

**History 600: Advanced Seminar in History
History Through the Commodity
University of Wisconsin, Madison--Spring 2008**

Prof. Nan Enstad
Tuesdays 11-1 Humanities 5345
email: nenstad@wisc.edu
office phone: 263-1846
office: Humanities 5113

office hours: T 1:30-3:30pm
and by appointment

The Seminar

This course is the capstone of the history major. The central, shared goal of the seminar is for each of us to develop, research, and write an original piece of history scholarship. By the end of the semester, we will each produce a paper approximately 20 pages in length that is based on primary sources and makes an original contribution to historical knowledge. This research paper is, therefore, most likely quite different from any paper you have done before. Because this course is demanding and intensive, requiring a great deal of independent work outside of class, plan to make this seminar the focal point of your semester. Though much of this work is inevitably done independently, we pursue it as a community of researchers and writers. We learn how to shape topics, do research, analyze sources, and write papers in dialogue with others who are doing the same thing. Plan to be interacting consistently with each other so that we can all help each other succeed. You are not competing with each other: it is possible for everyone to earn an A in this course.

Our Research Question

Our most general research question for this seminar is: how have commodities shaped life in the United States and how have people shaped and influenced commodities and their meanings? Over the past 150 years of history in the United States, commodities available for personal purchase have proliferated dramatically, affecting almost every aspect of our lives. Historical studies have increasingly turned to the commodity as subject matter in order to pursue a wide range of more specific questions. Historical studies we will read will begin with a commodity to explore questions related to labor, production, marketing, environmental change, individual and group identity formation, consumer movements, global capitalist networks, and more. Using these historical studies as models, each of us will create a focused and viable research question, within our shared, general question, that we will pursue through the semester.

Finding a Topic

Finding a topic that is original and workable is one of the most challenging aspects of this course. A good topic will make your work this semester easier and more fun. A topic that doesn't really work will make more work for you at every turn. You will likely revise and refine your topic and research question many times, working back and forth between a) your interests; b) available primary sources; c) existing historical literature on the topic. Finding a topic almost always involves a lot of browsing—in library shelves (including the reference section), the internet, and in primary sources. The best topics usually are ones that you arrive at after considerable revision and research, and often are ones that you did not anticipate or even know about when you started out. Please plan to put time, energy, reading, digging, and many conversations into finding and refining a topic in the several weeks of the semester.

Common Readings

We will read and discuss a number of works in common with three purposes: we will obtain a base of historical understanding of how the U.S. has changed in relationship to commodities; we will get ideas about ways to explore this large topic through specific topics; and we will gain valuable models into what a history research paper should contain. Therefore, the readings are a key part of this course and we will delve into them in depth. We will read books at the beginning of the semester, while formulating and refining topics, but will shift to shorter, article-length pieces as we enter into the research and writing phases of the paper. We also will read one book which contains a guide to research and writing as well as a style manual. Please note: We each will do *lots* of other reading this semester in secondary and primary sources related to our papers.

Three books are available for purchase at Room of One's Own Bookstore (307 W. Johnson St.):
Mona Domosh, *American Commodities in an Age of Empire* (2006).
John Soluri, *Banana Cultures: Agriculture, Consumption and Environmental Change in Honduras and the United States* (2005).
Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, 7th Edition*.
Revised by Booth, Colomb and Williams (2007) (**MUST BE THIS EDITION!**).

A Packet of 6 articles is available on library e-reserves. Contents listed at back of syllabus.

Grades and Requirements

Your grade for the semester will be calculated as follows:

- Preparation for and participation in seminar meetings—50%
This includes seminar discussions and all assignments *except* the three assignments directly related to your paper (delineated below). We will have assignments almost weekly designed to teach skills of research and critical analysis. Some of these assignments will be due on our learn@uw site. We will also give written feedback to each other at key points of the semester.
- Seminar paper—50%
This includes the Topic Synopsis with Explanation and Bibliography; the Plan of Argument; the first draft; and, of course, the final paper.

All assignments are due at the beginning of the seminar meeting or before. Because our work is all about process and collaboration, no late assignments will be accepted. Likewise, attendance is required.

A Note on Plagiarism

Plagiarism is utilizing the work of others (not just the words) without properly citing it. There are three main reasons plagiarism happens: 1) someone intentionally copies another's work; 2) someone does not understand fully what constitutes plagiarism; 3) someone has kept poor notes and, when writing, unintentionally blurs the boundary between another's words or ideas and their own. Make sure you understand what plagiarism is! This is your responsibility. Please see http://turnitin.com/research_site/e_what_is_plagiarism.html. Make sure you take careful notes that will clearly reveal upon later use when you were copying down a quote, when you were summarizing, and when you were making your own notation about material.

Course Schedule

Week 1 January 22

Introductions

Historical society library and archive tour

Week 2 January 29

Reading: Domosh, *American Commodities* pp. 1-142 required; pp. 143-195 recommended.
Turabian, pp. 3-35; 129-130.

Assignment: Write a summary of Domosh's thesis in *either* chapter 3 or chapter 4 in no more than 200 words. Bring to class to hand in.

Assignment: Post a short paragraph of premeditated response to Domosh's book to our learn@uw website. Please shape your paragraph around one particular question or issue you were interested in. ("How" or "why" questions are great; please do not post a "more information" question.)

