

U.S. SOCIAL HISTORY

HI 217-H1 Worcester State University
Spring 2018 MWF 1:30 pm Room S-101

INSTRUCTOR:
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Social history
explores the
worlds of “non-
famous” people,
who often left
little record of
their own.

Ordinary People, Extraordinary Stories

COURSE OVERVIEW AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

EXPECTATIONS AND COURSE STRUCTURE

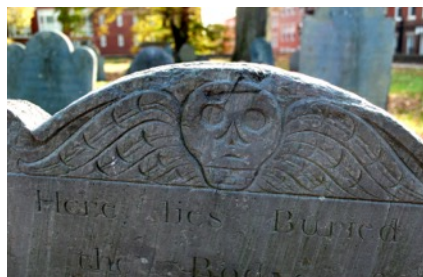
This course involves extensive reading and writing. You will be expected to read 50-100 pages a week (sometimes more), and to write approximately 20-25 pages over the course of the term. You will need to put in consistent effort during the whole semester; your learning will be assessed in multiple ways. You'll need to employ strong research skills and participate in a community of learning in our classroom.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

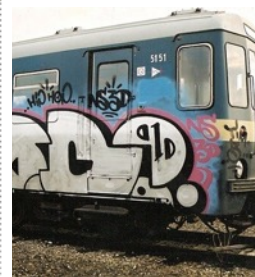
- Extend and broaden your own historical knowledge of the American past and its ordinary people, through the lens of social history.
- Consistently contribute to a community of learning in seminar discussion with: active preparation, productive and respectful discussion, and depth of engagement with 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.



Immigrants arriving at Ellis Island, New York City



Sometimes this is all we have left



Is this social history? (Yes!)

LASC Categories:
WAC + DAC
USW or TLC
and Honors

Course Requirements

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION 21%

I will take attendance in each class session. You should be prompt, present and ready to work in 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 Feb 12, March 16, and May 16.

RESPONSE PAPERS 9%

You’ll write three brief (2-page) papers that represent your thoughtful response to the assigned readings. The first is due Friday, Jan 26. 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.

ZINN BLOG 10% (HONORS ONLY)

Keep a running Blackboard backchannel discussing Zinn’s *People’s History of the United States*.

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 Feb 23.

RESEARCH PROJECT 20%

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. Your topic is due March 30. There will be a peer review session on Apr 23. 20 points total: Apr 23 draft 5 points, May 7 final paper 12 points, May 7 oral presentation 3 points.

THE FINE PRINT

Regarding plagiarism: on papers and exams, doing your own work is essential. Cite your sources using Chicago-Style footnotes. If you need help with citation, see the **Footnotes Module** on Blackboard. 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.

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.



Which is the “real” Pocahontas?

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.

Extra Credit

The topic and themes of this course can be explored beyond our classroom, and I highly recommend this! As an incentive, I will grant up to 5 points extra credit each time you do one of the following:

Visit a **museum** that contains images or objects relating to everyday peoples' lives, and either write a review of the exhibit or provide a description & close reading of one or more items/objects you viewed. For example: Worcester Art Museum, Worcester Historical Museum, or beyond Worcester: zillions of options. (3-5 pages)

Conduct an **interview or oral history** with a person whose life experience touches on our course themes: working-class labor, women's lives and work, or first-generation immigration (**provide video or audio and full transcript of interview**).

Write a **book review** of a monograph or biography that relates to our course themes. *Book must be approved in advance.* (3-5 pages).



Japanese American families boarding buses for World War II internment camps in California, 1942

Grading Scale

Attendance & participation
+ Prof for a Day
21 points

Response papers
(3 @ 3 points)
9 points

ZinnBlog (see p. 7)
10 points

Exams, lowest is dropped
(2 of 3 @ 10 points)
20 points

Digital Project
20 points

Research Paper
20 points

Total 100

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?

