

History 100: Histories of “Home”

Tuesdays, 1:20-3:15

Humanities 2251

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Office hours:

5119 Humanities, Thurs., 1:30-3:30

Introduction

"What place do you call home?"

When we ask this question, we are showing people that we want to find out about their lives. In this class, this question also begins an investigation of the histories that have shaped our communities, our families, and ourselves. This semester, we will read, write, talk, and think about “home” as a part of history—sometimes in ways that speak directly to our own experiences, and sometimes in ways that are quite different.

“Home” is a complex concept. It can mean a domestic setting (for example, household, apartment, house, farm), a place of origin (hometown, region, neighborhood), or a sense of comfort and belonging (“the place you feel most at home”). We also speak of “homelands,” a word that also has a wide array of implications (compare how many Native Americans speak of their nations’ “ancestral homelands” with the apartheid South African policy of containing Black South Africans’ political aspirations by assigning them to various invented “homelands”). And “home,” like “homeland,” can be intangible: something that a person or a people has lost, that they aspire to, or that exists in a mythic past, present, or future.

This is a history course, and I have chosen readings and activities that delve into various aspects of “home,” as experienced and analyzed by historians and other writers from a variety of backgrounds (including many from Wisconsin and the upper Midwest). Not every experience is represented here, of course, but you will have opportunities to venture beyond the readings on the syllabus. Part of your work during the semester will be to explore a history of “home”—yours, or one to which you feel powerfully connected—on your own terms, using the historian’s toolkit we will develop together.

We will spend part of this semester considering the double nature of your new “hometown,” which is both the city of Madison and a region called Teejop (four lakes), part of the Ho-Chunk people’s ancestral homeland. Madison is not unique in having a Native American past that is also a Native American present: every square foot of what is now the continental United States was until quite recently part of an Indigenous nation (for most of the country, within the last 200 years), and there are more than 500 federally recognized Native nations whose tribal members retain ownership of, residency in, or strong emotional ties to lands that are conventionally considered simply “America” or “the United States.”

Course Structure and Expectations

This class is meant to serve as an intellectual community, and my expectations are based on that fundamental goal. This course is brand new, experimental, and a work in progress. As you'll see, several assignments and readings are not yet finalized. **I will update the assignments via the Canvas site throughout the semester.**

Attendance: It's very important to be here every time. Being here and fully prepared is good. Being here, fully prepared, and ready to listen and share your ideas is even better. Illness or an emergency may keep you away unexpectedly, which of course happens to us all from time to time. But please don't miss seminar unless you really must.

Reading, writing, and discussion are at the heart of this course.

As you prepare for class each week, your main tasks will be:

- 1) to read thoughtfully and thoroughly, asking questions as you go;
- 2) to reflect on those questions before you arrive in class; and
- 3) to express ideas, arguments, and research findings in clear, forceful writing. Writing assignments are designed to help you make sense of and respond to the course readings and to develop skills as a researcher and writer.

When you come to class you should:

- 1) have that week's readings with you (in downloaded PDF or printed out)
- 2) have your writing assignment for that week (if any) downloaded or printed out
- 3) turn off your Wi-Fi, take out your earbuds, and turn off your phone: apart from documented medical needs (for example, for blood-sugar monitoring), all phones must be on silent, out of sight, and out of reach during class time.

Accommodation: I will make every effort to accommodate students' documented needs. Please work through the McBurney Center and speak with me directly. Note that for purposes of accommodation 1) in-class writing activities are on a pass/fail basis, and 2) there are no exams, timed or otherwise.

Academic Responsibility: All work that you turn in should be your own, and you may not appropriate another person's work. (This is called plagiarism, and it is a form of academic misconduct that can lead to serious penalties.) You may not use online resources (including but not limited to ChatGPT or similar products) for any assignment, including in-class writing, unless explicitly instructed otherwise. I will pursue all cases of possible academic misconduct, including but not limited to plagiarism, through the Office of the Dean of Students. When in any doubt, please ask!

Workload and breadth: The credit standard for this course is met by an expectation of a total of 135 hours of student engagement with the course learning activities (at least 45 hours per credit), which include seminar meetings, reading, writing, field trips, and other student work as described in the syllabus. This course meets the Humanities breadth requirement and counts as a Liberal Arts and Science credit in the College of Letters & Science.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Understand that History is an interpretive account of the human past, one that historians create in the present from surviving evidence.
2. Think self-consciously about the various methodologies that historians employ.
3. Ask questions of primary sources of various types, including, if appropriate, non-textual sources, and use those sources to craft interpretations of the past in written and oral form.
4. Reflect upon how the class materials allow them to better understand themselves, their own societies, and the larger global community, by engaging with multiple and diverse perspectives.

