

**HIST 65100/AMST 65000**  
**READING SEMINAR IN U. S. HISTORY:**  
**Problems in Modern American History**  
**SPRING 2016**

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Office hours:  
 Wednesdays 9:30-11:00  
 other days/times by appointment

This course is designed to introduce graduate students to the major issues and historiographical debates in United States history from 1877 to the late twentieth century. We will consider the form and substance of historical scholarship on the long 20th century, examining the secondary literature on U. S. politics and social movements. By the end of this course, students should have a firm foundation in the major periods and historical arguments to prepare for preliminary exams and to build a U. S. history survey syllabus from 1877 to the present. Students will be expected to participate actively in the weekly discussions of the reading and to write a series of short analyses of the assigned books and articles.

The following books have been ordered for the course. Feel free to purchase used or electronic copies wherever you may find them. Note that you have free online access to the books by Postel, Molina, Canaday, and Sugrue via Purdue Libraries. Other required readings are cited below and are available without cost in electronic format either on the Blackboard course site or through Purdue Libraries.

1. Charles Postel, *The Populist Vision*
2. Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920*
3. Natalia Molina, *Fit to Be Citizens? Public Health and Race in Los Angeles, 1879-1939*
4. Alan Brinkley, *The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War*
5. Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth Century America*
6. Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*
7. Danielle McGuire, *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance—A New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power*
8. Matt Garcia, *From the Jaws of Victory: The Triumph and Tragedy of Cesar Chavez and the Farm Worker Movement*
9. Robert O. Self, *All in the Family: The Realignment of American Democracy since the 1960s*
10. Michelle Nickerson and Darren Dochuk, eds., *Sunbelt Rising: The Politics of Space, Place, and Region*

**Week 1 (January 12)—Introductions**

**Week 2 (January 19)—Gilded Age Politics**

Charles Postel, *The Populist Vision*

Robert D. Johnston, "The Possibilities of Politics: Democracy in America, 1877 to 1917," in Eric Foner and Lisa McGirr, eds., *American History Now*, pp. 96-124.

**Week 3 (January 26)—Progressive Movements**

Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920*

Charles Postel, "If They Repeal the Progressive Era, Should We Care?" *Journal of the Gilded Age & Progressive Era* 13 (July 2014): 400-10.

Meg Jacobs and Julian Zelizer, "The Democratic Experiment: New Directions in American Political History," in Jacobs, et al., eds., *The Democratic Experiment: New Directions in American Political History*, pp. 1-19. Available on line here: <http://press.princeton.edu/chapters/s7644.html>

**Week 4 (February 2)—Immigration and Citizenship**

Natalia Molina, *Fit to Be Citizens? Public Health and Race in Los Angeles, 1879-1939*

"Future Directions in American Immigration and Ethnic History," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 25 (Summer 2006). Select from articles by Mae Ngai, Matthew Jacobson, Dirk Hoerder, Virginia Yans, Joe Trotter, David Hollinger, Nancy Foner, Hasia Diner, and Ruben Rumbault.

Mae Ngai, "Immigration and Ethnic History," in Eric Foner and Lisa McGirr, eds., *American History Now*, pp. 358-75.

#### **Week 5 (February 9)—Political Economy and Citizenship in the New Deal Era**

Alan Brinkley, *The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War*

Jeff Cowie and Nick Salvatore, "The Long Exception: Rethinking the Place of the New Deal in American History," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 74 (Fall 2008): 3-32. Select from responses by Kevin Boyle, Michael Kazin, Jennifer Klein, David Montgomery, and Nancy MacLean (pp. 33-69).

#### **Week 6 (February 16)—Gender, Sexuality, and the State**

Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth Century America*

Leisa Meyer, "Interrupting Norms and Constructing Deviances: Competing Frameworks in the Histories of Sexualities in the United States," in S. Jay Kleinberg, et al., eds., *The Practice of U. S. Women's History*, pp. 280-307.

Joanne Meyerowitz, "Transnational Sex and U. S. History," *American Historical Review* 114 (December 2009): 1273-86.

#### **Week 7 (February 23) — no class meeting**

#### **Week 8 (March 1) — Postwar Politics of Race and Place in the Urban North**

Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*

Lizabeth Cohen, "From Town Center to Shopping Center: The Reconfiguration of Community Marketplaces in Postwar America," *American Historical Review* 101 (October 1996): 1050-81.

Robert Self and Thomas Sugrue, "The Power of Place: Race, Political Economy, and Identity in the Postwar Metropolis," in Jean-Christophe Agnew and Roy Rosenzweig, eds., *A Companion to Post-1945 America*, pp. 20-43.

#### **Week 9 (March 8)—Black Freedom Movement**

Danielle McGuire, *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance—A New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power*

Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *Journal of American History* 91 (March 2005): 1233-63.

Kevin Gaines, "The Historiography of the Struggle for Black Equality since 1945," in Jean-Christophe Agnew and Roy Rosenzweig, eds., *A Companion to Post-1945 America*, pp. 211-34.

