

History 5750 Spring 2024
Field: Recent U.S. History
Theme: U.S. History in Transnational and International Perspective
Professor Chris Endy
Tuesdays, 6:00 to 8:45 pm in King Hall D3082

Contact Your Professor

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:30 to 5:55 pm via Zoom or in my office (King Hall C4076A). Office hours are times that faculty set aside to meet with students to talk about any topic. You never need to make an appointment for office hours. You can just pop in unannounced. My Zoom link for office hours is posted on Canvas. If I am meeting with another student, please remain in the Zoom waiting room and I will buzz you in when I'm free. If you can't make my posted office hours, please let me know and we can arrange another time or way to connect.

Office Phone: 323-343-2046. *Email is usually a better option, but you can sometimes reach me via phone on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and you can leave a voicemail message at any time. Please note that I let my phone go to voicemail when I am already meeting with someone in my office.*

More Info: See the [Syllabus Appendix](#) on Canvas for tips, resources, and definitions of key terms such as "class participation," "good writing," and "plagiarism." See my [personal faculty webpage](#) with advice on surviving college and links to some of my favorite things:

Course Overview:

This seminar allows graduate students to explore recent U.S. history through transnational and international perspectives. (For a definition of "transnational," see my [glossary of historiographic terms](#).) Taken as a whole, our common readings will explore diverse themes, including economics, politics, empire, culture, labor, gender and sexuality, race, immigration, and peace activism, both inside and outside the United States.

Big Questions:

1. Diplomacy: What factors and motives (e.g. economics, cultural ideologies, security concerns) have shaped or motivated U.S. policy toward the wider world?

2. Empire: What does it mean to call the United States an empire?

3. Networks: How have transnational networks and communities emerged and what forms have they taken? How have they operated across national borders and what have they accomplished?

4. Networks: How can a focus on transnational networks help us appreciate neglected forms of politics, culture, and community, and neglected histories of domination, resistance, and innovation?

5. Networks and states: How have transnational networks challenged nation-states and empires? In contrast, how have nation-states and empires used transnational networks to further their own ends?

Required Readings:

I have assigned six books to start our common readings. In the first few weeks of the semester, we will discuss ideas for three or four more books that we will read toward the end of the semester. Students are expected to obtain copies (paper or digital) of each book that we read together.

Grades:

Class Participation	20%	
Weekly Reading Notes	33%	
Book Set-Up	2%	2 pages (single-spaced)
Book Selection Work	2%	
History Essay	8%	3-4 pages (double-spaced)
Historiographic Essay	10%	4-5 pages (double-spaced)
Final Essay	25%	12-15 pages (double-spaced)

We will use a “+/-” system: A (93-100), A- (90-92), B+ (87-89), B (83-86), B- (80-82), C+ (77-79), C (73-76), C- (70-72), D+ (67-69), D (60-66), F (0-59). If you don’t understand the basis of the grade you received, please speak to me—but only after letting twenty-four hours pass for you to reflect on the feedback. Special rule: Students must submit a passing-quality final essay AND must attend at least 10 class sessions to avoid an automatic failing grade for the course.

Late Policy:

Yes, you can turn in assignments late. I encourage students to submit work on time because we will often do class activities based on those assignments. At the same time, I know that our lives can get very busy, and I don’t want late assignments to sabotage your overall grade. That’s why I make the late penalties relatively modest. Here’s the breakdown for most assignments:

- 1 day late: 3% off
- 2 days late: 5% off
- 3 days late: 7% off
- 4 to 21 days late: 10% off
- 22+ days late: 20% off

No late work will be accepted after the last day of classes (e.g. Week 15), unless you make advance plans with me.

The Free Lates: For four assignments, you may turn in your work up to seven days late with no penalty. To activate a Free Late, simply go to the assignment page on Canvas and type “Free Late #1” (or #2 or #3) in the Assignment Comment section. Canvas will still label your assignment as “late” but I will know not to give it a late penalty. You do not need to give a reason for the delay. Exceptions: You cannot use a Free Late for the Book Setup or Final Essay.

What should I do if I start to really fall behind?:

Sometimes work, health, or family can make it hard to attend class or meet deadlines. If you see a problem approaching, please stop by office hours or send me an email to keep me posted. When an unexpected problem arises, please let me know as soon as possible. If a real hardship arises and you let me know what’s going on at an early stage, I will do my best to work with you and help you do well in the class.

