

**History 900: An Introduction to History for US Historians**  
(unexpanded version—lacks additional readings assigned by visitors)

Nan Enstad  
Office: 5113 Humanities  
Phone: 263-1846  
email: nenstad@wisc.edu

5257 Humanities  
Mondays 9-12  
Office hours: M4-5:30; W 10:30-12  
and by appointment

**Course Description:**

This is the second year that this introductory seminar has been offered in the US history program here at UW. It's joined this year by HIST 701, the one-credit course required of all history graduate students across field of specialization. Both of these courses are the result of conversations and town hall meetings in the department over the past few years about how to improve the experience of doing graduate work in history here at UW. We realized that rigorous academic training in the twenty-first century includes more than training in critical reading and researching. Your path through the history program will encounter many of the innovations that these conversations have prompted, including more training in teaching skills and more public presentation of your research. The two introductory courses are among the most important of the changes recently instituted.

Why require a 3-credit introductory seminar for new US history graduate students? In the past, new graduate students in US history have taken no common course whatsoever, with no shared set of readings, no training in basic skills that graduate work will require, no introduction to the challenges involved in becoming a professional historian, no mechanism either for meeting each other or the faculty in US history. We decided that a required course was the best way to address all of these issues, though no course can complete your training in any of these long-term goals. Indeed, we want to alert you immediately to the fact that becoming a historian is an exciting process that is much more complex and meaningful than simply mastering a field of specialization. You are entering a profession that is intensely public, requiring skills as a teacher, academic citizen, and public intellectual. We will talk about how our research and teaching influences society—a far cry from the stereotypic image of an “ivory tower” cut off from the world. At the same time, this profession requires highly specialized skills in research and writing gained through long hours of solitary work and collaboration with others. This course is our chance to talk about the myriad of aspects of becoming a historian. In a sense, this is the course in which we learn about the bus—the dashboard instruments, maintenance tips, a few maps—while in your other courses you'll barrel down the highway.

More specifically, this course will have the following components:

- An introduction to fields, themes, debates and questions within US history. Through readings, discussions, and visits from US history faculty we will explore a wide range of issues and approaches to US history that should be part of a well-rounded historians' understanding. We will consider the whole chronological period and a diversity of topics.
- Attention to our central role as teachers of history. We will especially focus on the challenges of teaching the history survey, both because this is a course that most of you will someday teach and because the preliminary exam requires you to design a history survey syllabus. Along with conversations about balancing competing demands on content, we will also talk about teaching techniques, and how to begin the lifelong task of learning to teach well.
- A collaborative introduction to research skills and resources. We will pool our efforts to discover the wealth of resources awaiting US historians and will develop some basic skills needed in order to launch a research project based on primary sources.
- Ongoing discussion about professional development. We will talk about a variety of professional development questions, such as: What does a research/funding proposal look like? What do you need to know to stay on track in your program? How do you find conferences, listserves, and organizations to provide you with a broader intellectual community? What are the differences between types of schools and types of jobs in which history PhDs work?

- A consideration of professional historians' role in the community. We will explore various ways that historians participate in the world and make their research and/or teaching available outside of classrooms and academic journals.
- A beginning of collaborative efforts with classmates. Perhaps the most important element of this seminar is it will provide you a context in which to get to know each other. This can be fun, but it's also important to your intellectual and professional development. You'll learn as much from each other informally in graduate school as you will in seminars. In addition, friends you make in graduate school will be your professional colleagues throughout your professional life. In seminar, we'll bounce things off each other, learn to question, share resources, and respectfully critique each others' work. We'll talk about what builds good seminar discussions and collaborative efforts, and how to take critique gracefully.
- An introduction to the faculty. A key goal of the seminar is to introduce you to the US history faculty and to give you a chance to see who they are so that you'll feel more comfortable taking courses with them, teaching or researching with them, asking them to serve on your committees, or seeking out their help in other ways.

### **Seminar Format:**

As you can see, we will be busy! This necessitates a quite varied structure to our time together. Our seminar meetings will generally be divided into two 90 minute parts: a workshop/discussion with just us, and a panel discussion on a particular topic with faculty or graduate students.

Workshop/discussions: We will be pooling our efforts in gaining research skills and resources, sharing written work, and discussing historiographic and teaching issues. Our time will be very hands-on—though it is Monday morning, please do whatever you have to in order to be ready to take active part right away.

