

HISTORY 600: RACE AND NATION IN AMERICAN HISTORY  
Seminar, Tuesdays, 1:20-3:15 p.m.

This course examines the role that race has historically played in the formation of the United States as a nation. We begin with the colonial period but place greater emphasis on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The course focuses substantially but not exclusively on the foundational impact of a black and white dynamic in shaping race in the United States. The critical events studied include slavery, imperial expansion, and the development of an urban industrial society. Students will further develop their analytical skills as they familiarize themselves with this history, a powerful tool for understanding the totality of American life. The objective of the course is to strengthen our knowledge of how critical aspects of today's complex society developed. The readings, discussions, and assignments provide a safe and respectful space to study race systematically and thoughtfully.

**Learning goals and outcomes include:** Enhancing students' understanding of the role race has played in the creation of contemporary U. S. society; strengthening students' ability to critically assess cultural and historical information; augmenting critical reading, writing, speaking, and thinking skills; contributing to the further development of an informed, educated, and pro-active citizenry.

**Required texts.** (In alphabetical order)

Books:

Daniel Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire: A History of the Greater United States*

Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*

Doc File - primary source items – on Canvas in .pdf format

Articles and book chapters:

Kathleen M. Brown, "From 'Foul Crimes' to 'Spurious Issue' Sexual Regulation and the Social Construction of Race," from *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia*

Sarah Gualtieri, *Between Arab and White*, chapter 2

Ann S. Holder, "What's Sex Got to Do with It? Race, Power, Citizenship, and 'Intermediate Identities' in the Post-Emancipation United States," *Journal of African American History* 93 (Spring 2008)

Robert G. Lee, "Brown Is the New Yellow: The Yellow Peril in an Age of Terror," from James T. Campbell et al., *Race, Nation, and Empire in American History*

Daniel R. Mandell, "Shifting Boundaries of Race and Ethnicity: Indian-Black Inter-marriage in Southern New England, 1760-1880," *Journal of American History*, Sept. 1998

Melani McAlister, “Rethinking the ‘Clash of Civilisations’: American Evangelicals, the Bush Administration and the Winding Road to the Iraq War,” James Campbell et al., *Race, Nation, and Empire in American History*

Edmund Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, chapters 15 and 16

Louise M. Newman, “Women’s Rights, Race, and Imperialism in U. S. History, 1870-1920,” Campbell et al., *Race, Nation, and Empire in American History*

Film:

Sut Jhall, dir. “Reel Bad Arabs” (50 minutes), Media Education Foundation, 2006. Accessible on Kanopy

**Organization.** This 3-credit course meets once a week on Tuesdays at 3:30 p.m. for 115 minutes. The University expects students to spend nine hours a week working on seminars. That time includes in-class meeting sessions, time spent reading and writing, online time where you are doing nothing else (no multitasking!), and office hour visits with the professor. The class will mostly follow the seminar format with some commentary by the professor and discussion led by students. Scheduled topics provide broad chronological and thematic continuity and supply background material for students’ own research interests.

Each student will sign up to lead one day’s discussion of assigned readings. In the case of multiple readings, two students can share the task. After making yourself familiar with the material you are to talk about, you will write down your talking points on a sheet of paper that you will hand in to me. This can be a paragraph or two outlining what you got out of the reading and what you want the class to discuss, and/or it can be a precise set of questions for discussion. Discussion leading is graded by evaluating how clearly the discussant presents the reading and remains proactive throughout the session. The ability to identify major points, put the material in context, and develop thoughtful questions is assessed.

There are two papers, the first is a 10-page first draft that is directly related to the subject of race and nation in American history. The specific topic is of your own choosing but will be approved by me. The second paper, due on the last day of class, must be a refinement of the first. Brief additional information is below at p. 6, and further details will be provided in a separate handout.

**Classroom policies.** The more controversial a subject, the more we need to respect one another’s viewpoints. Class discussions can be lively and intense, but they must be diplomatic. Thoughtfully criticize an idea; don’t attack the person expressing it. Laptops, tablets, and Kindles are to be used to access readings only.

**Attendance requirement:** Attendance is required and will be kept for each class session for several reasons. 1) Seminars only work with input from the members. Learning is not only about what a professor says: it is also based on interaction among members of a group; 2) active involvement protects the interests of students who diligently come to class and help create a community by their presence. This is based on the idea of a classroom as a social entity and educational commitment; 3) people’s whereabouts and medical status are of particular concern during a pandemic so that some gauge of public health can be made. Anyone can have up to 2

unexcused absences without penalty. Students who belong to UW teams or who are involved with university-sponsored activities that may occasionally take them away from class, should provide a schedule of their absences to their professors beforehand. Religious holiday absences are not penalized, and advance notification of these is appreciated. Those otherwise missing more than 2 class sessions without good reason cannot earn more than a C in the course.

