

HIST 651:
READING SEMINAR IN AMERICAN HISTORY: AMERICANS IN THE WORLD

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Office Hours:
Tuesday, 1:00pm-2:00pm
Thursday, 1:30pm-2:30pm
Or by appointment

COURSE OVERVIEW

For over a decade, scholars have emphasized the need to place United States history in a broader transnational context, a process that involves transcending the boundaries of the nation state in favor of a more global perspective. This impulse now resonates at every level of our profession: at our professional conferences, in university presses, inside university administrations, and inside hiring committees. This reading seminar will examine the premises, objectives, and results of this ongoing endeavor. We will focus our attention primarily on the twentieth century and we will examine and evaluate innovative scholarship that follows American tourists, artists, music, missionaries, corporations, ideas, values, and goods beyond the borders of the United States and into the world.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- *A Nation Among Nations: America's Place in World History*, Thomas Bender
- *Pacific Connections: The Making of the U.S.-Canadian Borderlands*, Kornel Chang
- *Paths of Empire: Panama and the California Gold Rush*, Aims McGuinness
- *Buffalo Bill in Bologna: The Americanization of the World, 1869-1922*, Robert Rydell and Rob Kroes
- *Consumers' Imperium: The Global Production of American Domesticity*, Kristin Hoganson
- *The Business of Empire: United Fruit, Empire, and U.S. expansionism in Central America*, Jason Colby
- *Alabama in Africa: Booker T. Washington, the German Empire, and the Globalization of the New South*, Andrew Zimmerman
- *Becoming Americans in Paris: Transatlantic Politics and Culture between the World Wars*, Brooke Blower
- *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance Through Twentieth-Century Europe*, Victoria deGrazia
- *Covert Capital: Landscapes of Denial and the Making of U.S. Empire in the Suburbs of Northern Virginia*, Andrew Friedman
- *A Tale of Two Cities: Santo Domingo and New York after 1950*, Jesse Hoffnung-Garskoff

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

GRADE BREAKDOWN: The following elements will constitute your final grade:

Attendance & Participation	(25%)
5 Reading Responses	(25%)
Comparative Book Review	(25%)
Conference Paper & Presentation	(25%)

CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Class **attendance** and **participation** will account for 25% of your final grade. You are expected to come to class prepared to participate in discussions. Consistent lateness or missed classes will negatively affect your overall grade. You should email me in advance if you know you cannot attend class for any reason other than illness.

If you plan on writing a reading response for that week's book, you will also be partly responsible for guiding the discussion that week. Those of you writing reading responses should email me 3-4 questions that you would like to discuss with the class by Wednesday at noon, the day before each class. I will organize and circulate the complete list to the entire class by Wednesday evening.

Each class meeting will be based on three distinct but related discussions. We will begin by orienting ourselves in the argument of the book under consideration. One student will be responsible for leading this portion of the discussion each week. We will assign these responsibilities during the first class meeting. We will then analyze and critique the monograph, paying particular attention to concepts, methodologies, sources, the validity of the author's arguments, and assessments of that scholar's contribution to the broader literature. This discussion will be framed by the questions you contribute beforehand. Finally, we will consider what questions and issues this work suggests for future research, and where we might go from here.

COMPARATIVE ANALYTICAL BOOK REVIEW

You are required to write **one** five-six page comparative book review during the course of the semester. Your review will be based on any two of the assigned readings. Depending on the books you choose, the review will be due on the day we discuss the second book in class. Analytical book reviews are not simply summaries of the book under review. You should certainly provide an overview of the authors' main arguments, but you should also analyze the following aspects of the work: how do these books fit into the broader literature? How successfully does each author make her or his argument? What evidence do the authors use, and what are some of the advantages and disadvantages of using those sources? What contributions has each author made to our understanding of American history by adopting a transnational or global methodology? What other issues have these authors chosen to ignore? Should the authors have addressed other issues? If so what should the authors have included and why? Finally, what possibilities for further research do these books suggest?

READING RESPONSES

You will write **five** two page responses to the readings over the course of the semester. These will be due on the day the book is discussed in class. You can choose which books to respond to, but they should not be the same two books that you choose to formally review. These responses should be brief and to the point and consider the following questions: What contributions has the author made to our understanding of American history by adopting a transnational or global methodology? Was the author successful? What possibilities for further research do these books suggest?

CONFERENCE PAPER

At the end of the semester we will hold our own mini-conference. At the beginning of the semester we will form panels. Together, you and your panel will devise a broad theme and prepare a brief panel proposal. You can choose any theme whatsoever, as long as it addresses the effort to place American history in a global context. Each of you will also prepare a brief (1 paragraph) paper topic proposal, and you will submit the entire panel proposal to me by **Thursday, March 27**. The conference will take place during the final two class meetings of the semester.