Panel discussions: Most of these will be panel discussions with US history faculty on historiographic questions or significant fields of study. We will also meet with advanced graduate students. Each of you will be assigned as facilitator to a panel discussion. (More on this under “course requirements.”)

### **Required Readings:**

#### **I. Books:**

The following three books are crucial manuals for aspects of your graduate career; I predict you will refer to each repeatedly long after this semester. They are for sale at Rainbow Books (426 W. Gilman, off State Street) and on reserve at College Library. I recommend you buy them if you possibly can.

Thomas Bender, Philip M. Katz, Colin Palmer, *The Education of Historians for the Twenty-first Century*, University of Illinois Press for the American Historical Association, 2004.

Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams, *The Craft of Research*, University of Chicago Press, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2003.

Wilbert J. McKeachie, *Teaching Tips: Strategies, Research and Theory for College and University Teachers*, Houghton Mifflin, 11<sup>th</sup> ed., 2002.

#### **II. American Historical Association Pamphlet Publications:**

*Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct*, American Historical Association, 2003. (hand out in class)

Constance Schulz, Page Putnam Miller, Aaron Marrs, Kevin Allen, *Careers for Students of History*, American Historical Association, 2002. On reserve and available for purchase through the AHA ([www.theaha.org](http://www.theaha.org)).

#### **III. Articles:**

There are TWO sets of articles that you are responsible for:

A Packet of Readings available on our reserve shelf at the Historical Society, southwest corner of the Reading Room. This packet includes all articles listed on this *unexpanded* version of the syllabus.

Additional Readings assigned weekly by Panel Discussion Guests. These will either be distributed electronically or they will be placed on our reserve shelf at the Historical Society. You are responsible for acquiring these readings each week. These are not listed on this syllabus; at the end of the semester you will receive an expanded syllabus for your records with all readings from the semester listed.

#### IV. Historiography Book:

Each of you will read a book that will introduce you to some aspect of historiography. These books are listed later in the syllabus, and are on reserve at College Library.

#### Course Requirements:

Assignments are spelled out in detail on the course schedule. Written assignments are always due at the beginning of class unless you are submitting them to a peer reviewer; in that case they are due at noon the day before seminar over email. When you are asked to bring copies of reports for everyone in the class, these are also due at the beginning of our meeting. Since our workshop format depends on everyone contributing their bit, it is very important that you come to class fully prepared.

There are three kinds of written assignments:

One-page Reports. These are reports, usually on resources, that you compile and share with everyone in the class. You will do five of these. Collectively, we will be creating a source book of information for your graduate career. (30% total on an A/N basis.)

Book Review. (20%.)

Research Proposal (developed over three due dates) (40%.)

Participation in the seminar is composed of several components (10% total):

Everyone is expected to contribute in a graduate seminar; we will be emphasizing ways to promote cooperative and rigorous exchange in our discussion.

You will also sign up to facilitate a panel discussion. Your task here is to figure out ways to get student questions and participation involved in the discussion. This will involve meeting with the faculty in advance of the session, and brainstorming questions or ways to connect their topic to discussions we have had. It also may involve communicating with the class via email or otherwise about the upcoming presentation.

You will also be responsible for peer review of the book review and the research proposal draft (peer assignments will be made in class). Make sure you come to class on the given days with written feedback prepared.

#### Course Schedule:

**NOTE: THIS VERSION OF THE SYLLABUS DOES NOT INCLUDE ADDITIONAL READINGS ASSIGNED BY FACULTY FOR THEIR PANEL DISCUSSIONS! YOU ARE EQUALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THESE READINGS, TBA.**

September 2 First Meeting, Getting Acquainted, and Reception with Faculty

September 6 Labor Day—no class

September 13

9:00-10:30 Discussion: We Historians

Discussion: Seminars, Book Reviews and Historiography

10:30-12:00 Panel: How to Read More Than You Thought Humanly Possible and Other Helpful Tips

(Guests: Honor Sachs, Brenna Greer, Dave Gilbert)

Reading:

William C. Cronon, "Getting Ready to Do History"

([www.carnegiefoundation.org/CID/essays/CID\\_history\\_Cronon.pdf](http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/CID/essays/CID_history_Cronon.pdf) or in packet)

Catherine R. Stimpson, "A Letter to a Grad Student" (in packet)

Bender et al, pp. 3-84 "We Historians"

September 20

9:00-10:30 Workshop: The Analytical Book Review

10:30-12:00 Panel: US History International (Guests: Jeremi Suri, Nan Enstad).

Reading: the book you are reviewing.