**Students with disabilities.** Students with a disability should contact the professor as soon as possible to arrange for alternative testing accommodations or any other special needs.

**Other information:**

The class list address is: history600-6-s22@g-groups.wisc.edu

Professor's office hours: Thursdays, 1-2 p.m in Room 4133 Helen C. White. E-mail address: bplummer@wisc.edu

**Evaluation.** Grades will be based on the following:

Participation and attendance = 25 percent

Discussion leading = 20 percent

Midterm paper = 25 percent

Final paper = 30 percent

Each student will sign up to lead one day's discussion of assigned readings. Everyone will have at least one opportunity to organize discussion for the class. After making yourself familiar with the material you are to talk about, you will write down your talking points on a sheet of paper that you will hand in to me. This can be a paragraph or two outlining what you got out of the reading and what you want the class to discuss, and/or it can be a precise set of questions for discussion. Discussion leading is graded by evaluating how clearly the discussant presents the reading and remains proactive throughout the session. The ability to identify major points, put the material in context, and develop thoughtful questions is assessed.

**How performance is assessed:**

A (93-100) - Papers have a well-defined, logically developed argument that considers possible counterarguments, and that shows strong evidence of original thinking. "A" papers are soundly structured, skillfully written, lack grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors, and are careful about citations. Attendance is excellent and participation is informed and freely offered.

AB (85-92) - Papers are informative. They indicate solid understanding of the sources used. Such papers are well argued and do not simply mirror the conclusions of others. They are clearly written and identify all sources used and cited but are not outstanding as far as writing style or insights are concerned. ABs have a minimum of grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors. Attendance is good and student makes consistent contribution to discussion.

B (80-84) - Papers show an adequate grasp of the subject but arguments are not strongly supported, and writing is okay but not impressive. Participation is moderate. Sometimes there is

slippage about citations and grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors. Oral presentations may lack organizational focus.

BC (77-79) -Oral presentations are loosely organized and may be based on inadequate preparation. Participation is lukewarm. Papers may have serious structural or organizational problems. They may feature weak arguments or adequate arguments that are weakly supported. Not enough attention has been paid to grammatical, punctuation, and spelling issues.

C (70-76) -Oral presentations may be poorly organized and presented. Papers indicate through inaccuracies or lack of material that not enough preparation was done. They may have writing problems serious enough to confuse a reader. "C" papers do not present a real argument or do little to support it. They may contain extensive citation that just fills up space with poor documentation of the citations. These papers pay little or no attention to grammar, punctuation, or spelling. Participation is marginal.

D (69-65) -Oral presentations show lack of preparation through faulty organization and preparation. Papers do not contain much information and lack a thesis. Extensive difficulties with writing and documentation are apparent. No attention is paid to the paper's appearance, which might contain extensive grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors. Little or no participation.

F (64) - Failure to carry out the minimum requirements of the course as detailed above.

**History resource:** The History Lab is a History Department resource center where PhD students will assist you with your history papers. You can go there even if you are not taking the course for History Department credit. No matter your stage in the writing process—choosing a topic, conducting research, composing a thesis, outlining your argument, revising your drafts—the History Lab staff can help you sharpen your skills and become a more successful writer. Sign up for a consultation online: <http://go.wisc.edu/hlab>

**Contact with professor:** I will hold office hours in 5111 Humanities on Tuesdays from --- or by appointment. E-mail is better for communicating with me than leaving phone messages. My e-mail address is [bplummer@wisc.edu](mailto:bplummer@wisc.edu). There is a class list. You are automatically subscribed to it if you are registered. The list address is ---. Students should also feel free to use the list to communicate with one another and share information about the course. E-mail is not a substitute, however, for class attendance and participation.

**More on participation:** The basis for evaluating participation is:

- \* Students come to class having read the material. They have notes and/or questions to share.
- \* Students verbally participate in discussion.
- \* Students pay attention to the views of others.
- \* When they disagree, they do so respectfully.

**Leading class discussion.** Everyone will have an opportunity to organize discussion for the class. After making yourself thoroughly familiar with the material you are assigned to present, you write down your talking points on a sheet of paper that you will hand in to me. This can be a paragraph or two outlining what you got out of the reading and what you want

the class to discuss, and/or it can be a set of questions for discussion. Any introductory or summary remarks to the class should take no more than 10 minutes because it's assumed that everyone has read the text. When it is a student's turn to lead discussion, he/she will have carefully done the reading, submitted the talking points, guided discussion, and remained engaged and on top of it throughout.

