

**History 9817**  
**United States History and Historiography**

Fall Term

Wednesdays 11:30 am – 2:30 pm, Lawson Hall 2270C

**Professor Rob MacDougall**

Office: Lawson Hall 2228

Office Hours: TBA

Email: [rmacdou@uwo.ca](mailto:rmacdou@uwo.ca)

Course Website: <http://www.robmacdougall.org/9817>

### **Course Description**

“Historiography” means both the writing of history and the study of historical writing itself. This seminar approaches historiography in both senses. It will introduce you to some major themes and famous works of United States history, and invite you to develop your skills as readers and critics of historical literature. We will also try to analyze the writing of history—how history is constructed as a written craft. This course is not a comprehensive survey of American history (hardly possible in 13 weeks!), but rather a history of historical writing about the United States. We will read and discuss a combination of classic and modern texts—some of the best work in the profession—to see how American historiography has changed over time, and how history is always shaped by the historical, intellectual, and biographical circumstances of those who write it. We will learn a great deal about United States history along the way, but the course is really an intellectual history of history, in the American context.

### **Assignments and Evaluation**

This is a graduate course. Thorough **reading** and **informed discussion**—in every seminar—are the central requirements. You are expected to attend every meeting prepared to **engage actively** with the readings and with each other. Each week, you will also be expected to post online (or email me) a **short response to the readings** for that week or some other small assignment.

In the first half of the term, you will write **one historiographic review** locating a work of scholarship in its historical context. In the second half of the term, we will work together to produce (and maybe publish) **a single group-authored article**, using computational “distant reading” or data mining methods to analyze or critique the narrative of historiography offered in the first half of the course. You will be graded on your contribution to this article—or, if you are not comfortable being graded on a group project, you may write **an individual essay** analyzing a historiographical problem or tracing and discussing the development of historiography on a specific subject over time. There will be no midterm or final exam.

In-class participation (reading, discussion, insight)	20%	
Short homework assignments / online responses	20%	
Historiographic Review (6-8 pages)	30%	due October 23
Contribution to Group Article OR		
Individual Historiographic Essay (8-10 pages)	30%	due December 4

## Objectives and Outcomes

Students in History 9817 will:

- Collaborate in a term-long investigation of United States history and historiography.
- Become familiar with some major themes and core works of United States history, and with the evolution of historical writing on the American past.
- Build a theoretical vocabulary relevant for historiographical discussions.
- Learn to make and analyze historiographical arguments.
- Analyze the relationship between historical texts and the historical, intellectual, and biographical circumstances in which those texts were produced.
- Use computational “distant reading” techniques to confirm or critique received wisdom about United States historiography.

## Readings

The readings for this class are extensive. We will discuss strategies for efficient reading, and I will often direct you to focus on particular chapters or sections of these texts, but the bottom line is that there is a lot of reading, and you are responsible for coming to each class prepared to discuss all readings assigned. A seminar works when everyone comes prepared. If you fail to do the readings your participation grade will suffer but so too will the whole class’ experience.

I encourage you to buy the books we read, or at least the ones that interest you most. It is easier to read a book you own; you can mark it up, you have it close at hand, and you can refer to it for future projects. That said, I do not require you to buy these books, and I have not ordered any books at the Campus Bookstore. All readings will be available on reserve at D.B. Weldon Library and/or online. I also have copies of some books which I may lend the class.

## Schedule

This syllabus is still subject to change! Please check the class website each week for the most up to date information (and links to online reading).

## Key

- 📖 Book on reserve shelf at Weldon (2-hour loan) and possibly from me.
- 📄 E-book or journal article available through online library catalog.
- 📄 PDF available on course website (<http://www.robmacdougall.org/9817>).

