

History 3306F

The United States in the Nineteenth Century

Fall 2023

Instructor: Laurel Clark Shire, Associate Professor

Email: lshire@uwo.ca

This is a **draft** syllabus update 14 June 2023. Please see the course site on OWL for a final version.

Course Description

Many things changed in the United States between the Early Republic (1776-1815) and the turn of the 20th century. Technology reshaped American landscapes, farms, homes, and workplaces. The USA expanded into new territory, and forced thousands of indigenous people to relocate in order to make the best land available to white families. Americans consumed more goods, as economic markets expanded and increasingly sorted them into distinct “classes.” Religious revivals rocked America and launched numerous reform movements. Many of the women who joined those reform causes soon demanded formal political rights for themselves. Slavery ended in a fiery conflagration, but race became even more divisive in the age of eugenics and segregation. Working people demanded more rights and protections as the captains of industry garnered massive wealth. Americans came to believe that they were in the vanguard of human progress, and they increasingly deployed the idea of progress as leverage in social, cultural, and political debates.

In this course we will read some of the best recent scholarship published about the U.S. in the nineteenth century. Each week, a book or collection of articles will broaden and deepen your knowledge of this period of American History in order to prepare you to analyze primary historical sources. You will learn to read scholarship analytically – looking for each historian’s argument and interpretive framework. You will use the historical background you develop from this reading to offer your own, original analyses of primary historical sources. Class time will primarily be spent in discussion, with occasional short lectures or quizzes.

Antirequisite(s): History 3305E.

Prerequisite(s): 1.0 History course at the 2200-level or above.

Learning Outcomes

Content - By the end of this course successful students will be able to:

- describe the social and political order of the United States in the 1800s

- describe major events and changes in the U.S. in the 19th century, especially those related to slavery, Indigenous dispossession, social reform, and the rise of modern capitalism
- explain the significance of the above to individuals, groups, the social order and the history of North America

Skills - By the end of this course you will be able to

- identify, analyze, and interpret primary historical sources
- identify the argument as well as the relevant information in secondary scholarly articles and books
- write a properly cited essay with a strong argument and persuasive evidence

Methods of Evaluation

Participation in class	20%
Reverse Outlines (7/10 due before class)	15%
Primary Source Analyses (2 in class)	10%
Midterm Exam (Nov. 9)	25%
Final Exam	30%

Participation (20%)

Your participation grade is worth 20% of your grade in this course because this is a relatively small seminar-style course, and the conversations we have in class will provide information and learning opportunities that cannot be provided elsewhere. Your participation grade will be based on your contributions and preparedness in class – not whether you speak, but whether what you say reflects that you have done the reading and can offer reflections and analyses of it. Active listening to me and your peers is also part of this grade. If you feel anxiety about speaking in class, please discuss your options with me as soon as you enroll in the course. I have many strategies that I have used in the past to help shy or anxious students earn their full participation marks, and I will be very happy to work with you. In class assessments, such as primary document analyses or pop quizzes, is also part of this grade. You **MUST** bring all readings and assigned writing (email is preferred) with you to class on the due dates – failing to bring them to class will lower your grade.

We will meet 13 times in seminar this semester, and each of those seminar meetings will be an opportunity for you to earn 7.7 points toward your participation grade. During class, I keep track of who makes valuable contributions, listens actively, and engages with the material and with your classmates. Excused absences are omitted from this grade. Missing one class will result in a 0% for participation that week – and thus will reduce your best possible total participation mark to 92%, even if you are engaged at every other

meeting. Missing two will reduce that *best possible* participation mark to 84%, missing 3 classes will reduce it to 76%, missing 4 classes will reduce it to 69%, missing 5 class meetings will reduce it to 61% and missing 6 of our seminar discussions will result in a 53% or lower for participation. Please understand how this math works before you skip class.

An excused absence will not affect your grade, but it will change the way your other weekly participation scores are calculated (rather than 13 weeks to earn 100 points, you will only have 12, making each week worth more – 8.3 points rather than 7.7). If you find yourself in a situation in which you cannot attend at least 8 of 13 weeks, you should consider withdrawing from the course, as it will be difficult for you to be successful.

If you are ill, please do not come to class. If you have a cold, please wear a mask if you are able to do so, and I will do the same. **If you wish to be excused from class**, you must provide evidence to the Academic Counseling office in your home faculty that you were ill, or attending a medical appointment or participating in a University athletics match, or unable to attend due to a personal emergency. Unexcused absences, as well as frequent tardiness, will harm your participation grade and will hamper your ability to be successful in the course. It is up to you to provide explanations and supporting documentation to Academic Counseling, I will not remind you to provide them and I cannot accept them from you directly (to ensure privacy, confidentiality, and equity).

Comportment and Courtesy: Come to class on time. Turn off your phones. Feel free to snack as long as it is not disruptive to discussion and so long as you clean up after yourself. We will take a break about 75 minutes into class time, so please plan to use that break for washroom visits. If you **MUST** take notes on a smartphone, tablet, or laptop, please stay on task, do not multi-task during class, and please close your device during discussion as a courtesy to your classmates. I am not the technology police, and I will not interrupt class to correct this behavior. But I will mark your participation as zero (0) if you are off task during class. It is distracting to me and other students, and disrespectful.

Written Assignments

Most assignments are due in class (preferably by email just before class to lshire@uwo.ca). Written assignments are always preferred in electronic form (.docx or .pdf) and sent to lshire@uwo.ca. All written material in this course will be examined for plagiarism using the latest software tools available.

