

History 109

Who is an American?

Department of History
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Fall 2019
MWF, 1:20-2:10
1121 Mosse Humanities

Prof. Stephen Kantrowitz
Office: 5119 Humanities
Office phone: 263-1844
Student Hours: Fri, 10-12
skantrow@wisc.edu

Ned Frame (TA)
4272 Humanities
263-1939
Fri, 11-1
eframe@wisc.edu

Brad Woods (TA)
4272 Humanities
941-448-0636
Thu 8:50-9:40, 9:55-10:45
bdwoods@wisc.edu

This is the course syllabus. It explains the expectations, requirements, assignments, and schedule of class and section meetings that together constitute the semester's work. We've put a hardcopy in your hands on the first day to emphasize its importance. It is also available to view, download, and print on Canvas; that version contains live links to some class resources. **Look here first for answers to your questions about the course.**

Course Topic

Who is an American? How has the answer to that question changed over time? Whose actions and ideas have shaped those answers? This course explores these questions through two distinct but related concepts. The first is *citizenship*: the laws, institutions, and practices that determine formal membership in a nation's political body. The second is *belonging*: the informal but powerful sense, shaped by emotion, experience, and interaction, of the degree to which one is (or is recognized as) a member of the national community.

This course is not an overview of U.S. history such as you probably had in high school. Instead, it focuses on about a dozen topics, usually for two or three class meetings each, moving only partly chronologically from the Revolutionary era to the present. Each unit is organized by a question (for more about this see below) that you should consider as you read and as you take part in class meetings.

Studying History at the College Level

This course is meant to challenge and deepen your understanding of United States history. You will confront many things, among them upsetting words, images, and ideas drawn from the national past. We will do our collective best to contextualize and interpret these materials without embracing or perpetuating their ugliness.

Studying history is not about memorizing names and dates, but about thoughtfully weaving those specifics into verifiable stories (narratives) that help make sense of broader patterns of interaction, continuity, and change (analyses). Every story should convey meaning. Every story will be incomplete. (For more on what History Department courses are designed to teach you, see "Goals of the Major" on the last page of this document.)

This understanding of history as narrative and analysis shapes many aspects of the course. There is no exam such as you may be familiar with from your previous courses. When you come to class or section, or when you sit down to do the reading, your undivided attention should be on the material's arguments, methods, and complexities—not whether a particular fact will be on the exam.

The principles and policies of the course, enumerated below, are designed to promote that focus.

1. *Open-book, open-note assignments*

All course assignments will be open-book and open-note. There are no timed tests. We're much less interested in what you don't know than in how well you can make sense of what you've read and learned. Unless we specifically tell you otherwise, however, you must complete assignments by yourself, and all the work in them must be your own (for more on this, see the academic misconduct policy).

2. *Eyes and ears on the material and the people in the room with you*

We all know what happens when we have both a screen and an internet connection available. Non-classroom activities on a screen do more than take you away from the course; they create a cone of distraction around and behind you. I'm not up on a high horse here: this policy reflects my awareness of my own frailty.

You don't need to transcribe what's going on in the classroom to understand it; in fact, there's some evidence to suggest that this is counter-productive, even when you're not multi-tasking. We will provide outlines and lists of keywords for each class meeting; we'll then post all of these in pdf on Learn@UW.

Your job during our class meetings is to make sure you understand the main arguments and topics, to think about what your teachers and classmates are saying, and to craft your own responses. You'll do this better by thoughtfully listening, taking selective notes, and asking questions than by trying to catch every word the professor says. That may or may not be true in your other courses, but it is true here.

In principle, the two above paragraphs constitute an argument against laptops in the classroom. In the past, this has been my policy. On the other hand, I recognize that learning styles vary, and that some people may need a keyboard/screen interface to process information.

So here's the deal: you may, if you wish, use a laptop in this course. If you do, **you must turn off the wifi before lecture (or discussion section) begins and not turn it back on until lecture ends.** The TAs will sit at the back of the hall and monitor laptop use. If you turn your wifi on, your TA will take note, ask you to shut it down, and inform me. If this occurs a second time, you will lose your laptop privileges for the remainder of the semester. But this is not a blanket policy that everyone gets one warning: that's no way to run a classroom. If we get to the point where three people have been warned, the entire class will go "on warning"; at this point, the policy will become one strike and your laptop is out.

Phones and other devices—watches, tablets, toasters, whatever—must be silenced and set not to vibrate (on an iPhone, for example, use the "do not disturb" setting) **and** placed out of sight and out of reach. If the message you are waiting for is so important that it can't remain unread or unanswered for fifty minutes, don't come to class that day.