Assignments and Grading:

10 short writing or research assignments, @5% each: 50% of course grade
 Attendance and participation: 50% of course grade

Grading scale:

A: 92.5%+ AB: 87.5 - <92.5% B: 82.5 - <87.5
 BC: 77.5 - <82.5% C: 70 - <77.5% D: 60 - 69.9% F: <60%

Please note that grades for this course are not curved: in principle, every single student can earn an A. You are not in competition with one another; on the contrary, I hope you will help each other succeed.

Schedule of Meetings and Assignments

*****Assignments are due in Canvas no later than 12 noon on the day of class*****

Week 1, Sept. 10: Introductions**Week 2, Sept. 17: History as Storytelling**

Read: Linda LeGarde Grover, "Part I: Point of Rocks," in *Gichigami Hearts: Stories and Histories from Misaabekong*. **This is viewable as an ebook from the UW library system. You will need to download free Adobe software to view it.**

Write: An essay of 150-300 words, using Grover's writing as a model and inspiration, about one story people from your hometown tell about the place. Some questions you might consider:

- Who, or what group of people, usually tells this story?
- Is this story meant to be about history – about how your hometown (or some aspect of it) began, developed, or came to be? An origin story? Something else?
- What audience is the story aimed at?
- What is the story's lesson, moral, or intended meaning?
- How do you yourself respond to this story? Do you think you respond to it as the storyteller intends, or in some other way?

*****Remember to 1) begin with the story, and 2) make an argument about its meaning, in response to one or more of the questions listed above.*****

Week 3, Sept. 24: Immigrant Stories

Read: Sergio M. Gonzalez, "Introduction: Practicing Hospitality in Latino Wisconsin," 1-19 and "Acknowledgements," ix-xv, in *Strangers No Longer: Latino Belonging and Faith in Twentieth-Century Wisconsin*.

Write: Using Gonzalez's account of Latinos, churches, and "hospitality" in Wisconsin as a model or inspiration, write an essay of about 250 words about any institution, agency, organization, or group that has shaped how you understand your place in your hometown.

Week 4, Oct. 1: Mythic homelands

Read: Orm Øverland, "Prologue," in *Immigrant Minds, American Identities: Making the United States Home, 1870-1930*

Rudolfo Anaya, "Aztlán: A Homeland without Boundaries"

Write: Using these readings as a point of departure, write a reflection (100-300 words) on the role that ideas, stories, or myths about *another* place (a country, region, town, etc.) affect the way you or others think about your hometown or your place in it.

Week 5, Oct. 8: Madison/Teejop outdoors

***WEAR COMFORTABLE OUTDOOR CLOTHES/SHOES**

Read: Kendra Greendeer, "The Land Remembers Native Stories"

Stephen Kantrowitz, "Looking at Lincoln from the Effigy Mound"

Write: What do you know about the Native American history of your hometown?

Week 6, Oct. 15: Madison/Teejop in the Archives

Read: Mary Ellen Gabriel, "Ne-rucha-ja: The Forgotten Tale of Frost's Woods and Charles E. Brown's Fight to Save It for the Ho-Chunk," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 95:1 (Autumn 2011), 36-49

Write: In no more than fifty words, summarize the argument of Gabriel's article.

Before our seminar: register at the WHS archives (4th floor of the WHS Library & Archives building on Library Mall). Details to follow.

Week 7, Oct. 22: Your hometown in the library

What does the library have to say about your hometown? Explore the library's physical collections. Come to class with two physical sources (usually books, but other printed materials are fine as well). For each source, prepare notes on:

What is it?

What does it say?

What is surprising or interesting?

What is missing?

Who made it?

To what extent do you trust it? Why?

Week 8, Oct. 29: Non-belonging

Read: James Baldwin, "A Stranger in the Village"

Write: What historical forces have shaped an experience of non-belonging that you have experienced or witnessed?

Week 9, Nov. 5: Independent Work (no in-person class meeting)

Research: Continued investigation of your hometown; details to follow.

Week 10, Nov. 12: Belonging at UW-Madison (visit from Kacie Lucchini Butcher, Director of the Center for Campus History)

Read: “Report to the Chancellor”

Explore: “Sifting & Reckoning,” an online version of an exhibition that ran during the Fall 2022 semester at the Chazen museum on the UW-Madison campus. Read through at least three of the six thematic areas (“Early Years,” “Student Life,” “Classroom,” “Housing,” “Athletics,” and “Activism”)

Write: TBD

Week 11, Nov. 19: Reading and assignment TBD

Week 12, Nov. 26: Independent Work (no in-person class meeting)

Week 13, Dec. 3: Reading and assignment TBD

Week 14, Dec. 10: Final meeting – format and location to be announced