History 6352: Cultural History of the U.S., Spring 2016  
Mondays, 2:30-4:25, Rockefeller 110

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Office Hours: Wednesday, 2-4, and by appointment

This interdisciplinary graduate seminar will focus on recent readings in American cultural history (with an emphasis on modernity), which should help us to explore the “cultural turn” in History more broadly, as well as the rise of Cultural Studies and American Studies. Students from all related disciplines are welcome (English, Comparative Literature, Anthropology, Music, History of Art, History of Architecture, STS, Performing and Media Arts, etc.). The course is meant for anyone studying History, and/or the United States, and/or Culture.

Students will have two options for written work (PLEASE TURN IN HARD COPIES FOR ALL PAPER ASSIGNMENTS):  
--Three 2000-word review essays, each one dealing with at least two books from the syllabus (due on 3/7, 4/11, and 5/13); OR  
--One 6000-word essay due on 5/20 (note: these word counts do not include references/citations). Students who choose this second option should speak with me mid-semester to discuss possibilities. This could be a historiographic essay dealing with several books from the syllabus; a historiographic essay dealing with a few books from the syllabus and a few books in related fields that you’ve read on your own; or a work of primary research that explicitly makes use of some of the history and theory from the syllabus in its framing. I’m also open to other suggestions.

Each student will also be the lead presenter/facilitator for one session, either alone or with one classmate, depending on how many people we have in the class. Presenters will have a conference with me a few days before their session, to discuss their approach to the material. Presentations will be extremely brief (5-10 minutes)—they are meant only to spark discussion—but will also entail the preparation of a one-page handout for the class.

I. Overview

Week 1. Monday, 2/1. Introduction.

--Allan Megill on historical epistemology and coherence (packet)

**Week 3: NO CLASS. (President’s Day)**

**II. The Nineteenth Century**

**Week 4. 2/22. Native American Studies.**
-- Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, “Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or, You’re So Paranoid You Probably Think This Essay Is About You” (packet)


**Week 5. 2/29. The History of Capitalism Turn?**
-- Michel de Certeau, excerpt from *The Practice of Everyday Life* (packet)


**III. Interlude**

**Week 6. 3/7. A Step Back: The Cultural Turn/Cultural Studies.**
Special Guest Discussant for the first hour of class: Prof. Larry Glickman
-- Cook, Glickman, O’Malley, eds., The Cultural Turn in US History (U. Chicago Press): Please read Parts I and IV, plus at least one selection from Part II and at least one selection from Part III.
--Burgett and Hendler, eds., Keywords for American Cultural Studies (NYU Press): Please read five of your own selections, plus the Introduction and the following entries: Affect, Capitalism, Citizenship, Culture, Empire, Ethnicity, Gender, Modern, Performance, Public, Queer, Race, Space.

NOTE: FIRST REVIEW ESSAY DUE TODAY IF YOU’RE TAKING WRITING OPTION #1.


IV. The Twentieth Century

Week 7. 3/14. The Normativity Turn?
--excerpt from Foucault, The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1 (packet)


--Verlyn Klinkenborg, Several Short Sentences about Writing (Vintage): Please read however much you find helpful; I’d recommend the first 100 pages.

Weeks 9 and 10. NO CLASS. (Spring Break)

Week 11. 4/11. The Persistence of Race.
-- Jonathan Holloway, Jim Crow Wisdom: Memory and Identity in Black America since 1940 (U. N. Carolina Press)
-- Claudia Rankine, excerpt from Citizen (packet)

NOTE: SECOND REVIEW ESSAY DUE TODAY IF YOU’RE TAKING WRITING OPTION #1.

Further Reading: Saadiya Hartman, Lose Your Mother: A Journey along the Atlantic Slave Route; Louis Masur, The Soiling of Old Glory: The Story of a Photograph That Shocked America; Mitchell Duneier, Slim’s Table: Race, Respectability, Masculinity; Ruth Feldstein, How It Feels to Be Free: Black Women Entertainers and the Civil Rights Movement; Leigh Raiford, The Civil Rights Movement in American Memory; Ta-Nehisi Coates, Between the World and Me.

