

HSTAA 522  
**Readings in American History: Late-Nineteenth Century to the Present**  
University of Washington  
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SPRING 2020: I am revising this syllabus to reflect teaching in an online environment. The workload is lighter than usual to reflect the stress and uncertainty of life during this emergency. We will be reading books available in e-book format through the UW Libraries only. After an opening Zoom session on Monday, March 30 from 1:30-2:30PM, we will operate asynchronously and communicate in writing rather than convening online at a set time/day each week. However, please hold the original class time of M 1:30-3:20 open in order to have live discussion on certain weeks with special guests. Assignments will be revised to incorporate two additional course goals: 1) creating publicly available resources for students and teachers of history, and 2) exploring tools and tactics of online pedagogy.

HSTAA 522 is the second in a two-quarter sequence whose primary goal is to introduce the variety of methods and conceptual and theoretical approaches that shape U.S. history scholarship. Without pretending to provide a comprehensive survey of U.S. history, the sequence aims to establish a bibliographic foundation for the research and teaching you will undertake as you move through the graduate program and beyond. (Students outside the History Department do not have to have taken HSTAA 521 as a prerequisite for this course.)

The temporal focus of HSTAA 522 is the late nineteenth century to the present. With only ten weeks and much ground to cover, I have been selective in my choices to balance out other regular graduate course offerings in this Department that cover certain modern U.S. subfields in greater depth. The reading load is heavy, organized chiefly by theme rather than by chronology to better illustrate evolution of methodologies and historiographical debate. Assignments are geared towards professionalization and preparation for comprehensive examinations and dissertation work – i.e., all could be repurposed for use beyond this class.

### **READINGS**

All books are available in e-book format through the UW Libraries. I have included the link to these electronic sources below. You are also welcome to purchase new or used hard copies from online or terrestrial bookstores, ideally independent ones.

Daniel Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (1998)  
<https://alliance-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/kjtuig/CP71124342000001451>

Sarah Quinn, *American Bonds: How Credit Markets Shaped a Nation* (2019)  
<https://alliance-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/kjtuig/CP71300533650001451>

Michael B. Katz, *The Undeserving Poor: America's Enduring Confrontation with Poverty* (1989, rev. 2014)

<https://alliance-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/kjtuig/CP71275965350001451>

Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (2004, updated 2014)

<https://alliance-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/kjtuig/CP71316567660001451>

Thomas J. Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis* (1996)

<https://alliance-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/kjtuig/CP71295786020001451>

Robert Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (2003)

<https://alliance-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/kjtuig/CP71145517590001451>

Sarah Igo, *The Known Citizen: A History of Privacy in Modern America* (2019)

<https://alliance-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/kjtuig/CP71287601940001451>

George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World* (1995)

<https://alliance-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/kjtuig/CP71123370200001451>

Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed, 2008)

<https://alliance-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/kjtuig/CP71251960030001451>

Jefferson Cowie, *Stayin' Alive: The 1970s and the Last Days of the Working Class* (2010)

<https://alliance-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/kjtuig/CP71167685160001451>

James Sparrow, *Warfare State: World War II, Americans and the Age of Big Government* (2011)

<https://alliance-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/kjtuig/CP71240616350001451>

Bruce Schulman, *From Cotton Belt to Sunbelt: Economic Development, Federal Policy, and the Transformation of the South, 1938-1980* (1991)

<https://alliance-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/kjtuig/CP71188901180001451>

Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, *Race for Profit: How Banks and the Real Estate Industry Undermined Black Homeownership* (2019)

<https://alliance-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/kjtuig/CP71308853530001451>

Sarah Milov, *The Cigarette: A Political History* (2019)

<https://alliance-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/kjtuig/CP71310406690001451>

Suleiman Osman, *The Invention of Brownstone Brooklyn* (2014)

<https://alliance-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/kjtuig/CP71204771040001451>

Lily Geismer, *Don't Blame Us: Suburban Liberals and the Transformation of the Democratic Party* (2014)

<https://alliance-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/kjtuig/CP71252142040001451>

## ASSIGNMENTS

The assignments in this course are intended to support your professional education and are designed so that they may be repurposed at a later date in your training or your career.

**READING NOTES/DISCUSSION.** To assist in close reading of the text and provide some framing questions for class discussion (as well as give you a written summary of each book for future use), I'd like everyone to post 400-500 word entry of notes on the week's assigned reading on a shared Google Doc that I will create for each of the assigned books. (I'm using this platform instead of Canvas discussion forums as it is less bandwidth-intensive and simpler to track and archive, and I'd like each of you to leave this class with a meaty reference document on each reading for future reference.) Notes should include a succinct restatement of each reading's main argument; your assessment of whether the author makes the argument successfully; and at least two questions raised by this reading. After everyone has posted their summary note, then let's return to the document and provide at least two other comments or respond to questions raised by others. Links to other sources and historiographic reviews/discussions are encouraged. You will post notes each week by Sunday night, and comment by Monday night.

