



course description and objectives

What is “social history”? How is it different from other historical methods and perspectives? What has this field contributed to the broader discipline of history? And what does it mean to “do” social history?

Let’s begin with the working definition that social history explores the world of ordinary Americans, who often left little record of their own. In this course, we will explore topics in the social history of the United States, through a wide variety of sources including newspapers, periodicals, tracts, photographs, archival records, didactic literature, fiction and oral history. You will gain experience with the work of social history in your readings and assignments. You’ll consider and experiment with ways of writing history that take “the little guy” (and gal) into account.

required texts

Nancy Walker, *Women’s Magazines 1940-1960* (Bedford, ISBN 978-0312102012)

Roy Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours for What We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City 1870-1920* (Cambridge U Press, ISBN 978-0521313971)

Pam Munoz Ryan, *Esperanza Rising* (Blue Sky Press 2002, ISBN 978-0439120425)

Recommended for Honors students (or anyone, really): Howard Zinn, *A People’s History of the United States* (Harper Perennial Modern Classics ISBN 978-0061965586)

We will also be reading material posted online as PDF files. You need (free) Adobe Reader or FoxIt Reader to access these files. I recommend printing them if you own your own printer, or bringing your laptop to class if you choose to read them online.

In addition, we will rely on many online materials, including the free US history textbook online at www.digitalhistory.org.

course requirements

This course involves extensive reading and writing. You will be expected to read 50-100 pages a week (sometimes more), and to write approximately 20-25 pages over the course of the term. You will need to put in consistent effort during the whole semester. You’ll need to have (or learn) basic computer research skills. To take advantage of multiple learning styles, and to help create a community of learning in this classroom, this course will assess your learning in several different ways.

- **Attendance and participation** in class (20%) - I will take attendance in each class session. You should be prompt, present, and ready for discussion each day. I expect class discussion will be lively, respectful, and substantive. Your A&P grade also includes your oral presentation day.
- **Oral Presentation** (included in class participation grade) - you make one presentation sometime during the term. On that day you'll be presenting your findings in the form of a short paper/blog post for your classmates to consider (graded separately), and an oral presentation in class. More than one person might present on a presentation day. On days you're not presenting, you are responsible for being prepared to contribute supportively to the discussion.
- **Exams** (20%) - we will have 3 closed-book hour-long exams. The last test will take place during the final exam period but will be the equivalent of the other two exams. Your lowest test score is dropped; for that reason there are no makeup exams. Exams will be on 2/14, 4/1 and 5/9

Papers and Written Work -

- **Response papers** (15%) - 3 brief (2-page) papers that represent your thoughtful response to the reading assignments. You'll do three of these throughout the term. The first is due on Friday, January 28th. Another one will be on your oral presentation day, and the third will be on a different presentation day of your choosing.
- **Digital Project** (20%) - as a class, we will add new material to an existing digital archive of Worcester local history. We will use the holdings of the Worcester Historical Museum. This will involve a class visit for archival research, scanning documentary material, and preparing that material to be uploaded to the internet. Due on Friday, Feb 18th.
- **Research paper** (20%) - You will write a term paper (6-8 pages) based on original research. Topic & bibliography are due on Friday, April 15th and the completed paper is due on Monday, May 2nd.
- **End of Term Reflection** (5%) - due at the Final Exam date, Monday May 9th

A&P, includes oral presentation	20%
Response papers 3 @ 5%	15%
Exams - drop one, so 2 @ 10%	20%
Digital project	20%
Research paper, 5% topic/bibliography, 15% paper	20%
Reflection Paper	5%
	100%

the fine print

Regarding plagiarism: On papers and exams, doing your own work is absolutely essential. In ALL papers, you **must** cite the sources of any information, quotations or ideas which are not your own work using standard citation styles (Chicago Style or MLA). Let me be very clear. You cannot clip and paste text from the internet into your papers and pass it off as your own writing. You cannot turn in a paper someone else has written or that you have bought online. Plagiarized work or exam cheating will automatically get a zero on the assignment and may cause you to fail the class, at my discretion. **I take such violations very seriously.** Please familiarize yourself with and follow the college policy on Academic Honesty in the Student Handbook.