Week 3 February 5

Reading: Soluri, pp. 1-103
Turabian pp. 36-61

Assignment: Write a summary of Soluri's thesis in chapters 1, 2 OR 3 in no more than 150 words.

Assignment: Post a how or why question about Soluri's book to learn@uw.

Assignment: Utilize the database America: History and Life to find a book review of Soluri's book, or an article that Soluri has published. Print the record and bring to class.

Assignment: Conduct a search in Madcat and in Arcat for historical information about a commodity that we have discussed so far. (That is, search in the regular library catalog and the historical society's archive catalog.) Find a secondary source that you would be interested in reading, print the record and bring to class. Also, find a primary source or collection that looks intriguing, print the record and bring to class.

Week 4 February 12

Reading: Soluri, pp. 128-245

Assignment: Initial statements of topics. Come up with two possible topics that you might wish to explore for your research paper. Write up a paragraph about each, including what question you would ask and what kinds of primary sources you could use to answer that question.

Week 5 February 19

Reading: [Packet] Glickman, "Make Lisle the Style"; Price, "When Women Were Women"

Assignment: Analyze the primary sources that Glickman uses in his article. What kinds of sources are they and where are they found? Type out a bibliography of his primary sources and look them up to see which of them is available here at UW. Mark that on the bibliography.

Assignment: Obtain a primary source that is significant to one of your topic ideas and write a primary source analysis of it (see guideline).

Week 6 February 26

Reading: [Packet] Cosgrove, "The Zoot Suit and Style Warfare"

Assignment: learn@uw assignment TBA

Assignment: Write a revised statement of topic (one page) and attach a briefly annotated bibliography of at least two secondary sources and four primary sources. These should be sources you actually have located and seen.

Week 7 March 4

Reading: [Packet] Jain, "Preface [excerpt]" "Introduction [excerpt]" and "Come Up to the 'Kool' Taste"; Brandt, "Engineering Consumer Confidence in the Twentieth Century"

Assignment: learn@uw assignment TBA

Week 8 March 11

Assignment: Topic Synopsis With Explanation and Bibliography Due. Please post to learn@uw website and put a hard copy in my mailbox by Monday March 10, 3pm. Please see guidelines.

Assignment: Write feedback to your small group members' Topic Synopses. Email feedback to them via the class email list. Due by March 14, 5pm.

No seminar meeting this week. I will be meeting with people in **individual appointments** between March 11 and March 13.

SPRING BREAK March 17-21

Week 9 March 25

Reading: Turabian pp. 62-81; 98-121

Assignment: Topic presentations in class, 5 minutes each (no more, no less). See guidelines.

Week 10 April 1

Reading: [Packet] Herzberg, "The Pill You Love Can Turn on You"

Assignment: Write a detailed outline Herzberg's article, noting the function of each section (eg: thesis, discussion of secondary literature, background information, presentation of primary material, etc.) as well as noting the flow of the specific content/argument.

Week 11 April 8

Assignment: Plan of Argument Due Monday April 7 by 9:00am. Please post your plan of argument to our learn@uw website.

Assignment: Write a paragraph of feedback on each of your small group members' plan of argument, and bring to seminar meeting.

Week 12 April 15

Assignment: First drafts due! Please post your draft to our learn@uw site by 11:00 am Tuesday April 15.

No seminar meeting this week. I will be meeting with people in **individual appointments** between April 16 and April 18. (See handout, "What is expected in a first draft?")

Week 13 April 22

Assignment: Written peer review of your small group members' papers. See guidelines. We will spend a portion of our seminar in small groups discussing drafts.

Assignment: As a large group, we will discuss in seminar how to make a *revision plan*. Please come prepared with preliminary notes about what you plan to revise and how. Completed revision plan due Wednesday April 23 9am to me via email.

Week 14 April 29

Please come prepared to discuss a) what you learned from reading and commenting on your peers' drafts; b) your own most vexing writing problem.

Week 15 May 6

FINAL PAPERS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF SEMINAR!

Packet Table of Contents

Lawrence B. Glickman, "'Make Lisle the Style': The Politics of Fashion in the Japanese Silk Boycott, 1937-1940" *Journal of Social History* 38:3 (Spring, 2005) pp. 573-608.

Jennifer Price, "When Women Were Women, Men Were Men, and Birds Were Hats," from *flight Maps: Adventures With Nature in Modern America* (NY: Basic Books, 1999).

Stuart Cosgrove, "The Zoot Suit and Style Warfare," *History Workshop Journal* Vol. 18 (Autumn 1984) pp. 77-91.

Sarah S. Lochlann Jain, "Preface [excerpt]" "Introduction [excerpt]" and "Come Up to the 'Kool' Taste': African American Upward Mobility and the Semiotics of Smoking Menthols" from *Injury: The Politics of Product Design and Safety Law in the United States* (Princeton University Press, 2006).

Allan M. Brandt, "Engineering Consumer Confidence in the Twentieth Century," Zhou Xun and Sander Gilman eds., *Smoke: A Global History of Smoking* (Reaktion, 2004).

David Herzberg, "'The Pill You Love Can Turn on You': Feminism, Tranquilizers, and the Valium Panic of the 1970s," *American Quarterly* 58:1 (March 2006) pp. 79-103.