Ordinary People, Extraordinary Stories

COURSE OVERVIEW AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

EXPECTATIONS AND COURSE STRUCTURE
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; your learning will be assessed in multiple ways. You’ll need to employ strong research skills and participate in a community of learning in our classroom.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Extend and broaden your own historical knowledge of the American past and its ordinary people, through the lens of social history.

- Consistently contribute to a community of learning in seminar discussion with: active preparation, productive and respectful discussion, and depth of engagement with course materials to advance your own and others’ understanding.

- Conduct small-scale primary research in local archives, while demonstrating high standards of scholarly integrity.

- Adhere to the disciplinary conventions of historical scholarship while crafting evidence-based research projects that exhibit originality.

Social history explores the worlds of “non-famous” people, who often left little record of their own.
ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION 25%
I will take attendance in each class session. You should be prompt, present and ready for discussion each day. Class discussion should be lively, substantive, and involve everyone. Your A&P grade also includes your “Prof” day, when you assume part of the responsibility for the teaching and discussion.

EXAMS 20%
We will have three closed-book written exams, one at the end of each unit. The last exam will take place during the final exam week but will be the equivalent of the other two exams, not a comprehensive final. Your lowest test score is dropped; for that reason there are no makeup exams. Exams will be held on Sept 28, Nov 2, and Dec 14.

RESPONSE PAPERS 20%
You’ll write three brief (2-page) papers that represent your thoughtful response to the assigned readings. The first is due Friday, Sept 11. The second is due on your “Prof for a Day”, and the third is due on a different “Prof for a Day” of your choosing. A fourth paper is a course reflection, due on the final exam date, Monday Dec 14.

DIGITAL PROJECT 20%
As a class, we will explore a collection in the holdings of the Worcester Historical Museum and each student will craft a digital project based on a social worker’s casefile from the early 20th century. The project involves a class visit for archival research, scanning and processing documentary material, and preparing that material to be added to a digital archive. Due on Oct 21.

RESEARCH PROJECT 15%
You’ll develop and conduct a social history research project, resulting in a well-crafted 6-page paper that adheres to the research and citation conventions of history. Detailed guidelines and rubric will be given later. Topic is due Nov 11. There will be a peer review session on Nov 23; the draft is 5% of the grade, and the final paper due on Dec 8 is 10% of the grade.

THE FINE PRINT
Regarding plagiarism: on papers and exams, doing your own work is essential. Cite your sources using Chicago-Style footnotes. Plagiarized work will result in an automatic 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 university’s policy on Academic Honesty in the student handbook.

POLICY ON DEVICES IN CLASS
We will be busy in every class session, and we don’t need any technological distractions. Silence your cell phone before you enter the classroom. Laptops or tablets are welcome, but please stay on task and use them only for taking notes or accessing course materials during discussion. Do not use your device in class to surf the internet, check email, or use social media. These activities will definitely jeopardize your class participation grade and they pull others away from the work at hand.

Which is the “real” Pocahontas?
**Grading Scale**

- Attendance & participation + oral presentation: 25%
- Response and reflection papers (4 @ 5%): 20%
- Exams, lowest is dropped (2 of 3 @ 10%): 20%
- Digital Project: 20%
- Research Paper: 15%

**Total 100%**

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**HERE’S A QUESTION:**

What evidence will YOU have left behind for future historians? How would they know about your life? What conclusions would a social historian make from your evidence?

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**MOST WEEKS WILL FOLLOW THE SAME PATTERN**

**MONDAY**

Historical context, introduction and overview of the week’s readings; assigned readings provide essential background for studying the historical evidence.

**WEDNESDAY**

Exploring the week’s primary sources and documents in depth, in a workshop / discussion format. Your task is to read & discuss for what we can learn about ordinary people from these documents, and how the document’s creator(s) got — and interpreted — their information.