**OP-ED.** Historians and historically-oriented scholars appear with increasing frequency on the op-ed page of major newspapers and online publications, and the crafting of these very particular sorts of argumentative writing can be an effective way to introduce historical and historiographic perspective to the public discourse. In this assignment you craft an 800-word op-ed keyed to a current news item, similar to the guest opinion columns appearing in *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *The Seattle Times*, et al. To prep, we will hold an op-ed workshop with Brian Rosenwald, co-editor of *The Washington Post's* Made By History section on April 13. Please submit your op-ed to Canvas by Monday April 27.

**WEB PAGE.** In order to think about your public presentation of yourself, I ask that you create a personal web page that presents you and your scholarly interests and accomplishments to an online audience. The page serves as a way to introduce to you peers, colleagues, prospective employers, students, and the general public. You may use any platform you wish; I will discuss different platforms and ideas during our introductory meeting. I strongly encourage you to link this page to the UW History website. Websites should be completed and URLs shared with the class by Monday May 18.

**SYLLABUS.** Recent years have seen extraordinary public collaborative projects that build reading lists designed to build broader historical understanding of contemporary events (for example, #CharlestonSyllabus, #TrumpSyllabus). There also has been ongoing discussion about reimagining the traditional U.S. history survey course (for example, <https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/april-2018/reimagining-the-history-survey-course>). The ongoing Covid-19 crisis is reinventing online teaching in real time. With these developments in mind, your assignment is to write a syllabus of your own, of your choice of the following 1) a public syllabus keyed to current events, published online; 2) a "reinvented" lower-division undergraduate survey; or 3) an online undergraduate U.S. history survey. The syllabus should be as substantively detailed and structurally precise as possible. Students from departments other than history may tailor this assignment to fit a course taught in your home department; consult with me on these choices. Please complete and post on Canvas no later than Monday, June 1.

REVIEW ESSAY. The end-of-term assignment is a review essay of about 2500-3000 words entitled “New Directions in \_\_\_\_\_ History.” The essay should begin by discussing the origins of the field (referencing seminal works), then present the current state of the field, then conclude by offering some promising new directions for the field. Although shorter than a review article found in a refereed journal such as *Reviews in American History*, the essay should be similar in spirit and tone of analysis. Your topic could be a disciplinary subfield (labor history, urban history, Western history, business history, etc.) or scholarly methodology (digital history, public history). Students from departments other than history also may tailor this assignment to support Ph.D. fields in their discipline. Please choose this topic in consultation with me. Please submit on Canvas by Friday, June 12.

Assignments are weighed as follows: reading notes 50%; op-ed 10%; syllabus 10%; web page 5%; final essay 25%. All assignments are C/NC except the final essay.

## **SCHEDULE**

Please read during the week/weekend, post reading notes on Sundays, and comments on those reading notes on Mondays.

### **Week 1: Introduction**

Introductory session by Zoom on Monday, March 31, 1:30PM

### **Week 2: State-building**

- Read Rodgers and Quinn, post notes by Sunday, April 5 at 9PM, comments on others’ notes by Monday, April 6 at 9PM

### **Week 3: Citizenship**

- Read Ngai and Katz, post notes by Sunday, April 12 at 9PM, comment on others’ notes by Monday, April 13 at 9PM

Op-ed workshop with Brian Rosenwald by Zoom on Monday, April 13 at 1:30PM

### **Week 4: Race & Space**

- Read Sugrue and Self, post notes by Sunday, April 19 at 9PM, comment on others’ notes by Monday, April 20 at 9PM

### **Week 5: Identity**

- Read Chauncey and Igo, post notes by Sunday, April 26 at 9PM, comment on others’ notes by Monday, April 27 at 9PM

Op-ed due Monday April 27 at 11:59PM

### **Week 6: Class**

- Read Cohen and Cowie, post notes by Sunday, May 3 at 9PM, comment on others' notes by Monday, May 4 at 9PM

### **Week 7: War**

- Read Shulman and Sparrow, post notes by Sunday, May 10 at 9PM, comment on others' notes by Monday, May 11 at 9PM

### **Week 8: Policy**

- Read Taylor and Milov, post notes by Sunday, May 17 at 9PM, comment on others' notes by Monday, May 18 at 9PM

Web page completed and launched by Monday May 18 at 11:59PM

**Week 9: Memorial Day** – take a breather, catch up, work on your writing assignments et al.

### **Week 10: Politics**

- Read Osman and Geismer, post notes by Sunday, May 31 at 9PM, comment on others' notes by Monday, June 1 at 9PM

Syllabus complete and submitted to Canvas by Monday, June 1 at 11:59PM

Final essay complete and submitted to Canvas by Friday, June 12 at 11:59PM