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 documents and readings in depth, in a workshop / discussion format. Your task is to understand what we can learn about ordinary people from these documents, and how the document's creator(s) got — and interpreted — their information. Discussion questions are listed ahead of time in the syllabus, so come with the readings and your notes addressing the discussion questions, ready to respond in class.

FRIDAY

"Prof for a Day." Students take a turn teaching based on the week's material and topics. Think of this as a chance to engage your peers and empower **their** learning, *NOT* as a formal or stiff "oral presentation" that shows off your own knowledge. There will be seven of these throughout the term.

Syllabus

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subject to change; check the website for updates!

#	DATE	TOPIC	READINGS	WHAT'S DUE / NOTES
Unit One Who Built America? Social History as Labor / Folk History				
1	Wed 1/17	Course Intro		
2	Fri 1/19	Social History, Labor History	Gutman, "Work, Culture & Society" PDF	
3	Mon 1/22	Labor and Gender	Zinn Ch 13	
4	Wed 1/24	The Brandeis Brief discussion	Brief in <i>Muller v. Oregon</i>	
Discussion Questions: 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 1/26	American Working Class History		Response Paper #1
6	Mon 1/29	The New South	Zinn Ch 11 + see online links	
7	Wed 1/31	<i>Like a Family</i> discussion	<i>Like a Family</i> , "Cradle to Grave" PDF	
Discussion Questions: 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 we've discussed so far, and in what ways is it similar? How did this team of researchers conduct their research?				
8	Fri 2/2	Prof for a Day #1		
9	Mon 2/5	Workers in Worcester	Rosenzweig, <i>Eight Hours</i> , Parts I and II	
10	Wed 2/7	Workers in Worcester discussion	Rosenzweig, <i>Eight Hours</i> , Parts III and IV	
Discussion Questions: Let's focus on Worcester and 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; what questions shall we bring to our project?				
11	Fri 2/9	Prof for a Day #2		
12	Mon 2/12	Exam #1		
The Digital Project				
13	Wed 2/14	Worcester Historical Museum	Field trip for half the class (other half has day off) - details on web	
14	Fri 2/16	Worcester Historical Museum	Field trip for half the class (other half has day off) - details on web	
15	Mon 2/21	Digital Project Work Day #1	bring laptops to class	
16	Wed 2/23	Digital Project Work Day #2	bring laptops to class	



Our digital project will take us to the research library of the Worcester Historical Museum

Syllabus

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Unit Two The Other Half: Social History as Women's History				
17	Mon 2/26	The "Pocahontas Problem"	Zinn Ch. 1 and Rountree PDF	
18	Wed 2/28	Native American Women discussion		
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 3/2	Prof for a Day #3		
19	Mon 3/5	Separate Spheres, Didactic Literature	Zinn Ch. 6 + Scott, "Gender" PDF	
20	Wed 3/7	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 3/9	Prof for a Day #4		
22	Mon 3/12	American Women 1940-1960	Zinn Ch. 19 + Walker's intro <i>Women's Magazines</i>	
23	Wed 3/14	Gender in mid20-century discussion	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?				
25	Fri 3/16	Exam #2	<i>Spring Break, March 19 - March 23</i>	
Unit Three Who is America? Social History as the History of Immigration and Multiculturalism				
26	Mon 3/26	Library Day 1	Intro to sources, strategies - bring laptops	
27	Wed 3/28	Biography & Microhistory discussion	Lepore, "Historians Who Love Too Much" PDF	
Discussion Questions: How does Lepore define "microhistory"? What is the difference between biography and microhistory? What is microhistory's value, especially for studying people who left us little record? What are Lepore's four propositions, and how will you apply them to your upcoming research project?				
28	Fri 3/30	Library Day 2	location TBA - bring laptops	Topic due by midnight
29	Mon 4/2	Immigration, Nation, Migration	Zinn Ch. 12	
30	Wed 4/4	Life in the Nadir discussion	Zinn Ch. 17	
Discussion Questions: Around 1900, most historians agree, was the low point for African American citizenship in all of American history (i.e. the "nadir"). What was life like for African Americans between 1880 and 1945? What forms of protest and social justice advocacy did they use? How do early 20th-century black lives illuminate American history's broader context: also an era of westward expansion, industrialization, American imperialism and involvement in global war, urbanization, and high rates of European immigration?				