Week 12. 4/18. The Transnational Turn? The Media Studies Turn?
Special Guest Discussant for the first hour of class: Prof. Penny Von Eschen

-- Timothy Mitchell, “The Stage of Modernity” (packet)

Further Reading: Penny Von Eschen, Satchmo Blows up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War; Ruben Flores, Mexico’s Melting Pot and Civil Rights in the United States; Amy Kaplan, Cultures of United States Imperialism; Laura Wexler, Tender Violence: Domestic Visions in an Age of U.S. Imperialism; James Baughman, The Republic of Mass Culture: Journalism, Filmmaking, and Broadcasting in America Since 1941; Evelyn Alsultany, Arabs and Muslims in the Media: Race and Representation after 9/11; Ian Tyrrell, Reforming the World: The Creation of America’s Moral Empire.

Week 13. 4/25. The Culture of Work.
-- Carlo Rotella, Good with Their Hands: Boxers, Bluesmen, and Other Characters from the Rust Belt (U. California Press)
-- Jefferson Cowie, “Something’s Happening to People Like Me” (packet)
-- Fredric Jameson, excerpt from “The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism” (packet)

Week 14. 5/2. The Spatial/Environmental Turn? The Science Studies Turn?


V. American Culture in a Queer-View Mirror

Week 15. 5/9. The Intersex/Transgender Turn?
-- Elizabeth Reis, Bodies in Doubt: An American History of Intersex (Johns Hopkins U. Press) (entire)
-- Donna Haraway, “The Promises of Monsters: A Regenerative Politics for Inappropriate/d Others” (packet)

Further Reading: Joanne Meyerowitz, How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States; Judith Butler, Gender Trouble and Bodies That Matter; Anne Fausto-Sterling, Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality; Susan Stryker, Transgender History; Judith Jack Halberstam, In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives.

NOTE: THIRD REVIEW ESSAY DUE ON FRIDAY, MAY 13, BY 4PM, IF YOU’RE TAKING WRITING OPTION #1.

IF YOU’RE TAKING WRITING OPTION #2, YOUR ONE LONG PAPER IS DUE ON FRIDAY, MAY 20, BY 4PM.

PAPERS CAN BE DELIVERED IN MY MAILBOX IN MCGRAW 451 OR SLID UNDER THE DOOR OF MY OFFICE (MCGRAW350).

LIST OF BOOKS TO PURCHASE
Note: All of these titles will be available in the textbook section of Buffalo Street Books (listed under this course) for the next month or so, after which time the remaining copies will be sent back to publishers. BSB is Ithaca’s only independent (and cooperatively owned) bookstore, located downtown. Store details:
Hours: Mon–Sat 10-8, Sun 10-5. Address: DeWitt Mall, 215 N. Cayuga (entrance on Buffalo between Tioga and Cayuga).
Cotton Seiler, Republic of Drivers (U. Chicago Press), 9780226745640
Angela Pulley Hudson, Real Native Genius (U. N. Carolina), 9781469624433
Scott Sandage, Born Losers (Harvard), 978-0674021075
Cook, Glickman, O’Malley, eds., The Cultural Turn in US History (U. Chicago), 9870226115078
Burgett and Hendler, eds., Keywords for American Cultural Studies (NYU), 9780814708019
Julian Carter, The Heart of Whiteness (Duke), 9780822339489
Brian Herrera, Latin Numbers (U Michigan) 978-0472052646
Jonathan Holloway, Jim Crow Wisdom (U. N. Carolina), 978-1469626413
Melani McAlister, Epic Encounters (U. California), 978-0520244993
Carlo Rotella, Good with Their Hands (U. California), 978-0520243354
Shiloh Krupar, Hot Spotter’s Report (U. Minnesota), 978-0816676392
Elizabeth Reis, Bodies in Doubt, (Johns Hopkins), 978-1421405834
Verlyn Klinkenborg, Several Short Sentences about Writing (Vintage), 978-0307279415

These books will also be available on the Cornell library system as “networked resources” or on 2-hour reserve at OLIN Library. Please bring the actual book to class when we are scheduled to discuss it. If you read a book on reserve, then please bring precise notes with you to class.

NOTE: THERE IS ALSO A XEROX PACKET FOR THE COURSE TO BE PURCHASED AT THE UPS STORE IN COLLEGETOWN, AT 407 COLLEGE AVE. PLEASE GO TO THE STORE AS SOON AS YOU CAN, ESPECIALLY SINCE THEY MIGHT RUN OUT OF PACKETS, IN WHICH CASE THERE WILL BE A 24-HOUR WAIT WHILE THEY PRINT NEW ONES. Whenever we will be discussing a reading from the packet (almost every week), please bring it to class.