- **My in-class technology policy:** we will be busy in every class session, and we don't need any technological distractions. Silence your cell phones before you enter the classroom. If you choose to bring a laptop to class, I expect that you will be using it **only** for taking notes or accessing the course's relevant material to refer to during discussion. Do not use your laptop in class to surf the internet, check your email, update your Facebook status, etc.
- **If you have a documented disability** (learning or otherwise), and you need a reasonable accommodation made for you in this course, please consult with me immediately at the outset of the course so we can design a solution that will help you be successful in the class.

syllabus

Most weeks will follow the same pattern:

Monday - historical context, introduction & overview of the week's documents. Monday reading will be for background & information, in the online digital history textbook or other reference sources. When there's no specific assigned reading, you'll need to show your own independent initiative to find reliable material to read on the assigned topic. Depending on your own knowledge level you may have to read more or less until you're comfortable with the listed topics for that day.

Wednesday - we get into the "meat" of the week's documents, which are the reading for that day. We read & discuss for what we can learn about ordinary people from this document, and how the document's creators got—and interpreted—this information.

Friday - a presentation day. Someone takes a turn presenting her/his own findings, conclusions, and arguments based on the week's material. In our class discussion we work to connect this week's work to other topics and issues we've covered. Exams are also given on some Fridays.

Unit One | Who Built America? Social History as Labor/Folk History

Week 1

1. Wed 1/19 - course introduction; social history as the history of workers
2. Fri 1/21 - Document: Herbert Gutman, "Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America 1815-1919" (PDF, in 2 parts)
Discuss Gutman's findings - what do we learn about industrializing America from 1815-1919? Why those dates? What does it mean to "industrialize"? Whom does Gutman focus on & why?

Week 2

3. Mon 1/24 - Labor and Gender (Zinn Ch 13)
Reading Topics: *Muller v. Oregon* case (1908), the *Lochner v. New York* case (1905), Women and Work, Laundries, Liberty of Contract, the Triangle Fire of 1911, Bread and Roses Strike
4. Wed 1/26 - Document: Louis Brandeis, *Brief in Muller v. Oregon*
<<http://www.law.louisville.edu/library/collections/brandeis/node/235>> - yes, it's 113 pages!
What "extra-legal" data did Brandeis use? What can we learn from this? Why has this brief become important in legal practice? How did Brandeis find and compile this information? What were his findings? What was the effect on the case? On a recent feminist lawyers' blog, one lawyer criticized this brief for being full of "paternalistic drivel." Do you agree?
5. Fri 1/28 - Presentation Day #1, on Labor and Gender/ Brandeis Brief
Response Paper #1 due on Gutman and/or Brandeis Brief (everyone does this one)

Week 3

6. Mon 1/31 - The New South
Reading Topics: the "New South," the cotton industry, mill life, class in the 19th century South, Lewis Hine
Reading: "Henry Grady Sells the New South," *History Matters* online, <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5745/>
7. Wed 2/2 - Document: *Like a Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World*, "Cradle to Grave" (PDF, in 2 parts).
What do we learn about the southern cotton mill world? Why/how is it a "world"? Who peoples it? What is life like? How does it differ from the northern urban working class life we've discussed so far, and in what ways is it similar? How did this team of researchers conduct their research?
8. Fri 2/4 - Presentation Day #2, on New South/ Like a Family

Week 4

9. Mon 2/7 - Workers in Worcester

Reading: Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours*, Parts I and II (“Context” and “Culture”)

Discussion will focus on understanding urban working class life in general in this time period

10. Wed 2/9 - Workers in Worcester

Reading: Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours*, Parts III and IV (“Conflict” and “Culture, Conflict and Change”)

Discussion will focus specifically on Worcester & how Rosenzweig used sources to construct a portrait of workers in Worcester. What was it like to live in Worcester at this time period? How do we know? What is Rosenzweig’s argument? How will we go about researching Worcester in the same time period?