Your papers should be exactly 6 pages long (a 15 minute presentation). It should be based on primary sources, and should put forward a new transnational interpretation of a familiar event/moment in American history. These can be somewhat speculative, and good conference papers often are. Use your imagination, but ground your findings in the historical record.

DISCLAIMER

In the event of a major campus emergency, the above requirements, deadlines, and grading policies are subject to changes that may be required by a revised semester calendar. Any such changes in this course will be posted once the course resumes on Blackboard or can be obtained by contacting me via email.

TOPICS & READING ASSIGNMENTS

- Thur. January 16: **Introduction**
- Thur. January 23: **A Global Survey of American History**
A Nation Among Nations: America's Place in World History
- Thur. January 30: **Globalizing American Immigration**
Pacific Connections: The Making of the US-Canadian Borderlands
- Thur. February 6: **Transcontinental Transnationalism in the 19th Century**
Paths of Empire: Panama and the California Gold Rush
- Thur. February 13: **Selling America in the World**
Buffalo Bill in Bologna: The Americanization of the World, 1869-1922
- Thur. February 20: **Selling the World in America**
Consumers' Imperium: The Global Production of American Domesticity
- Thur. February 27: **Transplanting America in Latin America**
The Business of Empire: United Fruit, Empire, & U.S. Expansionism in Central America
- Thur. March 6: **Africa, African-Americans, and the New South**
Alabama in Africa: Booker T. Washington, the German Empire, and the Globalization of the New South
- Thur. March 13: **Transnational Nationalism**
Becoming Americans in Paris: Transatlantic Politics and Culture between the World Wars
- Thur. March 20: **SPRING BREAK-NO CLASS**

- Thur. March 27: **Selling America in Europe**
Irresistible Empire: America's Advance Through Twentieth-Century Europe
- Thur. April 3: **National Security & Empire**
Covert Capital: Landscapes of Denial and the Making of U.S. Empire in the Suburbs of Northern Virginia
- Thur. April 10: **OAH CONFERENCE-NO CLASS**
- Thur. April 17: **Transnational Urban History**
A Tale of Two Cities: Santo Domingo and New York after 1950
- Thur. April 24: **Conference Panel I, II, & III**
- Thur. May 1: **Conference Panel IV & V**

GRADE SCALE

A	93-100
A-	92-90
B+	88-89
B	83-87
B-	82-80
C+	78-79
C	73-77
C-	72-70
D	60-69
F	0-59

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

CHEATING / PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism refers to the reproduction of another's words or ideas without proper attribution. University Regulations contains further information on dishonesty. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are serious offenses, and will be treated as such in this class. **You are expected to produce your own work and to accurately cite all necessary materials.** Cheating, plagiarism, and other dishonest practices will be punished as harshly as Purdue University policies allow. Any instances of academic dishonesty will likely result in a grade of F for the course and notification of the Dean of Students Office.

Please make sure that you are familiar with Purdue's academic integrity policies:

<http://www.purdue.edu/odos/aboutodos/academicintegrity.php>

GRIEF ABSENCE POLICY

Purdue University recognizes that a time of bereavement is very difficult for a student. The University therefore provides the following rights to students facing the loss of a family member through the Grief Absence Policy for Students (GAPS). Students will be excused from classes for funeral leave and given the opportunity to complete missed assignments or assessments in the event of the death of a member of the student's family.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Purdue University is committed to providing equal access and equal opportunity to university courses, activities, and programs for students with disabilities. Students with documented disabilities that substantially limit a major life activity, such as learning, walking, or seeing, may qualify for academic adjustments and/or services. If you have a disability that requires special academic accommodation, please make an appointment to speak with me within the first three weeks of the semester in order to discuss any adjustments. It is the student's responsibility to notify the Disability Resource Center of any impairment/condition that may require accommodations and/or classroom modifications.

To request information about academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, or services, please contact the Disability Resource Center in the Office of the Dean of Students, 830 Young Hall, (765) 494-1247 (V/TTY), drc@purdue.edu.

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT

Purdue University is committed to maintaining a community which recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among its members; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. In pursuit of its goal of academic excellence, the University seeks to develop and nurture diversity. The University believes that diversity among its many members strengthens the institution, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of ideas, and enriches campus life.

Purdue University prohibits discrimination against any member of the University community on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, disability, or status as a veteran. The University will conduct its programs, services and activities consistent with applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and orders and in conformance with the procedures and limitations as set forth in Executive Memorandum No. D-1, which provides specific contractual rights and remedies.

VIOLENT BEHAVIOR POLICY

Purdue University is committed to providing a safe and secure campus environment. Purdue strives to create an educational environment for students and work environment for employees that promote educational and career goals. Violent behavior impedes such goals. Therefore, violent behavior is prohibited in or on any university facility or while participating in any university activity.