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



Mill children in Lawrence

Required Books:

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)
ISBN 978-0439120425

Howard Zinn,
A People's History of the United States
(reissue edition, Harper)
ISBN 978-0062397348

#	DATE	TOPIC	READINGS	WHAT'S DUE / NOTES
31	Fri 4/6	Prof for a Day #5		
32	Mon 4/9	Asian Migrants	Ngai, "Filipinos" PDF + Goldstein-Shirley "Strangers" PDF	
33	Wed 4/11	Race and Immigration restriction discussion	Document by assignment, see website links	
Discussion Questions: Use your assigned primary source to address these questions — how did prevailing ideas about race inform immigration policy in Congress and the courts between 1880 and 1945? What assumptions and values can you identify in your document? What were some of the long-term effects of immigration restriction?				
34	Fri 4/13	Prof for a Day #6		<i>No Class Mon 4/16</i>
35	Wed 4/18	Today's Immigrant Cultures discussion	TAL episode = website links	Plan ahead - episodes are 1 hour long
Discussion Questions: Who are today's immigrants (and why those in particular)? What are some of the pushes and pulls that bring newcomers to the United States? Make a concept map or chart showing some of the perspectives, stereotypes, assumptions or values evident in our recent / current debate about American immigration. In what ways does today's debate echo earlier national debates over immigration vs. what is new and unique to our time?				
36	Fri 4/20	Prof for a Day #7		
37	Mon 4/23	Peer Review Day	none - bring 2 printed drafts of your paper to class	Paper Draft Due - 2 copies, printed out
38	Wed 4/25	Paper Workshop	Prof conferences & bring paper to work on in class	

#	DATE	TOPIC	READINGS	WHAT'S DUE / NOTES
	Fri 4/27	<i>No Class</i>	WSU is in session, but our class is cancelled for the day. Use the time to work on your research papers or read the upcoming novel for Wed 5/2	
39	Mon 4/30	Bilingual America	Zinn Ch. 8, also pp. 614-616 + website links	
40	Wed 5/2	The (?) Mexican American experience	Pam Munoz Ryan, <i>Esperanza Rising</i> (entire)	
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?				
41	Fri 5/4	Latino-American discussion	(No Prof for a Day today)	
42	Mon 5/7	Course Wrap-Up and Research Sharing	Bring a food to share that represents your (or another) cultural heritage	Final Papers Due + 50-word summary of your research project
	Wed 5/16	Exam #3 12:30 pm		

More about the Honors ZinnBlog

Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States* is an important book to grapple with and it's stuffed with powerful stories, but it's not perfect. Zinn makes no attempt to be objective; instead he takes a strong ideological perspective that reflects his own radical politics and working-class-to-intellectual biography. He also seems uninterested in the usual trappings of scholarly writing, like footnotes citing his sources. Are these problems? Should they be?

For the benefit of the non-honors class we treat Zinn fairly uncritically, as if his account of the past is authoritative and true, if perhaps incomplete. We will read 6 of the chapters together as a class (1, 6, 8, 12, 17, and 19), though not necessarily in order. In a sense we (mis-)use *People's History* like a textbook (which it's not designed to be). The honors section, however, should approach Zinn more thoroughly as critical, engaged readers and will maintain a running Blackboard discussion board as a sort of backchannel conversation. Each honors student will have an assigned week to be in charge of the ZinnBlog. Threads open on a Monday morning and close the following Sunday at midnight. Everyone contributes to each open thread, either with a post (if it's your week in charge) or with smart comment(s) to keep the discussion flowing. I'll post a schedule to the honors Blackboard shell once the semester gets going.

"I am supposing, or perhaps only hoping, that our future may be found in the past's fugitive moments of compassion rather than in its solid centuries of warfare." — Howard Zinn