### Week 1      September 16      Welcome to the Course

Pierre BAYARD, *How To Talk About Books You Haven’t Read* (2007). 📖

### Week 2      September 23      Seven Ways to Spot a Witch

George BANCROFT, *History of the United States, Volume II* (1840), pp. TBA. 📄

George Lyman KITTREDGE, *Witchcraft in Old and New England* (1929), pp. TBA. □  
 Perry MILLER, *The New England Mind: From Colony to Province* (1953), pp. TBA. □  
 Paul BOYER & Stephen NISSENBAUM, *Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft* (1974), pp. TBA. □  
 Carol KARLSEN, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman* (1987), pp. TBA. □  
 Mary Beth NORTON, *In the Devil's Snare* (2002), pp. TBA. □  
 Sarah RIVETT, "Our Salem, Our Selves," *William and Mary Quarterly* 65 (2008): 495-502. 📖

**Week 3      September 30      Early, Professional, and Progressive Historians (1800s-1930s)**

George BANCROFT, *History of the United States, Volume II* (1840), pp. 450-466. □  
 Frederick Jackson TURNER, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," (1893), in Martin Ridge, ed., *History, Frontier, and Section*, pp. 59-91. □  
 Charles BEARD, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* (1913), pp. 1-18, 253-291. □  
 Joyce APPLEBY et al, *Telling the Truth About History* (1994), pp. 91-125. □  
 David BROWN, *Beyond the Frontier: The Midwestern Voice in Historical Writing* (2009), pp. 25-71. □

**Week 4      October 7      The Consensus Historians (1940s-1960s)**

Richard HOFSTADTER, *The American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made It* (1948). 📖  
 John HIGHAM, "Beyond Consensus: The Historian as Moral Critic," *American Historical Review* 67 (1962): 609-625. □  
 David BROWN, *Richard Hofstadter: An Intellectual Biography* (2006). 📖

**Week 5      October 14      The New Social History (1960s-1970s)**

Herbert GUTMAN, "Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America," *American Historical Review* 78 (1973): 531-588. 📖  
 Ira BERLIN, "Herbert G. Gutman and the American Working Class," in *Power and Culture: Essays on the American Working Class* (1987), pp. 3-69. □  
 Alice KESSLER-HARRIS, "A New Agenda for American Labor History: A Gendered Analysis and the Question of Class," in *Perspectives on American Labor History* (1989), pp. 217-234. □

**Week 6      October 21      Slavery and the Problem of Agency**

Ulrich B. PHILLIPS, *American Negro Slavery* (1918), pp. 291-308. □  
 Stanley ELKINS, *Slavery* (1959), pp. 81-87, 102-115, 128-39. □  
 John BLASSINGAME, *The Slave Community* (1972), pp. xi-xii, 105-148. □  
 Eugene GENOVESE, *Roll Jordan Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (1974), pp. 3-7, 113-149. □  
 Deborah Gray WHITE, *Ar'n't I a Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South* (1985, Rev. ed. 1999), pp. 1-25. □  
 Walter JOHNSON, "Agency: A Ghost Story," in *Slavery's Ghost: The Problem of Freedom in the Age of Emancipation* (2011), pp. 8-30. □

## Historiographic Book Review Due Friday, October 23

### Week 7      October 28      Women's History

Eleanor FLEXNER, *Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States* (1959), pp. vii-x, 41-61. □

Caroll SMITH-ROSENBERG, "The New Woman and the New History," *Feminist Studies* 3 (1975): 185-198. □

Linda KERBER, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *Journal of American History* 75 (1988): 9-39. □

Mary RYAN, *Mysteries of Sex: Tracing Women & Men Through American History* (2006). □

Laurel Thatcher ULRICH, *Well-Behaved Women Seldom Make History* (2007), pp. 191-222. □

### Week 8      November 4      The Cultural Turn (1980s-1990s)

Joan SCOTT, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91 (1986): 1053-1075. □

George CHAUNCEY, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World* (1994). □

Gail BEDERMAN, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (1995). □

James LIVINGSTON, *The World Turned Inside Out* (2010), pp. 37-54. □

### Week 9      November 11      War and Military History

Christian APPY, *Working-Class War: American Combat Soldiers and Vietnam* (1993). □

Emily ROSENBERG, *A Date Which Will Live: Pearl Harbor in American Memory* (2003). □

Robert CITINO, "Military Histories Old and New: A Reintroduction," *American Historical Review* 112 (2007), pp. 1070-1090. □

### Week 10      November 18      Digital Historiography

This week we will do and discuss our computational data mining or distant reading experiment to confirm or critique some of the historiography we have covered so far in the class.

Supporting readings to be announced.