Attendance:

I have designed this class to revolve around learning that we do together in the classroom. If you miss class, you will miss the heart of this course. Please make attending *each* class session your top priority. Please arrive on time and stay until the end. If an unexpected emergency arises, send me an email as soon as possible and contact members of your team. Missing one class during the semester will not hurt your grade, but further unexcused absences will. These absences will also result in a lower class participation score.

Plagiarism, ChatGPT, and Text-Generating AI:

As a professor, I’ve noticed that students often resort to plagiarism when they run out of time or don’t understand how to do an assignment. If you find yourself drifting toward plagiarism, visit my office hours or send me an email. I can help you get through the assignment or calculate the (modest) late penalty. You will be much better off taking a small late penalty than committing plagiarism. For a definition of plagiarism, and for resources on avoiding it, see my Syllabus Appendix on Canvas. The Syllabus Appendix also contains advice and class policy related to ChatGPT and other kinds of text-generating AI.

Disabilities: As your professor, I want all students to succeed in class. If you have a disability or any other issue that affects your learning, please let me know at any time. Also take note of the resources at the [Office for Students with Disabilities](#) (Student Services Building Room 1320).

Change: I reserve the right to make reasonable changes to the syllabus when needed.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Date	Readings	Assignment
Jan 23rd	No readings	None—Course Introduction
Jan 30th	Marixa Lasso, <i>Erased: The Untold Story of the Panama Canal</i> (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2019).	Lasso notes
Feb 6th	Megan Black. <i>The Global Interior: Mineral Frontiers and American Power</i> (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2019).	Black notes
Feb 13th	Adria L. Imada, <i>Aloha America: Hula Circuits through the U.S. Empire</i> (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012).	Imada notes
Feb 18th	Draft of History Essay due on Sunday by 11:59pm via Canvas. You can also submit your draft on Monday or Tuesday before class with no late penalty, but I will not be able to give as much feedback.	
Feb 20th	Book reviews (details TBD) to help us finalize our final book selections tonight.	Bring a paper copy of your history essay draft to class tonight.
Feb 25th	History Essay due on Sunday by 11:59pm via Canvas.	
Feb 27th	Kelly Lytle Hernandez, <i>Bad Mexicans: Race, Empire, and Revolution in the Borderlands</i> (New York: Norton, 2022).	Lytle Hernandez notes
March 5th	Adam Goodman, <i>The Deportation Machine: America's Long History of Expelling Immigrants</i> (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020).	Goodman notes
March 12th	Two or three journal articles, details TBD.	None
March 19th	Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, <i>Radicals on the Road: Internationalism, Orientalism, and Feminism during the Vietnam Era</i> (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013).	Wu notes

March 26th	New Book #1	New Book #1 notes
<i>Spring Break: No class on April 2nd</i>		
April 7th	Draft of Historiographic Essay due on Sunday by 11:59pm via Canvas. You can also submit your draft on Monday or Tuesday before class with no late penalty, but I will not be able to give much (if any) feedback.	
April 9th	None	Bring a paper copy of your historiographic essay draft to class tonight.
April 14th	Historiographic Essay due on Sunday by 11:59pm via Canvas	
April 16th	New Book #2	New Book #2 notes
April 23rd	New Book #3	New Book #3 notes Informal Oral Presentations on Final Essay, Round 1 of 2
April 30th	Two or three journal articles, details TBD.	Informal Oral Presentations on Final Essay, Round 2 of 2
May 5th	Final Essay draft due on Sunday by 11:59pm via Canvas	
May 7th	None	Bring a paper copy of your final essay draft to class tonight. Even a partial draft or outline is better than nothing, so bring something!
May 18th	Final Essay due on Saturday by 11:59pm via Canvas	

GUIDELINES FOR YOUR BOOK NOTES

You are required to submit your reading notes for each of our common book readings. Notes should be single-spaced. They can be typed or hand-written and should be completed before the start of the class when we will be discussing the reading. You can submit notes via Canvas or in paper in class.

Your notes should include the following three elements:

1. The book's **main thesis** and each **chapters' thesis**. Do not simply copy full sentences from the author. Paraphrase instead. By using your own words, you ensure that you understand the author's main arguments.
2. The principal **historical methods and sources** used by the author.
3. Your own **thoughts and reflections** on the piece.

The third element, your thoughts and reflections, will probably be the most challenging, so here is further advice on what to write for this part.

