opportunity to plan and help lead the discussion of the required reading. In preparation, that student will choose a set of supplemental readings (in consultation with the course instructor) to accompany and enrich the week's assigned text (one or two books, or some combination of books and articles). The student will write a review of the assigned text with reference to the supplemental reading (about 1250 to 1500 words—the typical length and format of a “featured review”), which the student should distribute to the class by email by 8 PM Sunday night before class. During class discussion, that student should expect to foreground the conversation, provide an overview of his or her review, and suggest a set of

questions to guide the discussion. In addition, a *different* student will write a shorter review of the week's reading (750 words, no outside reading required), which she or he should also distribute the night before. That student should also expect to provide "back up" to the student who is leading the discussion.

Assignments:

- 1) Do all the reading and participate actively in class discussion
- 2) Plan and help lead one class discussion
- 3) Write two reviews, one long (1250–1500 words) and one short (750 words)
- 4) Final assignment: A substantive historiographical essay (20–25 pages) on a course-related topic of interest and a selection of books chosen in consultation with the instructor.

Grading:

Participation in class discussion:	25 percent
Long Review and discussion leading:	15 percent
Short Review:	10 percent
Historiographical essay:	50 percent

Seminar Schedule

January 9

Introduction to course: What are the big questions?

Reading: *American History Now*, eds. Eric Foner and Lisa McGirr, Chapters 5 through 8.

January 16: NO CLASS

Unit 1: The American Political Tradition and the Men (Ahem!) Who Made It

January 23

Reading: Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform* (1955); Robert Collins, “The Originality Trap: Hofstadter on Populism” *Journal of American History*, June 1989 (available on JStor)

January 30

Reading: Alan Brinkley, *The End of Reform* (1995)

February 6

Reading: Patricia Sullivan, *Days of Hope: Race and Democracy in the New Deal Era* (1996)

February 13

NB: No Reviews this week.

Reading: Gary Gerstle and Steve Fraser, eds., *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order* (1989)—Introduction, Chapters 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8; and Jefferson Cowie, “The Long Exception: Rethinking the Place of the New Deal in American History”

Unit 2: Orientalism

February 20

Reading: Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues* (2000)

February 27

Reading: Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (2004)

March 5: Have a Happy and Productive Spring Break

Unit 3: Work, Culture, and Society

March 12

Reading: David Brody, *Steelworkers in America: The Nonunion Era* (1960)

March 19

Reading: Jefferson Cowie, *Capital Moves* (2001)

March 26

Reading: Dorothy Sue Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement* (2005)

April 2

Reading: Nancy MacLean, *Freedom is Not Enough: The Opening of the American Workplace* (2008)

Unit 4: Pocketbook Politics

April 9

Reading: Sarah Deutsch, *Women and the City: Gender, Space, and Power in Boston, 1870-1940* (2002)

April 16

Reading: Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (2003)

April 23

Reading: Matthew Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (2006)

May 4: Final Papers Due