Successfully facilitating a seminar discussion requires attention to several areas:

- \* Being grounded in the reading.
- \* Presenting the material simply, clearly, and interestingly.
- \* Knowing how to identify major points and separate them from less relevant What do you see as important in the reading?

Do::

- \*Lead into your discussion with a theme that links the reading to a current topic of interest.
- \* Place the material in historical context.
- \* Use controversies to stimulate debate.
- \* Develop solid questions.
- \* Time yourself: How much time are you going to spend on developing discussion points?

Don't:

- \* Summarize in detail what everyone is supposed to have read. The purpose is not simply to echo the text.
- \* Drop out of the discussion after you have introduced it. You're responsible for running it.
- \* Lose track of the time while you're talking. If you think you'll ramble, use an outline.
- \* Read off your remarks from a piece of paper.

Evaluation criteria:

Does the presenter grapple with material that might be complex or confusing?  
 Does the presenter demonstrate analytical thinking?  
 How effectively the presenter facilitates discussion

### **WRITING THE PAPER:**

Step 1: Identify in a paragraph what the paper is about. What specific issue do you plan to discuss? Do you have an argument to make about it?

Step 2: What have you already learned about this topic? Who has already written about it? How does their thinking relate to yours? Prepare a bibliography.

Step 3: Prepare a thesis statement and an outline. What will the structure of your paper look like? How will you allocate pages?

Step 4: Write a draft that is approximately the same length as the final paper. Spell check and proofread it.

## COURSE CALENDAR

(Readings are discussed on the day they are listed. They are on Canvas by author's name.)

**September 13** - Introduction to the course

**September 20** – Colonial matters

Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, chapters 15 and 16; Brown, “From ‘Foul Crimes;’” Immerwahr, Introduction and “Note on Language”

**September 27** – The Revolutionary era  
Excerpt from the Petition of the African Lodge, Doc File, pp. 1-2; excerpts from the Constitution of the United States, excerpt from Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Doc File, p. 3; Immerwahr, chs. 1 and 2

**October 4** – “Expansion”

Andrew Jackson’s letter to the Cherokee Tribe, March 16, 1835, Doc File, pp. 9-10; Calhoun’s speech before Congress, January 4, 1848, excerpts, Doc File, pp. 11-12; “Shifting Boundaries”; Immerwahr, ch. 3

**October 11** –Slavery and emancipation  
Jefferson’s letter to Monroe, November 24, 1801, Doc File, 7-8; The Dred Scott Decision, excerpts, Doc File, pp. 14-16; Holder, “What’s Sex Got to Do with It?”

**October 18** – MIDTERM BREAK – No class meeting

**October 25** – Remaking the racial order  
Anti-Reconstruction cartoons, Doc File, pp. 17-18; Uncle Sam’s Thanksgiving” drawing, Doc File, p. 19; the Reconstruction Era Constitutional Amendments; Doc File, p. 20; Wells, “Southern Horrors,” Doc File, p. 21; antiblack representations, Doc File pp. 22-23; *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision, excerpts, Doc File, pp. 23-26

**November 1** – Imperialism

Immerwahr, chs. 4 and 5; Rothstein, Preface, chs. 1-2; Newman, “Women’s Rights, Race, and Imperialism; “Imperialism and anti-imperialism cartoons, Doc File, pp. 27-29. **FIRST PAPER DUE**

**November 8** - Race and immigration in the Progressive Era

Immerwahr, chs. 6-8; Rothstein, ch. 3-5; Gualtieri, *Between Arab and White*, chapter 2; “All My Children” cartoon, Doc File, p. 30; “Reel Bad Arabs,” 30 min. film on Kanopy or YouTube

**November 15** - The challenge of fascism

Immerwahr. chs. 9-11; Rothstein, chs. 6-7; *Korematsu v. United States*, 323 U.S. 214 (1944) and rapist graphics, Doc File, pp. 31-33

**November 22** – Refining the postwar racial state

Immerwahr, chs. 13-15; Rothstein, chs. 8-9

**November 29** – The limits of reform

Immerwahr, ch. 16-18; Rothstein, chs. 10-11

**December 6** – 20<sup>th</sup> century controversies

Immerwahr, ch. 19-21; Rothstein, ch. 12 and epilog; McAlister, “Rethinking the ‘Clash of Civilisations’”

**December 13** – 21<sup>st</sup> century controversies

Lee, “Brown Is the New Yellow; Rothstein, Appendix; Immerwahr, ch. 22 and Conclusion