### Week 11      November 25      Race and Whiteness

C. Vann WOODWARD, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (1955, 1966, 1974). □

Matthew Frye JACOBSON, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (1998). □

Peter KOLCHIN, "Whiteness Studies: The New History of Race in America," *Journal of American History* 89 (2002): 154-173. □

### Week 12      December 2      Transnational and Comparative History


Ian TYRELL, *Transnational Nation: United States History in Global Perspective since 1789* (2007). □

Jason KAUFMAN, *The Origins of Canadian and American Political Differences* (2009). □

Erez MANELA, "The United States in the World," in Eric Foner and Lisa McGirr, eds., *American History Now* (2011), pp. 201-220. □

## Historiographic Essay or Contribution to Group Article Due Friday, December 4

### Week 13      December 9      Historiography Now?

Daniel RODGERS, *Age of Fracture* (2011) 

Andrew HARTMAN, *A War for the Soul of America: A History of the Culture Wars* (2015)

Supporting reading TBA.

## ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

### **Prerequisites and Antirequisites:**

Unless you have either the requisites for this course, as described in the Academic Calendar description of the course, or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites. The Academic Calendar description of each course also indicates which classes are considered antirequisites, i.e., to cover such similar material that students are not permitted to receive academic credit for both courses.

### **Academic Offences:**

Scholastic Offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitute a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

### **Plagiarism:**

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offense (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

The following rules pertain to the acknowledgements necessary in academic papers.

A. In using another writer's words, you must both place the words in quotation marks and acknowledge that the words are those of another writer.

You are plagiarizing if you use a sequence of words, a sentence or a paragraph taken from other writers without acknowledging them to be theirs. Acknowledgement is indicated either by (1) mentioning the author and work from which the words are borrowed in the text of your paper; or by (2) placing a footnote number at the end of the quotation in your text, and including a correspondingly numbered footnote at the bottom of the page (or in a separate reference section at the end of your essay). This footnote should indicate author, title of the work, place and date of Publication and page number. Method (2) given above is usually preferable for academic essays because it provides the reader with more information about your sources and leaves your text uncluttered with parenthetical and tangential references. In either case words taken from another author must be enclosed in quotation marks or set off from your text by single spacing and

indentation in such a way that they cannot be mistaken for your own words. Note that you cannot avoid indicating quotation simply by changing a word or phrase in a sentence or paragraph which is not your own.

B. In adopting other writer's ideas, you must acknowledge that they are theirs.

You are plagiarizing if you adopt, summarize, or paraphrase other writers' trains of argument, ideas or sequences of ideas without acknowledging their authorship according to the method of acknowledgement given in 'A' above. Since the words are your own, they need not be enclosed in quotation marks. Be certain, however, that the words you use are entirely your own; where you must use words or phrases from your source; these should be enclosed in quotation marks, as in 'A' above.

Clearly, it is possible for you to formulate arguments or ideas independently of another writer who has expounded the same ideas, and whom you have not read. Where you got your ideas is the important consideration here. Do not be afraid to present an argument or idea without acknowledgement to another writer, if you have arrived at it entirely independently. Acknowledge it if you have derived it from a source outside your own thinking on the subject.

In short, use of acknowledgements and, when necessary, quotation marks is necessary to distinguish clearly between what is yours and what is not. Since the rules have been explained to you, if you fail to make this distinction, your instructor very likely will do so for you, and they will be forced to regard your omission as intentional literary theft. Plagiarism is a serious offence which may result in a student's receiving an 'F' in a course or, in extreme cases, in their suspension from the University.

## **Medical Issues:**

The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet his/her academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Please go to [https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/medical\\_accommodations\\_link\\_for\\_OOR.pdf](https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/medical_accommodations_link_for_OOR.pdf) to read about the University's policy on medical accommodation. This site provides links to the necessary forms. In the event of illness, you should contact Academic Counselling as soon as possible. The Academic Counsellors will determine, in consultation with the student, whether or not accommodation should be requested. They will subsequently contact the instructors in the relevant courses about the accommodation. Once the instructor has made a decision about whether to grant an accommodation, the student should contact his/her instructors to determine a new due date for tests, assignments, and exams.

### **SUPPORT SERVICES:**

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to [Mental Health@Western](mailto:MentalHealth@Western), <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

*Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation.*

If you have any further questions or concerns please contact, Morgan Sheriff, Undergraduate Program Advisor, Department of History, 519-661-2111 x84999 or [msherif5@uwo.ca](mailto:msherif5@uwo.ca)