

History 600: Advanced Seminar in History Citizens and Others in North American History

Prof. Steve Kantrowitz
Spring 2025
Mondays, 1:20-3:15, 5255 Humanities
This is an in-person course

Student hours: Wednesdays, 1:00-3:00, and by appointment, in 5119 Humanities

Attendance and classroom community

We are a community of scholars. It is possible for everyone in the seminar to earn an A. Please help each other succeed.

Your success in this course will mainly depend on consistent preparation and engagement. We meet only a dozen times, so missing more than one seminar meeting, for any reason, will cause you to fall significantly behind. I suggest that you do not think of this policy as “I get to skip one seminar,” but instead consider it your margin of safety in case of a medical or other emergency.

Readings

There is one required book: Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers* (9th edition), which you can purchase online. Other readings are available via Canvas under the “Files” tab.

The Research Paper

For much of the semester, each of you will be working on a research paper—a work of original historical scholarship. You will identify a topic, locate sources and the existing scholarship, and write several drafts.

The key to a successful research paper is to identify a *subject* of interest to you, and a *question* about that subject which you can reasonably expect to answer. This must be a question which is not adequately addressed by the *existing scholarly literature*, and for which there are appropriate, sufficient, and accessible *primary sources*. You will therefore be pursuing several related lines of inquiry simultaneously: asking what interests you, framing a question about it, determining what has already been said about it, and locating the primary sources that will form the backbone of your contribution to the scholarship.

Topic selection and refinement is the most critical phase of the project: a workable topic will help you at every step; a difficult one will frustrate you. You may not settle on a final topic until the middle of the semester, but you must begin the process of finding one almost immediately. Perhaps the most challenging aspect of this, particularly for those undertaking a substantial work of historical research for the first time, is developing a workable question—one that leads you to a rich base of sources, that encourages you to make a well-framed argument, and that interprets rather than simply tells a story.

Be curious! Your task during many of the early weeks of the semester will be to jump off from our readings and explore questions that seem interesting and answerable through available archives. Take the time to follow your nose and/or your heart toward topics that seem compelling. The first topic (or the first six!) may not pan out—but this is the way to find one that will engage you.

The final product should be about 5,000-7,000 words plus notes, approximately the length of a short article in a scholarly journal (such as those we will read this semester).

This is a marathon, not a sprint. As you’ll see as you read this syllabus, by mid-semester you should have settled on a topic and have begun researching it. Polished drafts of your research papers are due **before** the end of the semester. You will comment on each other’s drafts and receive comments from me before producing a final draft. **The final version will be due Weds., May 7** (one week after our last seminar meeting) at noon, via Canvas.

Academic Responsibility

All work that you turn in must be your own. You are responsible for knowing what constitutes plagiarism; claiming ignorance will not help you after the fact. A few guidelines: If you 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). Likewise, if you closely paraphrase another writer or rely on their ideas, you must acknowledge your debt with an appropriate citation. Appropriation of another author's work without citation—whether or not you use direct quotations—always constitutes plagiarism. I pursue all cases of possible academic misconduct. A more detailed set of guidelines is available at: http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html.

“AI” in our classroom

Some people find that LLMs (Large Language Models; so-called “AI” chatbots) can be useful in thinking through a question, generating ideas, planning an essay, and even writing. However, much is lost when we rely on these technologies for historical analysis and interpretation. History, like any humanistic or social scientific discipline, relies both on rigorous empirical investigation and on human insight, intuition, and experience. LLMs can provide some help with empirical investigation, especially into prior scholarship and broad patterns of previous investigation (though, as you know, they also get things wrong and make things up). But LLMs, except by accident, cannot generate new ideas. They are predictive rather than self-aware, algorithmically regurgitating the most common sequences of words without regard to their sense, originality, or even truth or falsity; this explains what we anthropomorphically call their “hallucinations.” (This disregard for the distinction between truth and falsehood is what the philosopher Harry Frankfurt defines as “[bullshit](#).” Don't @ me; it's a technical term.) Even when factually sound, their answers tend to reproduce broader societal biases and “common sense” rather than fostering original or creative thinking. Used more than sparingly, they short-circuit the creative process of thinking through a problem and developing skills as writers and thinkers. (As a side note, the energy costs of this technology are very high: [according to the investment bank Goldman Sachs](#), a ChatGPT query requires more than nine times the energy of the equivalent Google search.) I'm aware that to demand that you never use AI for anything is to try to hold back the sea with a rake. But relying on this technology to do your written work is not only a violation of class policy but a waste of everyone's time, including your own.

