

History 900
Fall Semester 2007
Mon. 9-12
5257 Humanities

Professor Susan L. Johnson
Office: 5117 Humanities
Office Hours: Tues. 1-3 & by appt.
Office Phone: 263-1848
E-mail: sljohnson5@wisc.edu

An Introduction to History for U.S. Historians

This graduate seminar is designed for incoming U.S. history graduate students in the Department of History. Its primary purpose is to introduce the study of history, in general, and of U.S. history, in particular, to future professional historians who anticipate careers in colleges and universities or else in institutions that interact with historians, such as historical societies or research libraries. Participants in the seminar also include graduate students from other departments who plan to work in the field of U.S. history broadly defined. We will consider the United States as an entity newly created out of the many places people have called home in North America, as well as the ways in which these North American places and peoples have been connected to other places and peoples around the globe. Among our concerns will be:

- the peculiar relationship each of us have to this thing called “history”
- the ingredients of a satisfying and successful graduate career in history at UW-Madison
- the day-to-day life of working historians
- the relationship between history and memory
- the history of history as an academic discipline
- the practice of history both inside and outside the academy
- the means by which professional historians produce and distribute historical knowledge
- the art of historical writing
- the craft of historical research
- the challenge of talking about history to non-specialists
- the teaching of U.S. history at the college level
- the major periods, topics, and approaches in the field of U.S. history
- the organizations and meetings that bring historians together
- the pleasures and pitfalls of working collectively with other historians
- the ethics and etiquette of being a historian

Toward these multiple ends, we will spend approximately half of each class period in animated discussion among ourselves, mulling over readings, considering writing assignments, and learning from group and individual projects. Most weeks we will spend the other half of the class listening to and then conversing with very special guests who come to impart their particular wisdom about working in the field of U.S. history. Most of these guests will be professors in the History Department, but some will be faculty members from other departments, historians from outside the university, or advanced graduate students from the History Department. Please understand that these guests have agreed to visit our class as a sort of “unpaid overtime” activity. Their presentations take time, energy, and thought, and they deserve our most intense and active engagement; they also deserve a “thank you” at the end of class or a kind word of appreciation the next time you see them around campus.

Course requirements

1. In the classroom: Faithful attendance, careful completion of weekly readings before class meets (both those assigned on this syllabus and those assigned by our guests), interactive and respectful participation in discussion. Active engagement with guest speakers is especially important. Class is a place for collective learning, and collective learning requires both active listening and thoughtful speaking, skills we’ll work to develop over the course of the semester. If you must miss a class meeting, please inform me well in advance (unless you face an emergency, of course), and we’ll work out an alternative assignment for you to complete for that day (which will probably take you longer to complete than it would take you to prepare for and attend the scheduled class). Please try not to miss any class meetings.

2. Collective work/presentations: You will undertake several collective projects and presentations for this class.

First, before both the Sept. 17 and Nov. 26 class meetings, you'll participate in an electronic discussion with your classmates via Learn@UW. On Sept. 17, we'll share ideas about the issues raised by Richard White's *Remembering Ahanagan*. On Nov. 26, we'll discuss how professional historians talk about the past with audiences of nonhistorians, particularly in film and radio.

Second, for the Oct. 29 class meeting, you'll work in a research team with one or two of your classmates to identify a significant collection of primary sources relevant to your field and available in UW-Madison libraries; you'll report on this collection in class.

Third, for the Dec. 3 class meeting, you'll come to class prepared with lists of benefits you'll derive from membership in professional associations, attendance at academic conferences, and subscription to at least one of H-Net's discussion networks. See Dec. 3 schedule for details.

Fourth, on Dec. 10, you'll report in class on your final project, a research prospectus and bibliography, and you'll exchange a draft of that project with a classmate.

3. Individual written work: You will do several kinds of individual writing assignments for this class. Your written assignments, if they're designated as "formal" below, should be double-spaced, with standard one-inch margins. They should have *no* grammatical or typographical errors or misspellings. When in doubt, please consult: William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White, *Elements of Style*, 4th ed. (or, for more fun, Maira Kalman's version, *Elements of Style, Illustrated* [2005]); and *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed. If you don't own these reference works, I suggest that you purchase them, as you'll use them throughout your career. Of course you should also consult our required text, Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*.