#### **Week 10 (March 15)—spring break/no class meeting**

#### **Week 11 (March 22) —Labor in the 1960s and 1970s**

Matt Garcia, *From the Jaws of Victory: The Triumph and Tragedy of Cesar Chavez and the Farm Worker Movement*

Dorothy Sue Cobble, "'A Spontaneous Loss of Enthusiasm': Workplace Feminism and the Transformation of Women's Service Jobs in the 1970s," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 56 (Fall 1999): 23-44.

Joseph A. McCartin, "A Wagner Act for Public Workers': Labor's Deferred Dream and the Rise of Conservatism, 1970-1976," *Journal of American History* 95 (June 2008): 123-148.

Katherine Turk, "Out of the Revolution, into the Mainstream: Employment Activism in the NOW Sears Campaign and the Growing Pains of Liberal Feminism," *Journal of American History* 97 (September 2010): 339-423.

#### **Week 12 (March 29) —no class meeting**

#### **Week 13 (April 5) — Politics and Culture at the End of the Century**

Robert O. Self, *All in the Family: The Realignment of American Democracy since the 1960s*

Kim Phillips-Fein, "1973 to the Present," in Eric Foner and Lisa McGirr, eds., *American History Now*, pp. 175-97.

Nancy MacLean, "Postwar Women's History: The 'Second Wave' or the End of the Family Wage," in Jean-Christophe Agnew and Roy Rosenzweig, eds., *A Companion to Post-1945 America*, pp. 235-59.

**Week 14 (April 12)—Postwar Politics of Space and Place in the South and West**

Michelle Nickerson and Darren Dochuk, eds., *Sunbelt Rising: The Politics of Space, Place, and Region*

**Week 15 (April 19) —New Approaches to Politics, Citizenship, and the State in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

"Historians and the Carceral State: A Special Issue," *Journal of American History* 102 (June 2015): 18-184. Articles by Kelly Lytle Hernández, Khalil Gibran Muhammad, Heather Thompson, Kali Gross, Jeffrey Adler, Miroslava Chávez-García, Timothy Stewart-Winter, Robert Chase, Julilly Kohler-Hausmann, Elizabeth Hinton, Alex Lichtenstein, Matthew Lassiter, Torrie Hester, Micol Seigel, Donna Murch, and Edward Escobar.

**Week 16 (April 26) — Conclusions**

**ASSIGNMENTS**

**Reading:**

The reading consists of a monograph or essay collection (and a historiographical or substantive article or two) each week. Active, critical discussion in class will play an important role in this course. Participation in the seminar is essential to the teaching/learning process and to your grade. It is not so much that I want you to speak for the sake of speaking, but that I want you to accept some responsibility for engaging others and for the energy and focus of the seminar. Some people will always be shyer and some more talkative than others but everyone should come prepared each week having not only read the assigned materials, but also having thought about them and prepared some questions or responses—even if you choose not to submit a reading response paper or review essay that week.

**Writing:**

The writing assignments will be discussed in greater detail in class, but here are some observations about their goals and purposes. Among the questions we will ask of our readings, both individually and collectively, are: what approaches do the authors take methodologically and theoretically? What historiographical traditions do the books follow or reshape? What sources do they use and how do they use them? What contributions do the books and articles make to social history, political history, social movement history, legal history, labor history, gender history and other historical sub-specialties? These sorts of questions should drive your writing for the course, both the more informal response papers and the more formal comparative critiques.

■ Every week, please email one-to-three discussion questions to the class using the course email list— [spring-2016-amst-65000-021-xlst@lists.purdue.edu](mailto:spring-2016-amst-65000-021-xlst@lists.purdue.edu)—by Monday at 7 pm. These questions should relate to what you've read, can be cumulative—bringing in previous weeks' reading—and should be designed to stimulate group discussion and/or to clarify significant issues.

■ You will write five two-page (550-700 words) responses to the readings over the course of the semester. These responses are due in electronic or hard copy on the day the reading/book is discussed in class. You decide which readings/books you will respond but they should not be the same books that you select for the comparative reviews. In these more informal response papers you should do more than write a précis (abstract or summary) of what you've read. Also consider how the historian treats certain themes or sources. What did you find most interesting and compelling? What was successful? What was less effective in argument, evidence, and execution? You could explicitly compare and contrast the arguments or frameworks of different historians. You could respond to one or more of the goals mentioned in the writing paragraph above. These are informal writing exercises. Relax and take risks. But please don't just free associate—keep your eye on specific readings. The responses should provide the basis for your participation in discussion.

■ You also will write two four-page (1100-1400 words) comparative reviews during the semester. Each review should be based on, engage, and compare and contrast the reading for two weeks. These two papers should be

more formal review essays similar in design and content to book reviews for journals like the *Journal of American History*, *Reviews in American History* and *American Quarterly*. These essays are due (electronic format—email attachments are okay) on the day we discuss the second reading.

**GRADING**

Class discussion (questions and participation):	45 per cent
5 Reading responses:	30 per cent
2 Comparative reviews:	25 per cent