Grades

Your grade for the semester will be calculated as follows:

Preparation for and participation in seminar meetings	30%
7 early assignments (weeks 2-8, @5 points each)	35%
Seminar paper polished draft (due Sun., Apr. 20, by Midnight)	10%
Seminar paper final draft (due Weds, May 7, by Noon)	25%

Course Requisites and Designation

Requisite: History 201 or History of Science 211

Breadth - Either Humanities or Social Science

Level - Advanced

L&S Credit - Counts as Liberal Arts and Science credit in L&S

Honors - Accelerated Honors (!)

Course Credit and Learning Outcomes

The credit standard for this 3-credit course is met by an expectation of a total of 135 hours of student engagement with the course's learning activities (at least 45 hours per credit or 9 hours per week), which include regularly scheduled meeting times (group seminar meetings of 115 minutes per week), guided individual research, dedicated online time, reading, writing, field trips, individual consultations with the instructor, and other student work as described in the syllabus

This course will help you meet several of the [Goals of the History Major](#):

- Learn how historians analyze, interpret, and write about primary sources
- Prepare for and participate in discussions of the common readings
- Turn in a series of short writing and research assignments
- Research and write a substantial, original work of historical interpretation

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

All written work, even the short assignments during the first half of the semester, should begin with (or consist of) a clear, well-considered thesis statement. Texts longer than a few sentences should be organized into coherent paragraphs, beginning with a thesis statement. Make every word count. Use simple, clear sentence structures and use quotation very selectively.

All assignments (up to but not including the outline of the final paper itself) should include your name, the date, the assignment title, **and a word count** at the top of the document.

Unless otherwise specified, all assignments are due as Word-compatible documents (doc, docx, or pages, **not pdf**) via Canvas no later than 10 a.m. on the morning of the seminar meeting.

Week 1: Jan. 27 – Starting Points

Reading: Linda Kerber, “The Meanings of Citizenship,” *Journal of American History* 84:3 (Dec. 1997)

Assignments: due in Canvas no later than 10 a.m. on the day of class

- 1) In a sentence of about 50 words, summarize Kerber’s argument.
- 2) Bring in one document or artifact that reflects some aspect of citizenship and come prepared to do a 2 to 3-minute show-and-tell. A (non-exhaustive) list of questions you might consider: What is the item? Who produced it, when, where, and why? What does this document or artifact tell us about some aspect of the history of citizenship? What questions does it raise? What do you wish you knew or understood about it? How would you go about investigating its origins, purposes, and career?

Week 2: Feb. 3 – Black Citizenship before the 14th Amendment

Reading: Martha Jones, *Birthright Citizens: A History of Race and Rights in Antebellum America* (Cambridge University Press, 2018), Introduction, chapters 1, 2, 4, 8, Conclusion

Assignment: due in Canvas no later than 10 a.m. on the day of class

- 1) Identify the thesis of each chapter (1, 2, 4, 8) and summarize it in a sentence of no more than 50 words. These summaries should not repeat the title of the book or chapter; they should state, as economically as possible, what each chapter argues.
- 2) Considering the reading as a whole, identify the thesis of the work and summarize it in a sentence of no more than 50 words.