3. *Reading attentively and interactively*

You may find the reading load heavy. During most weeks it is less than 100 pages, although occasionally (e.g., *The Melting Pot*, week 9) it goes over that. You'll want to look ahead and see what each week (or day) requires, and do the readings with the week's question in mind. (I first taught this course to Danish students, who did the reading in their second or third language. If they could do it, you can do it.)

Course Learning Outcomes

This course is designed to teach you to

- Read, interpret, and contextualize historical sources and historical scholarship
- Write clear and effective historical arguments based in evidence and scholarship
- Understand the complexities and transformations of American citizenship since the Revolutionary era
- Evaluate contemporary arguments and debates about the history of citizenship

These outcomes can in turn help you develop the skills described in the History Department's Goals of the History Major.

Practical Matters

Readings and Materials

History is a text-intensive discipline. Bring the relevant reading with you to every class and section meeting. We will often be looking at texts, writing about them, and discussing them during class. You will be lost without them.

There are two required readings for this course:

- 1) A (large) course packet, available at the [L&S Copy Center](#), 6120 Social Science (Observatory Drive);
- 2) A book, Mae Ngai's *Impossible Subjects*, available at [Room of One's Own](#), 315 W. Gorham. This link will take you to our course page on A Room of One's Own's website, where you can pay for your coursebooks in advance. You can choose to have books held for you at their service desk or shipped to you (shipments will go out at the start of September). The bookstore plans to be completely stocked by or before the first day of class.

The book and reader together are considerably less expensive than most US history textbooks (or the four or five books I have assigned in the past). You may reduce costs further by sharing materials with a classmate; in that case, you should do so *with someone in your discussion section*, then sit next to them in section and in class so that you always have access to the readings. At many points during the semester we will work together on these readings, including in lecture, so it's important that you have a physical copy of the materials with you to read, mark up, and discuss.

You'll need two other things:

- something to write with
- a small stack of 4x6 index cards (lined or unlined)

Credit, Expectations, and Attendance

This 4-credit course meets as a group for 4 hours per week (according to UW-Madison's credit hour policy, each 50-minute class counts as one hour). The course also carries the expectation that you will spend an average of at least 2 hours outside of class for every hour in the classroom. In other words, in addition to class time, plan to allot an average of at least 8 hours per week for reading, writing, preparing for discussions, and/or studying for quizzes and exams for this course.

It's been said that 80% of success is just showing up, but in this course the figure is a bit lower: attendance in lecture will determine 16% of your course grade. The reason we keep track of this is not because we don't respect your adulthood (although it's worth remembering that employers and supervisors out in the wider world do, in fact, take attendance) but because course meetings make up the analytical spine of the course.

We do not provide class notes beyond the outlines, keywords, and images or other material provided to everyone via Learn@UW. If you do have to miss a class meeting, you should make sure to obtain a classmate's notes. **Do not ask the professor or teaching assistant to give you a recap of what you missed.**

Attendance in section is required, and more than one unexcused absence will significantly affect your section grade, which makes up 20% of your final grade.

Accommodation

We will make every effort to accommodate students' documented needs. Students requiring accommodation must work through the McBurney Center and alert the professor and TA well before the first time they require such accommodation, ideally during the first two weeks of the semester.

Communication and Office Hours

Online scheduling of office hours has been disabled for faculty (don't ask me to explain), so we're going analog: I'll bring an office-hour sign-up sheet to lecture. Drop-ins are welcome, first-come, first-served.

I will make every effort to respond to student emails within 24 hours, with the following caveats: 1) messages received Friday afternoon may not receive a response until Monday morning; 2) If you do not receive a reply at all, it is probably because your question can be answered by reading this syllabus.

Assignments and Assessment

All reading assignments should be completed before the relevant class meeting.

Our weekly practice is the **50-word assignment**. This is based on the work of my retired colleague Prof. Charles Cohen; his explanation of it is available on Canvas. Limiting your answers to fifty words forces you to make hard choices about meaning, language, and style--the essential qualities of effective writing. During the first weeks of the semester, fifty words will be a limit. Once you've learned how to work at this length, from week 6 on, answers must be *exactly* fifty words. You must submit these to Canvas by Noon, Wednesday of the relevant week and bring them to section in **hardcopy**.

