

HISTORY 285

SPRING 2013

U.S. Cultural and Intellectual History: Global Contexts

Fridays 2:00-4:00
2303 Dwinelle

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office hours, most Fridays 12:00-2:00, or by appointment

In this course, we will explore topics that relate to or could be informed by considering the transnational and/or international dimensions of United States cultural and intellectual history. The subject matter of the class is broad, and students are encouraged to bring a creative attitude to exploring the question of how trans- or international connections grow out of but also continually reshape life at home. The primary goal of the course is for students to develop and write an original research paper. In addition to course meetings, I will meet each of you individually to delve into questions that come up as you do your research and writing. A successful paper would be a *first draft* of a publishable paper or could develop into a chapter of your dissertation.

There are no assigned readings at this point. As we discuss our research interests and topics, I will ask each of you to suggest articles or short excerpts from books that are important for your topics and might be useful models for the work we want to do. I will suggest materials for our collective work that I think might be helpful. You might also look at the following books if you are interested in thinking about historical methods as you prepare for the class:

Gabrielle M. Spiegel, ed., *Practicing History: New Directions in Historical Writing after the Linguistic Turn*

Peter Karsten and John Modell, eds., *Theory, Method, and Practice in Social and Cultural History*

Peter Burke, ed., *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*

The blog of the Society for U.S. Intellectual History is filled with lots of lively and interesting discussion, and the site has a good archive. Its URL is <http://us-intellectual-history.blogspot.com/>

None of the above is required for the course. The only requirements are writing an original research paper and coming to class meetings to help each other strengthen the work you are all doing. The timeline for the course follows, but it provides a timeline for activities that can change as we feel would be helpful to the big goals of providing a supportive environment for getting our papers done. I have one out-of-town trip in March and two in April, and the schedule works around the periods when I will be away. All of you are encouraged to contact me to schedule one-on-one discussions whenever you feel that this would help you.

JAN 25 -- ***Discussion of student interests and topic for research paper. Review of class schedule and goals.***

FEB 1 -- ***Presentation and discussion of articles important for student research interests.***

FEB 8 -- ***Continued presentation and discussion of articles important for student research interests.***

FEB 15 -- ***No class meeting, work on research topic.***

FEB 22 -- ***No class meeting, work on research topic.***

MAR 1 -- ***Brief bibliography due, listing secondary literature and potential primary sources relevant to research topic. Reports on research and reading.***

MAR 8 -- ***No class meeting, work on research topic.***

MAR 15 -- ***No class meeting, work on research topic.***

MAR 22 -- ***First (tentative) outlines due. Reports on the outlines.***

MAR 29 -- SPRING BREAK

APR 5 -- ***Annotated bibliography due. Search out, read, and annotate selections that are particularly helpful for the planned research. Reports on the bibliographies.***

APR 12 -- ***Extended outline due (submit electronically). No class meeting, work on research topic***

APR 19 -- ***Presentation of 20-minute papers, comment, and discussion. Class can extend an extra hour to 5:00 if needed.***

APR 26 -- ***No class meeting, work on first draft of paper.***

MAY 3 -- ***First draft submitted for critique. Reports on first drafts, problems that arose in writing, solutions found, and continuing concerns.***

MAY 17 -- FINAL DRAFT DUE (submit electronically)

Drafts will be returned electronically with comments by the end of May.

As we review our own work, as well as the work of each other, we might consider some of the following questions:

- How effectively are the historical questions posed?
- What's the argument?
- When and what context is it stated?
- How effective are the different types of evidence used to support the positions argued in the paper?
- Do theoretical concepts applied seem appropriate to the subject under discussion? Is there a critical evaluation of the potential limits to theory and concepts referenced?
- Does the analysis deepen understanding of the historical situations discussed and the causes of the change the author identifies?
- Does the conclusion flow from what preceded?
- What do illustrations, tables, and other supporting materials add?
- What will need to be done to make the paper more interesting to read and to make the argument more powerful?