Week 3: Feb. 10 – National Citizenship, Reconstruction, and Settler Colonialism

Readings:

- Garrett Epps, “The Citizenship Clause: A ‘Legislative History,’” *American University Law Review* 60:2 (2010), 331-388
- Stephen Kantrowitz, “White Supremacy, Settler Colonialism, and the Two Citizenships of the Fourteenth Amendment,” *Journal of the Civil War Era* 10:1 (March 2020), 29-53

Assignment: due in Canvas no later than 10 a.m. on the day of class

- 1) Identify the thesis of each article and summarize it in a sentence of no more than 50 words. These summaries should not repeat the title of the articles; they should state, as economically as possible, what each article argues.
- 2) In about 150 words, make an argument about the relationship between these two articles. This argument may focus on their points of agreement or congruence, or their differences in emphasis, method, evidence or any other matter of historical practice.

Week 4: Feb. 17 – Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, and the Border in the early 20th Century

Readings:

- Katherine Benton-Cohen, “Other Immigrants: Mexicans and the Dillingham Commission of 1907-1911,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 30:2 (Winter 2011)
- Natalia Molina, “‘In A Race All Their Own’: The Quest to Make Mexicans Ineligible for U.S. Citizenship,” *Pacific Historical Review* 79:2 (2010)

Assignment: Library boot camp, due in Canvas no later than 10 a.m. on the day of class

- 1) Using the Chicago Style Guide in Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*, transform footnotes 1 through 25 in Molina into a formal bibliography.
- 2) Using the UW library catalog and your wits, add a note to each item in that bibliography explaining:
 - a. Whether it is available *in full* in Madison, and if so where and in what format? (e.g., hardcopy at Wisconsin Historical Society; on the web at [address]; etc.)
 - b. If it not available *in full* in Madison (physically or online), where is it available? (Here, Worldcat.org, licensed through library.wisc.edu, may be a good friend to you.)

Week 5: Feb. 24 – Native American Citizenship and the “Nation of Immigrants”

Readings:

- Philip J. Deloria, “American Master Narratives and the Problem of Indian Citizenship in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era,” *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 14 (2015), 3-12
- Cristina Stanciu, “Native Acts, Immigrant Acts: Citizenship, Naturalization, and the Performance of Civic Identity during the Progressive Era,” *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 20 (2021), 252-276
- *A Manual for Writers*, 3-9

Assignment: 3 elements (1, 2a, 2b) due in Canvas no later than 10 a.m. on the day of class

- 1) Write “x, y, z” statements (as described in *A Manual for Writers*) for the articles by Deloria and Stanciu.
- 2) Identify one important claim in **one** of these articles (Deloria or Stanciu) for which the citation is a page reference to a scholarly book or article (not a reference to an entire work or to a primary source). **Find that scholarly book or article** and determine:
 - a. What sources—primary or secondary—did the author of that book or article use to make the claim that Deloria or Stanciu’s article cites? Create a mini-bibliography of *the cited work* (the book or article) and *the sources it relies on for the claim or information referred to by Deloria or Stanciu*.
 - b. In what way(s), whether, or to what extent do the cited sections of the book or article support the use that Deloria or Stanciu made of it by citing them? Make an argument in response to this prompt (75-150 words), quoting or paraphrasing the article by Deloria or Stanciu *and* the cited book or article.
- 3) Come to class prepared to explain your process and argument in 2, above.