First, on Oct. 15, you'll write a formal 3-page (750-word) review of a book-length work of historical scholarship of the kind you might find in *Journal of American History* or *American Historical Review*. Please note that there is also a less formal "pre-assignment" to complete before you write your review. See Oct. 15 schedule for details.

Second, on Oct. 22, you'll read two recent scholarly articles and fill out an "Anatomy of a History Article" sheet for each. Bring these completed sheets with you to class.

Third, on Nov. 5, you'll prepare a formal bibliography of all readings assigned in class to-date, and compose a corresponding set of footnotes. See Nov. 5 schedule for details.

Fourth, on Nov. 19, you'll prepare a formal 2-page discussion of teaching strategies for addressing a major issue in the U.S. history survey. Bring copies of your discussion to share with classmates. See Nov. 19 schedule for details.

Fifth, you'll write a formal 5-page research prospectus and bibliography for a scholarly article that could be written based on a primary source collection of your choice. This assignment begins with your research teamwork for the Oct. 29 class meeting, but then morphs into an individual project. You'll bring two copies of a complete, polished draft of your research prospectus/bibliography to class on Dec. 10, exchanging one with a classmate and turning the other in to me. By 4 p.m. on Fri. Dec. 14, you'll return your classmate's draft to her/him with comments, and pick up your draft with my comments from my mailbox. Your final paper is due in my mailbox by 4 p.m. Mon. Dec. 17.

A note about scholarly writing: In the interests of full disclosure, I must make two confessions. First, in a former life, I worked as an editor in scholarly publishing. Second, and more important, I simply love writing: the sound and feel of words, the rhythm and texture of a sentence. As a result, I'm a stickler for clear, evocative prose that invites readers in rather than shuts them out. So I pay close attention to the form, as well as the content, of scholarly writing. Sometimes graduate students experience this attention as oppressive, and assume mistakenly that I'm *more* interested in form than content. Nothing could be further from the truth. What I want to encourage is writing that illuminates rather than obscures the intellectual content of your work. Still, it can be daunting to receive a paper back with ample editorial as well as analytical suggestions. I hope that you'll consider my suggestions in the spirit in which they are given—as evidence of my deep engagement in your intellectual project and in your ongoing attempt to communicate that project effectively to your readers.

Readings

These books can be purchased at the University Book Store, and are on reserve at College Library in Helen C. White Hall (except Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*, which you should purchase; if this creates a hardship, please see me):

Required:

Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacob, *Telling the Truth about History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1994).

Thomas Bender, ed., *Rethinking American History in a Global Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

Richard White, *Remembering Ahanagan: A History of Stories* (1998; Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003).

Julie Des Jardins, *Women and the Historical Enterprise in America: Gender, Race, and the Politics of Memory, 1880-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*, 7th ed., Revised by Wayne Booth, Gregory Colomb, Joseph Williams, and the University of Chicago Press Staff (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

Recommended:

Thomas Bender, Philip Katz, and Colin Palmer, and the Committee on Graduate Education of the American Historical Association, *The Education of Historians for the Twenty-First Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press for the American Historical Association, 2004).

Wilbert James McKeachie and Marilla Svinicki, *McKeachie's Teaching Tips: Strategies, Research And Theory for College And University Teachers*, 12th ed. (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2005).

William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White, *Elements of Style*, 4th ed. (New York: Longman, 2000).

Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed. (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, 2003).

Other readings:

In addition, there are several shorter readings assigned that you can read on reserve at College Library and/or access via Learn@UW. Consult "Calendar and Assignments" below for details.

Special note about readings assigned in association with faculty presentations:

When a faculty member visits class, s/he will assign readings for you to complete in preparation for his/her presentation. I'll solicit this assignment from each faculty member two weeks before they visit class. So below, you'll generally see "TBA" under "Readings" associated with faculty presentations. Just because these readings don't yet appear on the syllabus doesn't mean that they're optional or unimportant. Indeed, these readings are crucial, and you're expected to have read them carefully enough that you can engage in discussion of them with our guests. Sometimes, in addition to "TBA" readings, you'll see an article from *Rethinking American History in a Global Age* assigned. Note that these articles have *not* been assigned by the faculty member visiting that week, but rather by me (the exception is Sept. 24, when Prof. Suri has assigned an article from the book). I've assigned these readings because I want to encourage us to think beyond the boundaries of the U.S. in all historical subfields. A faculty visitor may or may not be familiar with the readings in *Rethinking American History in a Global Age*, so if you ask a question or make a comment based on these readings, please summarize what you've read first.