The Past as Prologue

Sometime between Oct. 15 and Dec. 2, submit an essay of 200-250 words that uses one or two course readings to illuminate, explain, contextualize, or challenge a current newspaper or magazine story that involves our key topics and/or concepts. Make sure to use the skills you have developed through the 50-word assignments—i.e., make a concise argument and sustain it with evidence. **Required. 10%**

Final Take-Home Assignment

This open-book, open-note essay assignment will cover material from the entire course and will ask you to synthesize what you have learned. You may confer with classmates as you prepare to write, but once you begin writing all work must be entirely your own. The essay is due in Canvas no later than Dec. 16 at 4:45pm (the end of the scheduled exam block). Further information around Thanksgiving. **Required. 20%**

Written work must be prepared and submitted to Canvas:

- with your **name** at the top left of the first page.
- in a 12-point font, double-spaced, with 1-inch left and right margins.
- with an accurate **word-count** at the end of the text.
- after having been **carefully proofread**, not just spell-checked. Don't turn in a paper that claims that "White women who lived on plantains were usually proslavery." (The writer meant "plantations." I hope.)
- to the appropriate Assignment folder in Canvas, in a Word or Word-compatible document (**.doc, .docx, or .txt**, not .pdf, .pages, or other formats).

All students are encouraged to make use of **The History Lab**, a help center staffed by History Ph.D. students and available to undergraduates working on papers or research projects about the past. The Lab focuses on honing students' ability to form suitable topics, conduct research, develop arguments and thesis statements, cite evidence properly, and write using an effective process. The Lab offers support to native English speakers and English-language learners. The History Lab is located in Mosse Humanities 4255, just around the corner from the TA offices. Students are welcome to drop in, but it's best to make an appointment, either by visiting <http://go.wisc.edu/hlab> or calling (608) 890-3309.

Late Work and Missed Exercises

Things happen. You have one "free pass" to submit work a little late (48 hours) without further explanation. Further missed deadlines are only excused if you provide a note from a medical professional or dean. In the absence of such a note, your work will be marked down by 10% of its maximum possible grade each day that it is late.

Academic Responsibility

Everything you submit to us must be your own work. Appropriation of another person's work or ideas without citation always constitutes plagiarism, whether or not you reproduce their words exactly. If you do repeat someone else's words, you must use quotation marks and must cite the relevant author, work,

and page numbers (either in parentheses or in a footnote). If you closely paraphrase another writer or rely on his or her ideas, you must similarly acknowledge your debt with an appropriate citation. Clear guidelines for the use and citation of sources are available on the UW-Madison Writing Center's website [here](#) and [here](#). If you remain uncertain about these rules and responsibilities, ask! We will refer **every case** of suspected plagiarism or other academic misconduct to the Office of the Dean of Students.

Grades

Your final grade will be determined as follows:

Discussion section attendance and participation	20%
In-class notecard assignments	16%
3 (no more than) fifty-word assignments @3% (Weeks 1-2, 3, 4)	9%
5 (exactly) fifty-word assignments @5% (chosen from Weeks 6-14)	25%
"Past as Prologue" (due Dec. 2)	10%
Final Take-Home Essay (due Dec. 16 at 4:45pm)	20%

Schedule of Lectures, Readings, and Assignments

Our "weeks" begin with the Friday lecture, continue through the Monday and Wednesday lectures, and conclude with section meetings on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday.

All reading assignments should be completed ahead of the lecture for which they are assigned.

Remember to bring the day's readings to each class in hardcopy.

Week 1-2 What is history? What is citizenship? What is a nation?

9/4 Weds	First class day Assignment: By 8pm, Thursday 9/5, take the First Week Quiz on Canvas
9/6 Fri	Read: Gruesz, "America"
9/9 Mon	Read: Anderson, "Imagined Communities," 1-7; Foner, "Who is an American?"
9/11 Weds	Read: U.S. Constitution, Bill of Rights, and Naturalization Act of 1790

Write: In one sentence of no more than 50 words, answer the following question: As best you can tell by reading the Constitution, Bill of Rights (the first ten amendments), and Naturalization Act of 1790, whom did the Constitution's authors mean when they referred to "the people"? Base your argument entirely on evidence from the texts. Due no later than Noon, Wed. 9/11. **Required. 3%**

NOTE: Sections begin meeting Wednesday, 9/4 (first class day)

Week 3 How has the interaction between Native Americans and settlers shaped the meaning of "American"?

9/13 Fri	Read: Turner, "Significance of the Frontier" (1893)
9/16 Mon	Read: "Speech of John W. Quinney" (1854)
9/18 Weds	Read: Singer, "Indian States of America"

Write: In one sentence of no more than 50 words, answer the week's title question with reference to the assigned readings. **Required. 3%**

Week 4 How did slavery shape African American citizenship?