3A. Examples that show the book or article's big **strengths**. To identify strengths, find pages where the author provides persuasive or creatively-obtained primary sources to support the big thesis or a chapter thesis. Or identify ideas raised by the author that shed new light on other scholarly works or that help us better understand important problems in the past or present.

3B. Examples that show its main **weaknesses or limits**. To identify **weaknesses**, look for thesis claims that do not have adequate or persuasive evidence. Or look for evidence in the book or article that could be interpreted in ways that differ from the intended interpretation that the author is trying to make.

To identify **limits**, look for topics, sources, or questions that the author left out but that might have improved the study had the author included them. When explaining a limit, do not simply state that the author ignored something. Add a sentence or two explaining *why* the book or article *might* have been stronger had the author included it.

3C. **Similarities and differences** between this author and other authors we've read. Can you identify common themes and patterns between books or articles? If we put two works together, can we see a big picture emerge? Or does one author seem to contradict or complicate another author?

3D. Aspects of the work that **puzzle or interest** you. It's appropriate to write in a personal voice in your notes. Single out issues or details that relate to your own intellectual pursuits or concerns.

What notes are not:

-Your notes are **not extensive summaries**. Don't think of them as lecture notes. When listening to a lecture, you need to write a lot of detail because you might never hear that info again. With a book or article, you can easily return to pages and retrieve details when you need them. Thus, go light on details and focus more on the big ideas—both your big ideas and the author's big ideas. Only record details when they illuminate a big idea.

-Your notes are **not polished works**. I will not look at them the same way I will read your more formal essays. In your notes, you can use shorthand abbreviations, and you don't even need to proofread. If your notes are handwritten, I ask only that they be legible.

More Tips on Writing Notes:

Use the **"bookends" method of reading**. Read the book intro and conclusion first (or article intro/conclusion first). Then read each chapter's intro and conclusion. Then record your initial reactions to the author's topic, thesis, sources, method, etc. Then determine which chapters deserve more time, and focus more on those chapters. See [this page](#) for more on this bookends method.

Save time and space for your overall reflections. ALWAYS save about ten minutes at the end of your reading to record your overall thoughts about what you've just read and written. This is perhaps the **MOST IMPORTANT MOMENT** of the note-taking process. If you are tight on time, skip parts of a less-important chapter rather than skip the crucial step of overall reflection writing.

Develop a method or format that allows you (and me) to distinguish at a glance the key claims in a book, in contrast to the author's smaller details. Also develop a format that allows us to distinguish your summary of the book from your own ideas and evaluation of the piece.

Remember the pages numbers! At the end of every entry in your notes, record the page numbers in parentheses. The page reference will help you immensely later this semester, and years down the road.

Avoid copying long quotations, statistics (unless it's an absolutely stunning statistic), or other minor details. If there is an interesting quotation on the power of language on page 134, you can simply write in your notes, "interesting quote on the power of language (134)." If it turns out you need the exact quotation later in life, you will know what page to turn to.

Do not complain about petty stuff. If a piece seems too long or boring, that probably means that you need to skim faster through the author's details. We are not reading

these works for recreation. We are reading quickly and strategically to analyze argument and method and to make connections with other scholars. In short, provide a critique, not a complaint.

Make frequent ties between the author and other authors you've read. Give particular emphasis to authors from this seminar, because those connections will be most useful in preparing you for the final paper. Consider other authors from other classes as well.

ABOVE ALL, maintain a dialogue between you and the author: What do you find surprising, convincing, inspiring, frustrating? Avoid simple summarizing. Good note-taking is not simply about recording what the author wrote. At its best, note-taking highlights your own writing and thinking.

GUIDELINES FOR SHORT NOTES

For two weeks, you can submit "short notes" and still receive full credit for your work. Please write the phrase "short notes" at the top of your notes submission when using this option.

Short notes should be about 200 words and should consist of the following:

1. The book or article's **main thesis** (paraphrase; don't copy or quote directly).
2. The principal **historical methods and sources** used by the author.
3. **Commentary** on the following:
 - A. What you find most **surprising or interesting** about the thesis and methods.
 - B. How the book **relates to other books** you've read.
 - C. Your sense of what the author will need to do or show to **prove their thesis**.
 - D. **Questions** that you have about the book or topic based on your initial exploration of it.

Note: If using "short notes" for a week when we are reading the second half of a book, you can adopt the outline above and focus on just one or two chapters in the book's second half.