Calendar and Assignments

Sept. 10	Class discussion:	Introductions
	Presentation:	Advanced Graduate Students Provide the Key to a Successful Graduate Career at UW-Madison with Ikuko Asaka, Kellen Backer, Jerome Dotson, Tyina Steptoe, Heather Stur, and Jed Woodworth
	Reading:	Michael Penn, "The Past Walks With Us," <i>On Wisconsin</i> (2001) [distributed via class email list] Photo-essay from "The Santa Fe Trail: In Search of the Multiracial West" (2005) [distributed via class email list]
Sept. 14	<i>Special Friday Class Reception and Informal Dinner, 5-7 p.m. for new U.S. History Graduate Students and U.S. History Faculty at the home of Susan Johnson and Camille Guérin-Gonzales 1916 Jefferson Street, Madison</i>	
Sept. 17	Class discussion:	My History, My Memory
	Reading:	White, <i>Remembering Ahanagan</i>
	Assignment:	Participate at least twice in a Learn@UW discussion prompted by your reading of <i>Remembering Ahanagan</i> . Rather than commenting on the book itself, comment on how reading it has made you think about your own relationship to the categories "history" & "memory." Complete your participation by noon on Sun. 9-16, and make sure you've read the entire discussion by Mon.
	Presentation:	The Day-to-Day Life of Recent History PhDs with Sarah Marcus, Chicago Historical Society, and Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen
	Reading:	Constance Schulz et al., <i>Careers for Students of History</i> (2002) [on reserve or use link on Learn@UW] Louise Pubols (UW PhD), "Doing History in Exhibit Halls: The History PhD and a Museum Career" (2004) [use link on Learn@UW] and explore the website of the New Mexico Office of the State Historian, produced by Estevan Rael-Gálvez (Univ. of Mich. PhD), 2004-07 [use link on Learn@UW]

Sept. 24	<p>Class discussion: The History of History</p> <p>Reading: Appleby, Hunt, and Jacobs, <i>Telling the Truth about History</i> Chap. 1, “We Historians,” and Chap. 2 “Necessary Discussions,” in <i>The Education of Historians for the Twenty-First Century</i>, ed. Bender et al. [read hard copy if you’ve purchased this recommended text or use link on Learn@UW]</p> <p>Presentation: Approaches to U.S. History: Internationalizing the Field with Jeremi Suri And a dialogue between Jeremi Suri and Susan Johnson on the question “What’s a Good Colleague”?</p> <p>Reading: Marilyn Young, “The Age of Global Power,” in <i>Rethinking American History in a Global Age</i>, ed. Bender Jeremi Suri, “Transatlantic Ties,” Chap. 2 of <i>Henry Kissinger and the American Century</i> (2007)</p>
Oct. 1	<p>Class discussion: The History of U.S. History</p> <p>Reading: Des Jardins, <i>Women and the Historical Enterprise in America</i> Ian Tyrell, “Public at the Creation: Place, Memory, and Historical Practice in the Mississippi Valley Historical Association, 1907–1950,” <i>JAH</i> (2007) [use link on Learn@UW]</p> <p>Presentation: Topics in U.S. History: Immigration History with Tom Archdeacon</p> <p>Reading: TBA and Dirk Hoerder, “From Euro- and Afro-Atlantic to Pacific Migration System: A Comparative Migration Approach to North American History,” in <i>Rethinking American History in a Global Age</i>, ed. Bender</p>
Oct. 8	<p>Class discussion: The Ethics and Etiquette of Being a Historian</p> <p>Reading: William Cronon, “Getting Ready to Do History,” <i>Carnegie Essays on the Doctorate</i> (2004) [use link on Learn@UW] American Historical Association, <i>Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct</i> (2005) [use link on Learn@UW] Packet of materials on four controversies in the profession [on reserve]</p> <p>Presentations: Topics in U.S. History: Religious History with Chuck Cohen Topics in U.S. History: Regional History (with special reference to the West) with Susan Johnson</p> <p>Reading: TBA and Prasenjit Duara, “Transnationalism and the Challenge to National Histories,” in <i>Rethinking American History in a Global Age</i>, ed. Bender</p>