Late assignments should be emailed to lshire@uwo.ca, and **will be downgraded 5 points per day late** (i.e., on day 2 you will get the best grade out of 95 points rather than 100). **After one week I will no longer accept**

any assignment unless you have received an accommodation from Academic Counseling (for anything worth more than 10%) or from me (for assignments worth less than 10%) *ahead of the deadline*. If you anticipate having a hard time meeting a particular deadline, please come talk to me (or Academic Counseling, as required) about an extension. Make-up exams can only be arranged with the approval of the Dean.

Primary Source Interpretations (10%)

You will write two Primary Source interpretations in class. We will begin with one in class on October 5, and then you will prepare one before class on October 19. Following that, you will be expected to write more formal analytical essays about primary sources for the midterm on November 9 and as part of the final exam in December.

Reverse Outlines/Reading Notes (15%)

(complete 7 of 10, each 2.1% of course grade)

Think of these as “labs” for history students. On the dates indicated below, please submit a typed “reverse outline” of the book assigned that day. Turn it in before class to lshire@uwo.ca.

This is intended to help you learn how to effectively skim a scholarly book (using the method introduced in the first class). A reverse outline is a summary of a book. Depending on the length of the book, each one of these should be from 2-4 pages long. The first one is mandatory for all students (so that we can work on any skimming and note-taking questions together in class). In your reverse outline, you should include an introductory paragraph, a short paragraph about each chapter, and a concluding paragraph to cover each of these items:

- Paragraph 1: restates the main thesis in your own words and lists the major types of evidence and methods used
- Paragraphs 2-?: each lists the thesis and main ideas or subjects of each chapter
- Final Paragraph: personal reflections and opinions about what you found convincing/confusing in the book (and why) and this final paragraph is where you are free to mention any connections it elicited to the present or to other course readings.

Mid-Term Exam (25%)

In class on 9 November, you will complete a mid-term examination.

Final Exam (30%)

You will write one final exam in this course. It will feature identifications, chronological questions, some short answer questions about major course themes, and a series of primary sources that you must be prepared to interpret in short essays. You may bring all the books and articles we have read this semester into the exam, along with your reverse outlines. This is a test of your

analytical ability and critical thinking skills, not your ability to memorize names and dates.

Make-up tests, midterms, and exams can only be approved by Academic Counselling. Please see https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html for department procedures and requirements involving make-up tests and exams.

Extra Credit: If you attend at least one of the Goodman Lectures (Oct. 3-5, 2023) I will apply 2 extra points to your overall participation mark. Please see me at the lecture and be sure I note your attendance, or screen shot yourself in the Zoom room and send that to me.

Course Materials

Course texts are available at the library and the bookstore, and articles can be found via the databases at lib.uwo.ca.

Davis, Janet M. *The Gospel of Kindness: Animal Welfare and the Making of Modern America* (Oxford University Press, 2016) – Ebook via Weldon

Douglass, Frederick. *A Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, 1818-1895* (1845) available in print or free full-text online

Edwards, Laura F. *Only the Clothes on Her Back: Clothing and the Hidden History of Power in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (Oxford University Press, 2022) - Ebook at Weldon

Hemphill, Katie. *Bawdy City: Commercial Sex and Regulation in Baltimore, 1790-1915* (Cambridge University Press, 2019). Ebook via Weldon.

Hoy, Benjamin. *A Line of Blood and Dirt: Creating the Canada-United States Border Across Indigenous Lands* (Oxford University Press, 2021) – Ebook via Weldon

Isenberg, Nancy. *White Trash: The 400-Year Untold History of Class in America* (Viking, 2016) – copies at Kings and Brescia, hard copy requested for Weldon – consider purchasing this book

Jacobs, Harriet. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself*, 1861

Peterson, Dawn. *Indians in the Family: Adoption and the Politics of Antebellum Expansion* (Harvard University Press, 2017) – 1 hard copy at Weldon so consider purchasing this book

Pryor, Elizabeth Stordeur. *Colored Travelers: Mobility and the Fight for Citizenship before the Civil War*. (UNC Press, 2016) EBook via Weldon

Thomas, III, William G. *A Question of Freedom: The Families Who Challenged Slavery from the Nation's Founding to the Civil War* (Yale University Press, 2020) – Ebook requested for Weldon

Williams, Beth Lew. *The Chinese Must Go: Violence, Exclusion, and the Making of the Alien in America* (Harvard University Press, 2018)- Ebook via Weldon

Other course readings are available full-text online via Weldon Library.

Additional Statements

Communication policies:

The best way to reach me is email, lshire@uwo.ca (which pops to profshire@gmail.com). Please feel free to drop in during office hours, which is time set aside for you to come and speak with me about anything related to the course, or to your academic career. I also encourage you to email me to set up an appointment anytime. I am happy to meet over Zoom or in person at a time that will work for both of us.

Classroom behavior:

Please be on time for class, and please be respectful of me and your peers at all times. We will take a break about 75 minutes into class, and if possible please use that opportunity to use the washroom without leaving class while it's in session. You may eat and drink in class, so long as you clean up after yourself, and are not disruptive to the discussion.

Use of electronic devices:

Please do not use electronic devices for tasks unrelated to the seminar discussion during class. If you must access the reading that week on a screen, be sure to stay on task and turn off any notifications or sounds that might distract you and those around you. If you are off task on a device during class, that will be obvious to me and everyone else around you, and you will receive a zero for participation that day. You will not be allowed access to electronic devices during pop quizzes, tests or exams. Do not record audio or video of our class meetings without written permission from me and from your classmates.

Use of generative AI tools: All work submitted in this course must be your own. You may not make use of generative AI tools like ChatGPT for any assignments in this course.

Please review the Department of History's shared policies and statements for all undergraduate courses at:

https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html for important information regarding accessibility options, make-up exams, medical accommodations, health and wellness, academic integrity, plagiarism, and more.

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