

History 900

An Introduction to History for U.S. Historians

Steve Kantrowitz

Mondays 9–12
5255 Humanities

Contact

You may leave a message on my office answering machine (263-1844), but email (skantrow@wisc.edu) is almost always a better way to reach me. Please don't call me at home unless I've asked you to.

Office Hours

I will hold regular office hours on Wednesday mornings, 9:30-12:00, in 5110 Humanities. I will post sign-up sheets on the board outside my office. Walk-ins are welcome during unclaimed slots—first come, first served.

Course Description

This class is designed to introduce you to the professional practice of history, to the state of the field of American history, to the departmental faculty who work in and around American history, and to each other. During most weeks, our class meeting will be divided into two segments: in one, you'll meet one or more faculty members and see a part of the field from their perspective; in the other, we'll discuss an aspect of life as a historian—teaching, reading, research, ethics, outreach, and more.

Availability of Readings

Three books are available at Rainbow Bookstore Cooperative, 426 W. Gilman:

- Wayne C. Booth et al., *The Craft of Research* (2nd ed.)
- W. J. McKeachie, *Teaching Tips*
- W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*

Many of our other readings are available as online reserves, which you can access through the MyUW portal, and through various online resources (JSTOR, Making of America, etc.) accessible via the libraries' "E-Resource Gateway."

Other materials, including readings assigned by our guests, will be available in hard copy on the "informal reserves" shelf in the southeast corner of the second-floor reading room in the Wisconsin Historical Society Library.

NOTE: THIS VERSION OF THE SYLLABUS DOES NOT INCLUDE ADDITIONAL READINGS ASSIGNED BY FACULTY AND OTHER GUESTS FOR THEIR PANEL DISCUSSIONS! YOU ARE EQUALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THESE READINGS, WHICH WILL BE ANNOUNCED AND CIRCULATED PRIOR TO THE RELEVANT SEMINAR MEETING.

This syllabus is based in part on syllabi created by Bill Cronon, Nan Enstad, and Jeremi Suri. Acknowledging your sources—even when it's not strictly required—is a good habit to get into.

Schedule of Meetings and Assignments

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

Reception and informal dinner, 5-7 p.m.
Steve Kantrowitz's house, 2713 Oakridge Ave.
Directions to Steve's House

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

Extended introductions

Readings:

- Introduction and essays by Thomas Bender, Joyce Appleby, and William J. Cronon, in eds. Golde and Walker, *Envisioning the Future of Doctoral Education*, 3-20, 291-349.

DUE:

- An orally presented intellectual biography, not to exceed five minutes, that answers the following questions:

How did you end up in a Ph.D. program in History?

What motivates you to do this?

What have been the best (or best and worst) experience(s) you have had as a student, writer, or teacher while heading toward a Ph.D. in History?

- To be handed in: a written list (no more than one page) of the questions that most concern you about the next few years in the program, and the process of becoming a historian.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

1st half: Things They Didn't Tell You During Orientation

Readings:

- Bender et al., *The Education of Historians for the Twenty-first Century*, 3-84.

plus: What is an academic book review?

2nd half: Guest: **Chuck Cohen** - What Happened to Colonial History?

Readings: TBA

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

1st half: Workshop: The Analytical Book Review

Readings:

- at least six reviews in the *Journal of American History* or another major journal

- the book you are reviewing

- the book review for which you are a peer reviewer

2nd half: Guest: **Jean Lee** – History and Memory

Readings: TBA

DUE:

- **BY NOON, SUNDAY SEPT 24** to your peer reviewer(s) and to me [via an e-mailed Word or Abiword attachment]:

- an 800-word book review of a major work in U.S. history in a field you know reasonably well, intended for *The Journal of American History*. It may make sense to choose a book you have previously read.

- IN CLASS:

- photocopies of two book reviews whose approaches to the genre differ in some respect, highlighted to note passages of particular interest.
- written feedback on the book review(s) for which you are a peer reviewer.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 2

Yom Kippur – no class meeting

MONDAY, OCTOBER 9

1st half: History, Narrative, and Epistemology, pt. 1

Readings

- Hayden White, *Metahistory*, 1-42
- Roger Chartier, *On the Edge of the Cliff*, 13-47
- William J. Cronon, "A Place for Stories" *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 78, No. 4. (Mar., 1992), pp. 1347-1376. [JSTOR]

2nd half: Guest: **Bill Cronon** – Environmental History

Readings: TBA

MONDAY, OCTOBER 16

1st half: Research, pt. 1: Topics, Questions, and Sources

Readings:

- Booth et al., *The Craft of Research*, 35-107
- W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*

2nd half: Guests: **Cindy Cheng & Jim Sweet** – Working Across Disciplines

DUE: A one page single-spaced report on a primary source collection held here at UW, in the historical society or elsewhere on campus. The goal is for you to dig around and find sources that could help you explore a research topic related to your interests. Your report should describe the sources or collection in enough detail so someone else can get a sense of it (what or who it's about; when; where; why was this collected/preserved by UW; what is there and how much) and should give at least two examples of the sorts of questions that could be explored using these sources.

PLEASE BRING COPIES FOR EVERYONE IN THE CLASS.

ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENT: Attend Thomas Holt's Curti lectures, Oct 16, 17, and 18: "Work, Culture, Liberty: Contesting Jim Crow at the Turn of the 20th Century."