11. Fri 2/11 - Presentation Day #3, Worcester Workers

Week 5

12. Mon 2/14 - Exam #1

13. Wed 2/16 - Field Trip for sources to the Worcester Historical Museum. Details TBA on the blog. We will conduct archival research, collect and digitize materials and obtain permission to publish them. (1/2 the class goes today, the other half has the day off)

14. Fri 2/18 - Field Trip for sources to the Worcester Historical Museum. Details TBA on the blog. We will conduct archival research, collect and digitize materials and obtain permission to publish them. (1/2 the class goes today, the other half has the day off)

Week 6 (No class on Monday the 21st)

15. Wed 2/23 - Digital Project day #1 - we process and create the metadata for our digital project materials. Bring your laptop!

16. Fri 2/25 - Digital Project day #2 - we process and create the metadata for our digital project materials. Bring your laptop!

Unit Two | The Other Half: Social History as Women’s History

Week 7

17. Mon 2/28 - The “Pocahontas Problem” (Zinn Ch 1)

Reading Topics: Powhatan Indians, Jamestown and Roanoke colonies, women in native America, Pocahontas

18. Wed 3/2 - Documents: Helen Rountree, “Powhatan Indian Women: the People John Smith Barely Saw” (PDF) and primary sources about Pocahontas (PDF)

Discuss legends and reality surrounding this singular historical woman. What do we actually know about her? Why has she become such a repository for multiple meanings? In what ways does she or does she not represent other native American women of her time and place?

19. Fri 3/4 - Presentation Day #4, on Pocahontas and Native American Women in Early America
Digital Project is due in final form

Week 8

20. Mon 3/7 - Separate Spheres & Didactic Literature. (Zinn Ch 6)

Reading: Joan Wolloch Scott, “Gender: An Important Category of Historical Analysis” (PDF)

21. Wed 3/9 - Documents: Caroll Smith-Rosenberg, “The Female World of Love and Ritual” (PDF) and John S. Abbot, “The Mother at Home: or Principles of Maternal Duty” (American Tract Society, 1833) online at <<http://digital.lib.msu.edu/projects/ssb/search.cfm?TitleID=556>>

Discuss the ideology of separate spheres and what Nancy Cott has called the “canon of domesticity.” What ideas about gender were prevalent in early 19th century America? To whom did these definitions apply? What is meant by “proscriptive” literature? Can you think of contemporary examples of

proscriptive literature? How does Smith-Rosenberg investigate whether women followed this literature's prescriptions in their own lives?

22. Fri 3/11 - Presentation Day #5, on Separate Spheres/ Didactic Literature - if you're presenting this week, read & use Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860," *American Quarterly* 1966 (PDF)

Week 9 (Spring Break, March 14-18)

Week 10

23. Mon 3/21 - American Women in the 20th Century. Reading Topics: Rosie the Riveter, gender and the 1950s, Cold War, June Cleaver, suburbanization, Levittown.

Reading: Rosalind Rosenberg, *Divided Lives* Ch. 5, "Cold War Fears" (PDF)

24. Wed 3/23 - Documents: Nancy Walker, ed. *Women's Magazines, 1940-1960*

Discuss themes and ideas raised in women's magazines of this period. How do these compare & relate to the proscriptive literature of the early/mid 19th century? What ideas about gender can you glean? Are women following them, and how could we know? How can historians use these magazines as a source of information about women in this time period? What women are left out, or are defined out of the category of "women"?

25. Fri 3/25 - Presentation Day #6 on 20th Century American Women - (if you're presenting this week, listen to & use the 12/16/08 episode of NPR's On Point radio show, with Sister Soulja as the guest - how does her voice & perspective expand the notion of American women's experiences in the 20th century?)