**FRIDAY**

“Prof for a Day” Presentations. Students take a turn teaching based on the week’s material. Think of this as a chance to engage your colleagues and empower their learning, NOT as a formal or stiff “oral presentation.” There will be seven of these throughout the term.
Our digital project will take us to the research library of the Worcester Historical Museum.

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<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>READINGS</th>
<th>WHAT'S DUE / NOTES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Fri 10/9</td>
<td>The “Pocahontas Problem”</td>
<td>Zinn Ch. 1 and Rountree PDF</td>
<td>No class Mon 10/12</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Wed 10/14</td>
<td>Native American Women, discussion</td>
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**Discussion Questions:** Prepare to 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?

18 Fri 10/16 Prof for a Day #3

19 Mon 10/19 Separate Spheres, Didactic Literature | Zinn Ch. 6 + Scott, “Gender” PDF

20 Wed 10/21 Female Worlds, discussion | Smith-Rosenberg, “Female World” PDF + Abbott “The Mother At Home” online link

**Discussion Questions:** 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?

21 Fri 10/23 Prof for a Day #4

22 Mon 10/26 American Women 1940-1960 | Zinn Ch. 19 + Walker’s intro *Women’s Magazines*

23 Wed 10/28 Gender in mid20th century | bring Walker book to class with you

**Discussion Questions:** explore the themes and ideas raised in women’s magazines of this period. What did / did not surprise you? How do these compare and relate to the proscriptive literature of the 19th century? What ideas about gender can you find in these sources? Are women following them at the time, and how could we know? How can historians use these magazines as a source of information about women’s lives in this time period? What women are left out, or perhaps even defined out of the category of “women” altogether?

24 Fri 10/30 Prof for a Day #5

25 Mon 11/2 Exam #2

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

26 Wed 11/4 Library Day 1 | Intro to sources, strategies - bring laptops

27 Fri 11/6 Biography & Microlhistory | Lepore, “Historians Who Love Too Much” PDF

28 Mon 11/9 Library Day 2 | location TBA - bring laptops

**Wed 11/11 No Class - RP due via email** | Paper topic due

29 Fri 11/13 African American Life in the Nadir | Zinn Ch. 17

30 Mon 11/16 Immigration, Nation, Migration | Zinn Ch. 12

31 Wed 11/18 Asian Americans | Ngai, “Filipinos” PDF + Goldstein-Shirley “Strangers” PDF

**Syllabus** subject to change; check the website for updates!
### Required Books:


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**Strikers and Militia face off in Lawrence, MA during the 1912 “Bread & Roses” Strike**

**Mill children in Lawrence**

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<td>32</td>
<td>Fri 11/20</td>
<td>Prof for a Day #6</td>
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<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Mon 11/23</td>
<td>Peer Review Day</td>
<td>none - bring 2 printed drafts of your paper to class</td>
<td>Paper Draft Due - 2 copies, printed out</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/25 - 11/29</td>
<td><em>No School, Thanksgiving Holiday (… aka Native American National Day of Mourning)</em></td>
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<td>34</td>
<td>Mon 11/30</td>
<td>Latinos - Bilingual America</td>
<td>Zinn Ch. 8, also pp. 614-616 + website links</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>Wed 12/2</td>
<td>The (?) Mexican American experience</td>
<td>Pam Munoz Ryan, <em>Esperanza Rising</em> (entire)</td>
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**Discussion Questions:** What do you learn from this text about Mexican-American migrant worker experiences? Does the fact that it 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? What’s the novel’s historical context (hint: it was published in 2000)? How might this book be incorporated into K-12 classrooms, or into other public history or education settings? How does this story connect to our other readings about marginalized, migrant, and/or minority peoples?

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<td>36</td>
<td>Fri 12/4</td>
<td>Prof for a Day #7</td>
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<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Mon 12/7</td>
<td>Course Wrap-Up &amp; Sharing Research</td>
<td>Bring a food to share that represents your (or another) cultural heritage</td>
<td>Final Papers Due + 50-word summary of your rsch project</td>
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<td>Mon 12/14</td>
<td>Exam #3 12:30 pm</td>
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