MONDAY, OCTOBER 23

1st half: Analysis of Thomas Holt's Curti Lectures

2nd half: Guests: **Gayle Plummer & Tony Michels** – Race, Ethnicity, and the Transnational
Readings: TBA

DUE: A 2 or 3-page double-spaced assessment of Holt's lectures. One page should assess the intellectual contributions of the lectures; the other should assess them as a professional performance. Imagine that you are trying to describe Holt's visit to a very smart colleague who was unable to attend the lectures.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 30

1st half: Guests: **Bill Reese & John Cooper** – Politics and Reform, 1900-1945
Readings: TBA

2nd half: Guest: **Jeremi Suri** – How has Diplomatic History Evolved?
Readings: TBA

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 6

1st half: Professional Standards / Ethics

Readings:

- <http://www.historians.org/pubs/Free/ProfessionalStandards.cfm>

- Packet about three controversies (Bellesiles, Ambrose, Ellis) **on shelf**

2nd half: Guests: **Colleen Dunlavy & Art McEvoy** – Political Economy
Readings: TBA

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 13

1st half: History, Narrative, and Epistemology, pt. 2

Readings: see assignment, below.

2nd half: Guests: **Tom Archdeacon & John Sharpless** – Social History and Quantitative
Methods

Readings: TBA

DUE: An extensively footnoted narrative recreation of the 1850 defense of fugitive slave William Craft in the Boston home of Lewis Hayden.

1) Read the version of this story in Blackett, *Beating Against the Barriers* [call # E185.96 B55 1986], p. 92, and Horton and Horton, *Black Bostonians* (rev. ed.) [call # F73.9 N4 H67], p. 113. For background, read the preceding pages in each chapter.

2) Go back to the sources Blackett and Horton & Horton cite in the relevant footnotes. These sources are all available in print, microfilm or as electronic resources at UW.

- The two books mentioned above are on 3-hour reserve at the Historical Society, as are the microfilms you will need.

- The other resources can be found in the stacks, on the web at <http://docsouth.unc.edu> or the "Making of America" website at Cornell (both accessible via the libraries' e-resources gateway). Several of these sources are available in multiple locations.

3) After reading the original sources, construct what you consider to be a reasonable narrative recreation of these events in no more than 300 words (not including footnotes).

4) Footnote it more extensively than you ordinarily would--by the sentence, or even more precisely--so that your classmates and I can assess your use of the sources.

PLEASE BRING COPIES FOR EVERYONE IN THE CLASS.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 20

1st half: Thinking about the U.S. History Survey

Reading: **online, for purchase at Rainbow, and e-reserve**

- Lendol Calder, "Looking for Learning in the History Survey," *Perspectives*, March 2002. (<http://www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/2002/0203/>)

- McKeachie, *Teaching Tips*, pp. 1-28, 291-304.

- Gary Nash, Charlotte Crabtree and Ross Dunn, "In the Matter of History," in *History on Trial: Culture Wars and the Teaching of the Past* (Knopf, 1998)

2nd half: Guest: **Anne Enke** – History of Sexuality

Readings: TBA

DUE: A one page single-spaced list of the goals you would consider in creating a survey course, in rough order of priority. Please use complete sentences and explain your reasons.

PLEASE BRING COPIES FOR EVERYONE IN THE CLASS.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 27

1st half: Research pt. 2:

Readings: **for purchase at Rainbow and online**

- Booth et al., *Craft of Research*, 111-240

- "Using Primary Sources on the Web"

(www.lib.washington.edu/subject/History/RUSA/)

- Rosenzweig, "Can History Be Open Source?," *JAH* 93:1 (June 2006) [Hist Coop]

2nd half: Guest: **Will Jones** – Working-class History

Readings: TBA

DUE: A one page single-spaced report on a website collection of primary sources. Your report should explain the goals and content of the website and answer the questions on pp 3-6 of "Using Primary Sources on the Web."

PLEASE BRING COPIES FOR EVERYONE IN THE CLASS.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 4

1st half: Guests: **Peter Gottlieb and Michael Stevens**, WHS - Publics and History

Readings: **online and informal reserves**

- Forum: "State Budgets and the Crisis of Historical Infrastructure" with essays by William Cronon, Bruce Craig, Patrick McCormack, Clement Alexander Price, Robert C. Vaughan, and George L. Vogt. *Perspectives*, May 2004.

(<http://www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/2004/0405/>)

- *The Presence of the Past*, pages TBA

2nd half: Teaching as a Graduate Student

Readings: **online, for purchase at Rainbow, and e-reserve**

- Peter J. Frederick, "Four Reflections on Teaching and Learning History," *Perspectives*, October 2001. (www.historians.org/Perspectives/Issues/search.cfm)

- McKeachie, *Teaching Tips*, 29-69; 117-160.

- Ken Bain, *What the Best College Teachers Do*, 98-134.

DUE: A 3-5pp double-spaced prospectus of an article-length research project that you could imagine doing yourself. Include one paragraph on the topic itself, one paragraph on key questions you might want to ask about the topic, and one paragraph on major sources you would want to consult in pursuing the topic. Finally, in an appendix, list questions you would want to answer before deciding whether or not the project is actually feasible.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 11

1st half: Guest: **Nan Enstad & Steve Kantrowitz** – Narratives and Paradigms

Readings TBA

2nd half: Wrap-up: what next?