**DUE: 1000 word book review of a major work in U.S. history in a field you know reasonably well. TURN IN SUNDAY SEPT 19 BY NOON to your peer reviewers and to me. Come to class with written feedback on the book review for which you are a peer reviewer.**

September 27

9:00-10:30 Discussion: Historiography Resources

10:30-12:00 Panel: Considering Region in US History (Guests: Jean Lee and Bill Cronon).

Reading: Sign up for a book on historiography listed on the last page of the syllabus.

**DUE: One page single-spaced report on the historiography resource book you read. The report should summarize the book's goal, content, format, and your assessment of usefulness for different purposes. PLEASE BRING COPIES FOR EVERYONE IN THE CLASS.**

October 4

9:00-10:30 Discussion: Finding a Research Topic and Question

10:30-12:00 Panel: Perspectives on Political History (Guests: John Cooper, Steve Kantrowitz, Art McEvoy).

Reading: Booth et al., pp. 3-240 (quickly).

**DUE: A one page single-spaced report on a primary source collection held here at UW, in the historical society or elsewhere on campus. The goal is for you to dig around and find sources that could help you explore a research topic related to your interests. Your report should describe the sources or collection in enough detail so someone else can get a sense of it (what or who it's about; when; where; why was this collected/preserved by UW; what is there and how much) and should give at least two examples of the sorts of questions that could be explored using these sources. PLEASE BRING COPIES FOR EVERYONE IN THE CLASS.**

October 11

9:00-10:30 Discussion: Finding Primary Sources That Address or Complicate Your Question

10:30-12:00 Panel: Perspectives on the History of Capitalism (Guest: Colleen Dunlavy)

Reading: Booth et al., pp. 35-89 (carefully).

“Using Primary Sources on the Web” [www.lib.washington.edu/subject/History/RUSA/](http://www.lib.washington.edu/subject/History/RUSA/)  
(or in packet)

**DUE: A one page single-spaced report on a website collection of primary sources. Your report should explain the goals and content of the website and answer the questions on pp 3-6 of “Using Primary Sources on the Web.” PLEASE BRING COPIES FOR EVERYONE IN THE CLASS.**

October 18

9:00-10:30 Workshop: Developing and Refining Your Question

10:30-12:00 Workshop: What Makes a Good Research Proposal?

Reading: Booth et al., pp. 40-55.

Sample Research Proposals by UW Grad Students (handouts).

**DUE: Research Project Topic Statement in the three part model listed on page 56 of Booth et al. Please do literally use this model even if it feels awkward. Please also include a paragraph that explains this more fully, including why you are interested in this topic. Make sure your statement and paragraph contain the basic parameters of who, what, when, where, as well as your more analytical question.**

October 25

9:00-10:30 Discussion: Professional Standards and Recent Controversies

10:30-12:00 Panel: Making US History Multiracial (Guests: Gayle Plummer, Susan Johnson)

Reading: *Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct* (handout)

Packet about four controversies (Bellesiles, Ambrose, Foner, Ellis) on shelf in historical society. Packet contains the following:

Stanley N. Katz, et al., "Report of the Emory University Investigative Committee in the matter of Professor Michael Bellesiles," Emory University, July 10, 2002, excerpt.

"Statement of Michael Bellesiles on Emory University's Inquiry into Arming America," [2002]

Fred Barnes, "Now, Stephen Ambrose," *The Weekly Standard*, January 14, 2002.

Mark Lewis, "Ambrose Has Done it Before," *Forbes.com*, January 7, 2002.

"Stephen Ambrose, Prolific Author and Historian, Dies at 66," *New York Times*, Oct 13, 2002.

James O. Morris and Philip S. Foner, "Philip Foner and the Writing of the Joe Hill Case: An Exchange," *Labor History* 12:1 (Winter 1971), excerpt.

Walter V. Robinson, "Professor's Past in Doubt: Discrepancies Surface in Claim of Vietnam Duty," *Boston Globe*, June 18, 2001.

President Joanne V. Creighton, Letter to the Mount Holyoke Community, August 17, 2001.

Joseph J. Ellis, "Further Statement of Joseph J. Ellis, August 17, 2001.

November 1

9:00-10:30 Discussion: History Standards Debates and the Dilemmas of Survey Content

10:30-12:00 Panel: Perspectives on Gender and Sexuality in History

(Guests: Jeanne Boydston, Anne Enke)

Reading: Lendol Calder, "Looking for Learning in the History Survey," *Perspectives*, March 2002. ([www.historians.org/Perspectives/Issues/search.cfm](http://www.historians.org/Perspectives/Issues/search.cfm) or in packet.)