9/20 Fri	Read: American Colonization Society, "Memorial" (1820); Walker, <i>Appeal</i> (1830)
9/23 Mon	Read: Nikole Hannah-Jones, lead essay, the 1619 project (<i>New York Times</i> , Aug. 14, 2019): https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/black-history-american-democracy.html Watch/listen: Rhae Lynn Barnes, "The Birth of Blackface Minstrelsy and the Rise of Stephen Foster": http://ushistoryscene.com/article/birth-of-blackface/
9/25 Weds	Read: Douglass, "Oration (What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?)" (1852); <i>Dred Scott v. Sandford</i> , selections (1857)

Write: A sentence of no more than 50 words in response to the question. **Required. 3%**

Week 5 Reconstruction and the Revolution in American Citizenship

9/27 Fri	No lecture (Prof. Kantrowitz at a conference)
9/30 Mon	No lecture (Rosh Hashanah)
10/2 Weds	Read: Civil Rights Act (1866); Fourteenth Amendment (1866-68); Elliott, Speech on the Civil Rights Bill (1874)

Beginning with Week 6, no particular 50-word writing assignment is required; however, you must submit five assignments of *exactly* 50 words during the remaining weeks of the course. These are due in the dropbox no later than Wednesday at Noon of the appropriate week. These will be worth **5% each**.

Week 6 Were free women citizens in the 19th century?

10/4 Fri	Read: Kerber, "Meanings of Citizenship"; "Declaration of Sentiments" (1848)
10/7 Mon	Read: Read: Cott, "Marriage and Women's Citizenship"

10/9 Weds **No lecture (Yom Kippur)**

Write: A sentence of *exactly* 50 words in response to the question. **5%**.

Week 7 How have Native Americans experienced U.S. nationhood and U.S. citizenship?

10/11 Fri Read: Kantrowitz, "Citizens Clothing"

10/14 Mon Read: Deloria, "American Master Narratives and the Problem of Indian Citizenship"

10/16 Weds Read: Cothran, "Enduring Legacy"

Write: A sentence of *exactly* 50 words in response to the question. **5%**.

Week 8 How has the U.S. decided who may become a citizen?

10/18 Fri **No lecture**

10/21 Mon Read: Hester, Mendoza, Moloney, and Ngai, "Now the Trump administration is trying to punish legal immigrants for being poor," *Washington Post*, Aug. 9, 2018

Read: Emma Lazarus, "The New Colossus" (1883)

Listen: Ken Cuccinelli, Director of USCIS, on NPR, Aug. 13, 2019 (8 minutes)

10/23 Weds Read: Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*, 1-12; Haney López, *White by Law*, xiii-34

Write: A sentence of *exactly* 50 words in response to the question. **5%**

Week 9 How does history shape how people experience belonging?

10/25 Fri Read: Zangwill, "The Melting Pot"

10/28 Mon Read: DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903)

Read: Evans, *The Klan's Fight for Americanism* (1926)

10/30 Weds Read: Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, ch. 1

Write: A sentence of *exactly* 50 words in response to the question.

Week 10 What is "alien citizenship"?

11/1 Fri Read: Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, ch. 2

11/4 Mon Read: Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, ch. 4

11/6 Wed Read: Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, ch. 5

Write: A sentence of *exactly* 50 words in response to the question. **5%**.

Week 11 Who decides what is "Un-American"?

11/8 Fri Listen: Robeson, "Ballad for Americans" (1940)

Read: Robeson, Testimony before House Committee on Un-American Activities (1956)

Watch: "Red Nightmare" (1962)

11/11 Mon Read: Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, ch. 6

11/13 Weds Canaday, "Building a Straight State"

Write: A sentence of *exactly* 50 words in response to the question. **5%**.

Week 12 How did the Civil Rights Movement redefine citizenship and belonging?

11/15 Fri Read: Baldwin, "Letter to my Nephew" (1963)

Watch: James Baldwin debates William Buckley (1965)

11/18 Mon Read: King, "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"

11/20 Weds Read: TBA

Write: A sentence of *exactly* 50 words in response to the question. **5%**.

Week 13 How has the border shaped workers' lives?

11/22 Fri Read: Bosniak, "Opposing Prop. 187"

Listen: "They got hurt at work. Then they got deported," NPR, 8/16/17

11/25 Mon Read: Kobach, "Attrition Through Enforcement"

Read: Hester, "Deportability and the Carceral State"
11/27 Weds **No Lecture**

Write: A sentence of *exactly* 50 words in response to the question. **5%**.

Note: Sections will not meet Weds 11/27-Friday 11/29 (Thanksgiving break)

Week 14 How does the language of "terrorism" shape citizenship and belonging?

11/29 Fri **No Lecture**

12/2 Mon Read: Volpp, "The Citizen and the Terrorist"

12/4 Weds Read: Bayoumi, *How Does It Feel to Be a Problem?*, 13-44

Write: A sentence of *exactly* 50 words in response to the question. **5%**.

Week 15 What is "white nationalism"? What is "white supremacy"?

12/6 Fri Read: TBA

12/9 Mon Read: TBA

12/11 Weds Final class day