Oct. 15	Class discussion:	Writing History
	Reading:	“Book Reviewing in the AHR” [use link on Learn@UW] Choose a recent issue of <i>Journal of American History</i> and a history journal in your subfield, and survey book reviews, film reviews, exhibit reviews, and website reviews.
	Assignment:	This is a two-part assignment: 1) Choose two effective reviews that you found in your survey of recent journal issues (one book review and one film or exhibit or website review) and write an informal one-page explanation of why you found these reviews effective. 2) Write a formal 750-word review of a book-length work of historical scholarship. Choose a book you know fairly well.
	Presentations:	Periods in U.S. History: Early America with Jeanne Boydston and Ned Blackhawk
	Reading:	TBA and Karen Ordahl Kupperman, “International at the Creation: Early Modern American History,” in <i>Rethinking American History in a Global Age</i> , ed. Bender
Oct. 22	Class discussion:	Writing History
	Reading:	Laura McEnaney, “Nightmares on Elm Street: Demobilizing in Chicago, 1945–1953,” <i>JAH</i> (2006) [use link on Learn@UW] Claudio Saunt, “Telling Stories: The Political Uses of Myth and History in the Cherokee and Creek Nations,” <i>JAH</i> (2006) [use link on Learn@UW]
	Assignment:	For each of the articles above, fill out an “Anatomy of a History Article” sheet and bring it to class.
	Presentations:	Topics on U.S. History: Working-Class History with Camille Guérin-Gonzales Topics on U.S. History: Jewish History (with special reference to social and political movements) with Tony Michels
	Reading:	TBA and Robin D.G. Kelley, “How the West Was One: The African Diaspora and the Re-Mapping of U.S. History,” in <i>Rethinking American History in a Global Age</i> , ed. Bender Robert Weibe, “Framing U.S. History: Democracy, Nationalism, and Socialism,” in <i>Rethinking American History in a Global Age</i> , ed. Bender

Oct. 29	Class discussion:	Researching History
	Reading:	Turabian, <i>A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations</i> , Part I, "Research and Writing: From Planning to Production," pp. 3-130
	Assignment:	Working in research teams of 2-3, identify significant collection(s) of primary sources available in UW-Madison libraries relevant to your field and report on collection(s) in class. Bring to class copies of collection description(s), sample documents if possible (or descriptions if you're using an archival collection from which documents can't be photocopied), and examples of note-taking strategies for your collection(s).
	Presentations:	Approaches to U.S. History: Environmental History with Bill Cronon, Nancy Langston, and Gregg Mitman
	Reading:	TBA and Ian Tyrell, "Beyond the View from Euro-America: Environment, Settler Societies, and the Internationalization of American History," in <i>Rethinking American History in a Global Age</i> , ed. Bender
Nov. 5	Class discussion:	Researching History
	Reading:	Turabian, <i>A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations</i> , Part 2, "Source Citation," and Part 3, "Style," pp. 133-371
	Assignment:	Prepare a humanities-style bibliography of all readings assigned in this class so far. Then, choose ten of these readings and write sample footnotes for them, making sure your choices include both books and articles as well as sample citations to both hard copies and electronic sources (since your footnotes won't correspond to a written text as they would in real scholarly life, you can organize them randomly and number them 1-10). Using the primary source collection(s) you identified last week, begin individual work on final project, which will be a prospectus and bibliography for an article that could be written based on the sources you've found. Your draft will be due on Dec. 10 in class and your revised paper at 4 p.m. on Dec. 17.
	Presentation:	Approaches to U.S. History: Cultural History with Nan Enstad
	Reading:	TBA and Rob Kroes, "American Empire and Cultural Imperialism: A View from the Receiving End," in <i>Rethinking American History in a Global Age</i> , ed. Bender