McKeachie, pp. 1-28, 291-304.

Packet on History Standards Debate at Secondary Level. Packet contains the following:

Gary Nash, Charlotte Crabtree and Ross Dunn, "In the Matter of History," in *History on Trial: Culture Wars and the Teaching of the Past* (Knopf, 1998).

Norman Draper, "Dust-up Over History Standards" *Minneapolis Star Tribune* Oct 30, 2003, 1A.

Katherine Kersten, "Critics Would Teach About an Oppressive America," *Mpls Star Tribune*, Nov 9, 2003, 12AA.

Editorial, "Social Studies: Example of Civic Engagement," *Mpls Star Tribune*, Nov 9, 2003, 12AA.

Nick Coleman, "Indian History is Everyone's," *Mpls Star Tribune*, Nov 16, 2003, 3B.

Norman Draper, "Your Yore, or Mine?" *Mpls Star Tribune*, Dec 14, 2003, 1B.

Norman Draper, "Fifty Professors Endorse History Standards," *Mpls Star Tribune*, Jan 21, 2004, 1B

Norman Draper, "History Guidelines Take Another Punch," *Mpls Star Tribune*, Feb 18, 2004, 3B

November 8

9:00-10:30 Discussion: Teaching Through Active Learning and Lecturing

10:30-12:00 Panel: Teaching History: Its Place in Your Graduate Education

(Guests: Karen Benjamin, Tyina Steptoe, David Herzberg)

Reading: Peter J. Frederick, "Four Reflections on Teaching and Learning History," *Perspectives*, October 2001. ([www.historians.org/Perspectives/Issues/search.cfm](http://www.historians.org/Perspectives/Issues/search.cfm) or in packet.)

Michael Penn, "The Past Walks With Us," *On Wisconsin*, Fall 2001.

([www.uwalumni.com/onwisconsin/fall01/freedom1.html](http://www.uwalumni.com/onwisconsin/fall01/freedom1.html) or in packet.)

McKeachie, pp. 29-69; 117-160.

November 15

9:00-10:30 Workshop: Goals of a Survey

10:30-12:00 Panel: Perspectives on Urban and Economic History  
(Guests: Stan Schultz and Diane Lindstrom)

Reading: McKeachie, read the rest of the book quickly.

**DUE: A one page single-spaced list of the goals you would consider in creating a survey course, in rough order of priority. Please use complete sentences and explain your reasons. PLEASE BRING COPIES FOR EVERYONE IN THE CLASS.**

November 22

9:00-10:30 Panel: Ethnicity, Religion, and Society (Guests: Tony Michels, Chuck Cohen)

10:30-12:00 Workshop: Research Proposal Draft

Discussion: From Proposal to Final Product—Source Assessment, Argument, Writing

**DUE: Research Proposal Draft 1. This should be complete and will represent considerable initial research. Turn in Sunday Nov 21 by noon to your peer reviewers and me. Come to class with written feedback on the proposals for which you are a reviewer. (You will receive a handout describing the proposal requirements and the review process on October 18.)**

November 29

9:00-10:30 Discussion: Public History, Citizenship, Service

10:30-12:00 Panel: US History in Interdisciplinary Perspective

(Guests: Camille Guerin-Gonzales, Ron Radano, Michelle Hilmes).

Reading: Patricia Mooney-Melvin, "Professional Historians and the Challenge of Redefinition," and Constance B. Schulz, "Becoming a Public Historian," both in James B. Gardner and Peter S. LaPaglia, eds., *Public History: Essays from the Field*, Krieger Pub, 1999. (packet).

Forum: "State Budgets and the Crisis of Historical Infrastructure" with essays by William Cronen, Bruce Craig, Patrick McCormack, Clement Alexander Price, Robert C. Vaughan, and George L. Vogt. *Perspectives*, May 2004. ([www.historians.org/Perspectives/Issues/search.cfm](http://www.historians.org/Perspectives/Issues/search.cfm) or in packet.)

**DUE: One page single-spaced report on some instance of "outreach" by academic historians in which they communicate about history outside the university classroom or venues for presenting research to academic peers. This can be an example of an expanded classroom, a program in conjunction with a community organization, a connection to primary or secondary educators or public history institutions, etc. Your report should explain the basic information about the project (who, what, where, when), discuss the goals, and assess its effectiveness. Please note your sources. PLEASE BRING COPIES FOR EVERYONE IN THE CLASS.**

December 6

9:00-10:30 Discussion: Entering the Academic Community Outside UW—Conferences, Publications, Job Market.