<<http://www.onpointradio.org/shows/2008/12/sister-souljah/>>

Week 11

26. Mon 3/28 - the Women's Movement (Zinn Ch 19, to p. 514)

Reading Topics: "second-wave" feminism, women's movement, women's lib, NOW, Gloria Steinem, MS magazine, Roe v. Wade, ERA, International Women's Year (1975) and see also

< <http://www.washingtonwomenshistory.org/themes/womensrights/default.aspx>>

27. Wed 3/30 - Document: "Notes from the First Year," The New York Radical Women, 1968.

Duke University Women's Lib Collection: < <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/wlm/notes/>>

28. Fri 4/1 - Exam #2

Unit Three | Who is America? Social History as Multicultural History

Week 12

29. Mon 4/4 - African-American Nationalism before the 1950s (Zinn Ch 17)

Reading Topics: Ida B. Wells, Marcus Garvey, Harlem Renaissance, Langston Hughes, Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. DuBois, NAACP, Plessy v. Ferguson, A. Philip Randolph, Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, CORE, Jackie Robinson

30. Wed 4/6 - Documents: Ida B. Wells, "Lynch Law in America" (online, Project Gutenberg

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/14975/14975-h/14975-h.htm>); Langston Hughes, "Best of Simple" (PDF)

31. Fri 4/8 - Presentation Day #7, on African-American Nationalism

Week 13

32. Mon 4/11 - Immigration & Migration (Zinn Ch 11)

Reading Topics: slavery, immigration, Ellis Island, historiography of immigration studies, melting pot, Jacob Riis, muckrakers

< http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/historyonline/ethnic_am.cfm>

33. Wed 4/13 Documents: Undistinguished Americans

< http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/social_history/social_history.cfm>

You'll read 2 stories & we'll divide up the essays so that not everyone reads the same ones. Our class discussion will focus on these immigrant voices - who are they? Why did they come? What were pushes and pulls? What were their experiences after arriving in America? What does it mean to be an immigrant? Is America a pluralistic society or a "melting pot" (the term used as the title of Israel Zangwill's popular 1908 stage play)? See also Schoolhouse Rock, "The Great American Melting Pot"
< <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZWJ4udW41Ns>>

34. Fri 4/15 - Presentation Day #8, on Immigration/the "Undistinguished" - **Research Paper Topic & Bibliography Due for everyone**

Week 14 (No class Monday 4/18)

35. Wed 4/20 - Mexican-Americans, Hispanics, Latino/as in the US (Zinn Ch 8, also pp. 614-616)
Reading Topics: Mexican-American war, Texicans, Hispanic, Latino, LULAC, Cesar Chavez, Chicano/a, Bracero program

37. Fri 4/22 - Document: Pam Munoz Ryan, *Esperanza Rising* (entire).
Discussion - what do you learn from this text about Mexican-American migrant worker experiences? Does the fact that this is based on the author's own family story give this work of fiction special authority or power? What are some of the themes and symbols explored in this book? How might this book be incorporated into a public school classroom?

Week 15

37. Mon 4/25 - Asian-Americans

Reading Topics: "Golden Door," Yellow peril, Chinese Exclusion Act, *Yick Wo v. Hopkins* (1886), anti-Chinese riots, Rock Springs Wyoming riot (1885), Chinatowns, Japanese immigration, Isei/Nisei, anti-miscegenation laws, 1924 Oriental Exclusion Law

38. Wed 4/27 - Documents: from JARDA, Japanese-American Relocation Digital Archive

< <http://www.calisphere.universityofcalifornia.edu/jarda/>>

Discussion will focus on the experiences of Japanese-Americans interned during WW2. What sorts of sources are available to historians? What can we learn from them about the experience of Asian-Americans in the 20th century? What customs, cultural practices, or worldviews clashed in the internment process? Were interned Americans able to maintain their cultural practices?

39. Fri 4/29 - Presentation Day #9 - compare the experiences of Mexican-Americans and Japanese-Americans in the agricultural regions of the American west.

Week 16

40. Mon 5/2 - Post-Racial America?

Reading: at least 3 articles from 2008 on "post-racial" society - see links online

Due in class - Research Paper

Final Exam will be on May 9th, 12:30 pm. Bring your **Reflection Paper** with you to the exam.