Nov. 12	Class activity:	Teaching History
		<i>Alert!</i> Our schedule today is backwards! Rather than hold an in-class discussion first thing, we'll start the morning with our guest presentation (9-10:30), and then attend Prof. Kantrowitz's lecture in History 150, "American Histories: The Nineteenth Century," 11-11:50, 1121 Humanities.
	Presentation:	Periods in U.S. History: Nineteenth Century with Steve Kantrowitz [Remember: Guest presentation runs 9-10:30 today.]
	Reading:	TBA and Walter Johnson, "Time and Revolution in African America: Temporality and the History of Atlantic Slavery," in <i>Rethinking American History in a Global Age</i> , ed. Bender
Nov. 19	Class discussion:	Teaching History
	Reading:	Wilbert James McKeachie and Marilla Svinicki, <i>McKeachie's Teaching Tips</i> , chaps. 3-7, pp. 22-86 [on reserve or read hard copy if you've purchased this recommended text] Ken Bain, <i>What the Best College Teachers Do</i> (2004), pp. 98-134 [on reserve]
	Assignment:	Using relevant works listed on the document called "Historiographical Resources" [on Learn@UW], identify a major issue that you think ought to be examined in any U.S. history survey course. Prepare a two-page discussion of teaching strategies for addressing that issue, and bring enough copies of your discussion to share with classmates.
	Presentation:	Topics in U.S. History: History of Sexuality (with special reference to gender history) with Anne Enke and Susan Johnson
	Reading:	TBA

Nov. 26	Class discussion:	Talking About History
	Assignment:	<p>This is a three-part assignment:</p> <p>1) Watch at least one film from the PBS series “American Experience” (see list of those held in UW libraries on Learn@UW), choosing at least one in which professional historians appear on camera to reflect on the historical event, person, or phenomenon in question.</p> <p>2) Listen to at least one installment of the Wisconsin Public Radio program “University of the Air” that features a UW historian (from the History Department or another department on campus) being interviewed about a historical event, person, or phenomenon. Go to the program webpage (http://wpr.org/uoal) and click on the past couple years to find program titles and interviewed guests. Once you find a program that interests you, go to the WPR Audio Archives (http://wpr.org/webcasting/audioarchives_display.cfm?Code=uoal) and click on that program to listen (you’ll need RealPlayer installed).</p> <p>3) Participate at least twice in a Learn@UW discussion prompted by listening to professional historians talk about the past to audiences of nonhistorians. Complete your participation by noon on Sun. 11-25, and make sure you’ve read the entire discussion by Mon.</p>
	Presentation:	Periods in U.S. History: The Progressive Era with Bill Reese
	Reading:	TBA and Daniel T. Rodgers, “An Age of Social Politics,” in <i>Rethinking American History in a Global Age</i> , ed. Bender
Dec. 3	Class discussion:	Hanging Out With Historians
	Assignment:	<p>This is a two-part assignment:</p> <p>1) Explore the websites of the American Historical Association, the Organization of American Historians, and one other professional organization in your field. Include in your explorations perusal of programs from recent or upcoming history conferences. Talk to at least one advanced graduate student in the History Department about her/his experience attending academic history conferences. Come to class with an informal list of benefits you might derive from belonging to these three organizations and attending their annual conferences.</p> <p>2) Visit the website for H-Net, the organization devoted to the use of the Internet and World Wide Web for educational purposes in the Humanities and Social Sciences (http://www.h-net.org/). Click on “Discussion Networks,” and find at least one network that is relevant to your historical interests. Subscribe. Come to class with an informal list of benefits you hope to derive from your subscription.</p>
	Presentation:	Topics in U.S. History: History and Memory with Jean Lee
	Reading:	TBA

Dec. 10**Class discussion:**

Being and Becoming a Historian

Assignment:

Turn in two copies of a complete, polished draft of your final project, a research prospectus and bibliography for an article that could be written based on the primary source collection you've chosen. I'll read one copy and you'll exchange the other with a classmate. By 4 p.m. Fri. Dec. 14, return your classmate's draft to her/him with comments for revision, and pick up your draft with my comments from my mailbox. Your final paper is due in my mailbox by 4 p.m. Mon. Dec. 17.