10:30-12:00 Panel: Perspectives on Social History and Quantitative Methods (Guests: Tom Archdeacon, John Sharpless).

Reading: Schultz et al, *Careers for Students of History*.

December 13

9:00-10:30 Workshop: Presentation of Research Proposals

10:30-12:00 Discussion: Claim Your Education! Goals, Strategies, and Timelines for Success and Happiness in Grad School.

Reading: Bender et al., pp. 85-138.

**DUE: FINAL COPY OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL.**

### Books on Historiography

*NOTE: Books are on reserve at College Library and available for a three-day loan period.*

*There are two collections that introduce US historiography that all of you should know about. Both have significant flaws but are very useful in getting a sense of trends. I will ask someone to volunteer to report on each of these.*

Eric Foner, *The New American History*, rev ed. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997.

Francis Couvares, *Interpretations of American History: Patterns and Perspectives vol 1* (before Reconstruction), New York: Free Press, 2000.

Francis Couvares, *Interpretations of American History: Patterns and Perspectives vol 2* (since Reconstruction), New York: Free Press, 2000.

*Blackwell Pub. is putting out a series of books composed of historiographic articles written by historians for professional historians and graduate students. These are very detailed and are excellent ways to get a sense of developments within fields. You should be aware of this series; more "Companions" will appear each year while you are in graduate school. All of the books below are published by Blackwell Pub., London and Malden MA.*

William L. Barney, ed., *A companion to 19<sup>th</sup>-century America*. 2001.

Robert D Schulzinger, ed., *A companion to American foreign relations*. 2003

Nancy Hewitt, ed., *A companion to American women's history*. 2002.

Daniel Vickers, ed., *A companion to Colonial America*. 2003.

Jean-Christophe Agnew and Roy Rosenzweig, eds., *A companion to post-1945 America*. 2002.

Jack P. Greene and J.R. Pole, eds., *A companion to the American Revolution*. 2000.

John B. Boles, ed., *A companion to the American South*. 2002.

Philip J. Deloria and Neal Salisbury, eds., *A companion to American Indian history*. 2002.

Marilyn B. Young and Robert Buzzanco, eds., *A companion to the Vietnam War*. 2002.

*DC Heath began publishing a series called "Major Problems in American History" years ago; they have now been bought by Houghton Mifflin and new volumes and revised editions continue to appear yearly. These books are written by professional historians primarily for use in advanced undergraduate classrooms. They introduce historiographic "problems" by publishing two or three essays by historians on a given topic. They group these essays with primary documents to give undergraduates a sense of how history is made. Because they are written for undergraduates, they do not make an attempt to trace historiographic debates over time. However, they are a good way to gain a general introduction to issues within a particular field; I have used them regularly for this purpose. There are MANY of these; I list here ones that are not duplicating the Blackwell Companions, and are less than ten years old. They are now published by Houghton Mifflin, Boston MA.*

Thomas Holt and Elsa Barkley Brown, eds., *Major Problems in African American History*. 2000.

Colin Gordon, ed., *Major Problems in American History, 1920-1945*. 1999.

Jon Gjerde, ed., *Major Problems in American Immigration and Ethnic History*. 1998.

Patrick Allitt, ed., *Major Problems in American Religious History*. 2000.

Lon Kurashige and Alice Yang Murray, eds., *Major Problems in Asian American History*. 2003.

Zaragosa Vargas, ed., *Major Problems in Mexican American History*. 1999.

Michael Perman, ed., *Major Problems in the Civil War and Reconstruction 2/e*. 1998.

Leon Fink, ed., *Major Problems in the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era 2/e*. 2001.

John Harley Warner and Janet A. Tighe, eds., *Major Problems in the History of American Medicine and Public Health*. 2001.

Kathy Peiss, ed., *Major Problems in the History of American Sexuality*. 2002.

Merritt Smith and Gregory Clancey, eds., *Major Problems in the History of American Technology*. 1998.

Eileen Boris and Nelson Lichtenstein eds., *Major Problems in the History of American Workers*, 2003.

Mark A. Stoler and Melanie S. Gustafson, *Major Problems in the History of World War II*. 2003.

Clyde Milner, Anne Butler and David Lewis, *Major Problems in the History of the American West 2/e*. 1997.