GUIDELINES FOR THE BOOK SET-UP

For one book, you will be responsible for helping introduce our book by completing one of the two projects described below. Please upload your work to Canvas by 2pm on the day we discuss the book. You should also be prepared to guide the class through your handout in a brief, informal presentation (3 to 4 minutes). **Due Date: 2pm on the day we discuss the book.**

Length and formatting: Make sure that your document is no more than two pages long. If your document is running onto a 3rd page, trim the content or change the formatting so that it fits on two pages. I will make paper copies of your document for everyone, and I don't want us to waste paper or class time with overly long documents.

Method A: Biographic Sketch and Annotated Bibliography: Create a two-page document that introduces the author to the class. Begin by writing a brief paragraph that conveys what's most important or interesting to know about the author. Then provide as much information as you can about the author. Consider these questions: Where and when was the author born? Where did the author go to school? Who was the author's Ph.D. mentor? What was the Ph.D. dissertation about? Provide citations for books or key articles that the author has written. Alongside each citation, write a sentence or two explaining what each publication argued. Start by searching on the internet, especially for faculty websites. If your author has a common name, add "site:.edu" to your search on Google. This will limit your search to educational sites only.

Warning: Although you can cut and paste citations from the internet, make sure that the rest of the handout is your own writing. Do not simply copy a faculty webpage, because those webpages are usually addressed to students or prospective students at their campus.

Method B: Review of Book Reviews: Search for four interesting and important reviews of the week's book and compile them in a two-page chart. You can download a blank template for your review chart on Canvas. For each review, you should provide a citation as well as the reviewer's institutional affiliation and area of expertise. Then copy the most interesting positive and negative comments made by each reviewer.

See the list below for some of the best journals. Most of these journals can be found on the [University Library's One Search](#) tool. Also consider the h-net.org discussion networks, such as H-Diplo. H-net book reviews do not appear on the Library databases, but they are still scholarly in nature.

General History:

American Historical Review

The Historian

Journal of American History

Modern American History

Radical History Review

Reviews in American History

International and Transnational History

Cold War History

Diplomatic History (my favorite journal; includes transnational history)

H-Diplo

Hispanic American Historical Review (for Latin American history)

Human Rights Quarterly

International History Review

Journal of Cold War Studies

Journal of Peace Research

Pacific Historical Review

Social and Cultural History

American Quarterly (for American Studies)

Aztlan

Journal of Social History

Journal of Urban History

Journal of Women's History

Economic History

Business History Review

Enterprise & Society

International Labor and Working-Class History

Labor History

Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas

Essay Drafts

You are required to submit drafts for all three essays. Drafts are due on Sundays at 11:59pm, and we will work on them in class on Tuesdays. Drafts submitted on Monday or before class on Tuesday will not incur a late penalty, but I cannot guarantee that I will have time to give normal feedback.

Drafts will receive a check-mark grade that will influence the grade of your revised, final submission.

✓+ = a good draft submitted before the start of Tuesday's class with the following:

- creative ideas and a draft thesis
- all or almost all of your examples
- clear paragraph structure
- basic proofreading
- thoughtful author queries in which you raise your own questions and worries about the draft.

** a ✓+ adds 2 points to your essay's final grade.

✓ = a partial draft that lacks many of the examples your final version will need or that lacks other features listed above; or a full draft submitted after Tuesday's class.

** a ✓ neither adds to nor detracts from your essay's final grade.

✓- = a partial draft submitted after Tuesday's class, or no draft submission at all

** ✓- subtracts 2 points to your essay's final grade.

GUIDELINES FOR THE HISTORY ESSAY

Select two of our first three books (Lasso, Black, Imada) and write a 3-4 page essay (typed, double-spaced pages) that makes an interesting and creative historical argument about a theme that interests you. Sample themes include (but are not limited to) the history of transnational networks, cross-cultural exchanges, race, gender, sexuality, empire, labor, economics, technology, strategies of rule, and strategies of resistance. You can also look at two themes in relation to each other (e.g. how race shaped labor, or how technology shaped empire).

Advice:

-THEME: Just pick one basic topic or idea (e.g. labor, or how race shapes labor). This is a short essay, and you will not have space to develop more than one topic.

-THESIS: Do not simply re-state each author's thesis. Instead, weave aspects of the two books together to develop your own argument.