Week 6: Mar. 3 – Citizenship Education in the Jim Crow South

Readings:

- Elizabeth Gillespie McRae, “Citizenship Education for a Segregated Nation,” in *Mothers of Massive Resistance: White Women and the Politics of White Supremacy* (Oxford University Press, 2018), 41-60
- Katherine Mellen Charron, “Bridging Past and Future,” in *Freedom’s Teacher: The Life of Septima Clark* (UNC Press, 2009), 216-263
- *A Manual for Writers*, 3-24 (yes, re-read those pages), on topics and hypotheses

Assignment: due in Canvas no later than 10 a.m. on the day of class

- 1) Submit “x, y, z” statements for the readings by McRae and Charron
- 2) Identify **1 or 2 topics** that you are interested in researching. Using Google Scholar and online resources (such as JSTOR and Project Muse), do enough digging that you understand a bit about the scholarly conversations about these topics. **Turn in**
 - a. **1 or 2** potential research questions about these topics
 - b. Whatever you can discover about the archives available for various aspects of these topics (remember that you cannot write about a topic for which you don’t have an appropriate archive)

Week 7: Mar. 10 – Closing in on a topic

Note: In an ill-timed reminder that “citizenship” entails responsibilities as well as rights, I have been called to jury duty beginning the morning of March 10. I hope that, as in past instances, I will be excused before having to serve. But please check your email around noon to see whether I have had to cancel our seminar meeting! If I do, we will have individual conferences about your topics later in the week.

Reading: *A Manual for Writers*, 25-37, on finding and evaluating sources

Assignment: due in Canvas no later than 10 a.m. on the day of class

- 1) Pick one topic. Make a list of possible questions and arguments (ca. 1 page) that could shape this topic into a paper; include any potential problems you can foresee.
- 2) Explore available primary sources relevant to this topic; create a bibliography of the ones you explored
- 3) Come to class with a brief written summary of your progress, including:
 - a. A revised x, y, z statement
 - b. A bibliography of at least five specific primary sources, each with a one-sentence synopsis of how it relates to your topic.
 - c. A bibliography of relevant scholarship (via keyword searches)

Week 8: Mar. 17

Reading: *A Manual for Writers*, 38-50, on engaging sources and taking notes

Assignment:

- 1) Spend AT LEAST four more hours exploring primary sources and prior scholarship, refining both your topic and your bibliography as you go.
- 2) Submit a written summary of your progress to Canvas by 10 a.m. on the day of class:
 - a. A revised “x, y, z” statement
 - b. A one-page (ca. 250-word) summary of how the existing scholarship relates to this topic
 - c. A one-page (ca. 250-word) overview of what you are finding in the primary sources and how it is shaping your topic.
 - d. A further paragraph and/or list of your most pressing questions, concerns, and dilemmas.

Week 9: Mar. 31

Reading: *A Manual for Writers*, 51-65, on working toward an argument

Assignment:

- 1) By now, you should be able to formulate your topic as a hypothesis or argument. Revise the assignment from Week 8, updating it to reflect your progress over the past week.
- 2) What article or book has been most helpful so far in developing your topic and your approach to it? Come prepared to:
 - a. Explain the *argument* of the book/article, its *body of evidence*, and how that evidence supports the argument.
 - b. Explain what body of scholarship this book/article contributes to that is most relevant to your project
 - c. Why and how this work has been particularly helpful to you.

Week 10: Apr. 7

Reading: *A Manual for Writers*, 66-85

Assignment: Write a revised thesis statement (50-100 words) and a detailed outline of how you will make this argument, using the template provided in Canvas.

Week 11: Apr. 14

Reading: *A Manual for Writers*, 75-85 (yes, re-read!), on drafting

Assignment: Write, write, write. This week of seminar may be replaced with individual consultation with me, depending on how your projects are progressing.

Week 12: Apr. 21

Assignment: Polished drafts are due to Canvas by 10 a.m. on the day of class. **Please also bring a printed copy with you to seminar.** In seminar this week you will read and comment on a classmate's polished draft using a worksheet I will provide.

Week 13: Apr. 28

Reading: *A Manual for Writers*, 102-123, on writing and revision

Assignment: Come to class prepared to discuss the aspect of writing/revision that you have found most challenging, and how you have confronted it.

**REVISED ESSAYS DUE
NOON, WEDNESDAY, MAY 7, VIA CANVAS**