-ANALYSIS: Do not focus on summarizing the books' content. Focus on explaining and supporting your own thesis.

-EVIDENCE: You can be selective in how you draw from each book. You do not need to give equal coverage to each chapter of a given book. Instead, draw strategically from the two books to advance your own thesis. (Note: If you want to draw from three books, you may do so, if it helps you develop your own argument.)

-EVIDENCE: Draw extensive **details and short quotations** from each book to support your argument.

-AUDIENCE: Write for an audience of reasonably well-informed history MA students and professors, but do not assume that your readers are experts in the particular topic you are writing about. That is, you don't have to explain basic history concepts (e.g. the New Deal, the Haitian Revolution, Fidel Castro), but also don't assume knowledge of specialized details.

-WRITING: Write with clear, polished **prose**. Deliver a thesis in the intro, and begin each paragraph with a topic sentence argument.

-CITATIONS: Provide **citations** as either footnotes or endnotes using the Chicago Manuel of Style's documentary-note format. With good Chicago-style notes, you do not need a bibliography. For format rules, consult this site:
<https://libguides.calstatela.edu/WriteAndCite/Chicago>

-TITLE: Give your paper a brief but catchy **title** that hints at your essay's main argument or purpose.

GUIDELINES FOR THE HISTORIOGRAPHIC ESSAY

Select two books that we've read so far and write a 4-5 page historiographic essay (typed, double-spaced pages) that compares the approaches and arguments of those two books. For your essay's **thesis statement**, develop a historiographic argument. A historiographic thesis might advance an argument on the pros and cons of these two historians' methods, approaches, or arguments. Alternatively, your thesis analyze an important idea or concept shared by both books.

Note: Do not pick the same two books that you used in your History Essay. You can write about one book in both essays, but make sure not to repeat *both* book selections.

Tip: For a good thesis, it helps to start with an overarching question that unites the two authors. I can help you find an overarching question for your topic if you aren't sure how to proceed.

For the essay's mechanics, use the "Advice" guidelines provided for the History Essay.

Frequently Asked Questions on Historiographic Essays

Q) *What is a historiographic essay?*

A) Historiographic essays analyze historians and the methods historians use. A conventional history essay might ask, "What caused the Haitian Revolution?" In contrast, a historiographic essay might ask, "What new methods have historians used to explain the revolution?" or "How has the rise of the cultural approach changed our understanding of the revolution?"

Q) *What should I look for in a book when preparing a historiographic essay?*

A) Focus on these two areas:

1. How the author positions their work in relationship to prior scholarship.
2. The methods and theoretical assumptions that the author uses to analyze primary sources and build their arguments.

Q) *How do I know I've written a historiographic essay?*

A) You can tell your essay is historiographic when your thesis and topic sentence arguments make points about specific historians. Look at the subjects of your sentences. The names of specific historians should be the subjects/actors in your sentence. Compare these two sentences:

"Cold War fears influenced notions of ideal motherhood."

(This would be a fine sentence for a history essay, but it's not historiographic.)

"Through a close reading of 1950s women's magazines, historian Pat Smiley was the first to argue that Cold War fears influenced notions of ideal motherhood." (This sentence is historiographic because a historian occupies the subject position.)

GUIDELINES FOR THE FINAL ESSAY

The Broad Purpose:

The final paper represents an opportunity to synthesize our class readings around an overarching question that you choose. Select a big question or theme that matches your intellectual interests. Just make sure that your question or theme also connects to most of our common books. This essay can be either historiographic or historical in nature (your choice).

Help:

I am happy to work with you to develop your topic and question. Please ask me.

The Basic Requirements:

The paper should be 12-15 pages (typed, double-spaced), and it should draw numerous ideas and specific evidence from at least six of our books. Deploy ideas and evidence from our books in a way that allows you to answer that question. As with the first two essays, do not summarize books. Answer your chosen question in a way that highlights your own voice and analysis.

How to Outline an Outstanding Essay:

When you outline your paper, DO NOT simply move from book to book, author by author. Instead, create a thematic organization and weave together ideas and examples from different books within the paragraphs and sections of your essay. It is relatively easy, but also somewhat boring, to write a bunch of book summaries and paste them together in a row to assemble a long paper. It requires more analysis and thought to discuss two or more authors in a single, coherent paragraph. Aim for this more creative model as you create your essay's outline.

Format:

Same as for the first two essays—just longer! 😊