

Advanced Colloquium United States History

HIST 210B

Spring 2026 Section 01 In Person 4 Unit(s) 01/22/2026 to 05/11/2026 Modified 01/16/2026

Contact Information

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Office Hours

Thursdays, 4:00-5:00 p.m., or by appointment

DMH 134

Course Information

In this course, we will explore the major themes and historiographical debates of nineteenth-century American history. Students will read foundational and recent works, and class discussions will focus on and analyze the early republic, slavery, antebellum politics and society, gender in the antebellum and post-war periods, the causes and consequences of the Civil War, Reconstruction, industrialization, the West, immigration, and the Gilded Age. We will pay particular attention to shifting definitions and realities of democracy, freedom, gender, and race, the rise of American capitalism, westward expansion, and the cultural, ideological, political, and social transformation of an agrarian, traditional society into a modernizing America.

Colloquium

Thursdays, 6:00 to 8:30 p.m.

DMH 347

Our assigned classroom is DMH 347. If we fit, we will likely meet in DMH 135.

Course Description and Requisites

Intensive readings, discussions, and reports on American history in the nineteenth century. Repeatable for credit once with different instructor.

Prerequisite(s): Graduate standing.

Note(s): This course satisfies graduate-level GWAR in this master's program.

Letter Graded

Classroom Protocols

Generative AI Tools:

For the purposes of this class, using AI tools, such as ChatGPT, to generate writing assignments is considered a form of plagiarism, and will be treated as such. This applies to the annotated bibliographies and historiographical paper. See the AI Policy document for this class posted on Canvas.

Program Information

Program Learning Outcomes

PLO 1 Identify, summarize, and synthesize historical arguments about how peoples and societies evolved across time and space.

PLO 2 Interpret, evaluate, compare, and critique historiographical arguments.

PLO 3 Construct persuasive evidence-based historical arguments using original research including primary sources.

Course Goals

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Explore and critique significant approaches to historical interpretation.
- Analyze important works and historical debates in nineteenth century U.S. History and assess books on the Plan B reading list.
- Explain the leading historiographical questions and debates related to nineteenth-century U.S. history and the processes of historical causation, change, and continuity. Articulate an understanding of how the 19th century changed this nation in multiple ways and shaped our own society.
- Demonstrate a shift in focus from the simple acquisition of historical content/knowledge to the more complex processes associated with historical interpretation, analysis, argument, choice of methodology, and historiographical positioning.
- Provide and analyze examples of how culture and society establish contexts of equality and inequality that shape our understanding of gender, racial/ethnic, religious, regional, and class identities. Students

will emerge from this course able to grasp not only broad contours of historical change, but able to see how momentous events affected different groups and individuals and their status in society.

- Read critically and take notes effectively.
- Work with primary and secondary sources, in this case on a weekly basis, to hone skills in interpreting and comparing a range of sources and perspectives, and placing those perspectives in an appropriate context.
- Conduct independent historical research using secondary sources, interpreting and analyzing the material, and presenting ideas in effective prose. Students will emerge from this course with stronger written communication skills.

Course Materials

Textbook

There is no textbook for this course.

Other Readings

The following books are **required** for the course. Please note that most of readings required for this course are on the Plan B list for graduate students specializing in U.S. History (or shortly to be added to that list). For most weeks, I have indicated alternate readings in case you have already read the required reading for another graduate or undergraduate course, or you have specific interests on that topic. When you are given a choice(s) between books, you really can decide what you want to read. Because this is a graduate course and the books are on the Plan B comprehensive exam list, you will be expected to borrow copies from the library or purchase copies on your own. Most of the monographs on the U.S. Plan B list are available electronically through King Library, but it is a good idea to have hard copies, especially of books that are on the section of the list that corresponds to the exam you plan to take.

Seth Rockman, *Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009).

Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2023). ebook.

Manisha Sinha, *The Slave's Cause: A History of Abolition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016). ebook.

Ned Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006). ebook.

Tera Hunter, *Bound in Wedlock: Slave and Free Black Marriage in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017). ebook.

Lisa Tetrault, *The Myth of Seneca Falls: Memory and the Women's Suffrage Movement, 1848-1898* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2014). ebook.

Paul Johnson and Sean Wilentz, *The Kingdom of Matthias: A Story of Sex and Salvation in 19th-Century America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). ebook.

Edward Ayers, *What Caused the Civil War? Reflections on the South and Southern History* (New York: Norton, 2006).

Chandra Manning, *What this Cruel War was Over: Soldiers, Slavery, and the Civil War* (New York: Vintage, 2008). ebook.

David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Belknap, 2002). ebook.

Heather Cox Richardson, *West from Appomattox: The Reconstruction of America after the Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008). ebook.

Stacey Smith, *Freedom's Frontier: California and the Struggle over Unfree Labor, Emancipation, and Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina Press, 2013). ebook.

Mae Ngai, *The Chinese Question: The Gold Rushes and Global Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2021). ISBN 978-0393634167.

Charles Postel, *The Populist Vision* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009). ebook.

The following book of historiographical essays is optional:

Eric Foner and Lisa McGirr, *American History Now. Critical Perspectives on the Past* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011). ebook.

Course Requirements and Assignments

This course depends upon student participation and active involvement in class discussions. Students are expected to arrive in class having carefully and critically read the assigned books and articles. Attendance is required, as is the timely completion of all assignments.

Class Participation (200 points, 20% of final grade)

This grade will reflect student participation in weekly class discussions. Participation is assessed based on active and thoughtful engagement in the discussion. Students should demonstrate that they did the reading and thought carefully about it. Listening and interaction with others is also important.

Notes and meetings to discuss note (25 points each, 50 points total, 5% of final grade)

You will find it much easier to write effective annotated bibliographies and to prepare for the historiographical essay if you hone your ability to read critically and to take notes. You will hand in your notes for one of the first three books (this can and should include your marginal notes and underlining, which can be shown to me in office hours, or you can take pictures and send them to me). You will hand in your notes for another monograph in the last three weeks of the course and we will have a discussion in office hours (it is up to you to meet with me in the first and last three weeks of the course) about your method for underlining and taking notes, what techniques, if any, you would like to try, and how your approach has changed based on having completed the other writing assignments in

the course. You can choose the book/notes to share, and we will discuss how the process of writing the annotated bibliographies has shaped the way you read and take notes on your reading. These exercises are designed to help you prepare for the Plan B exam. Your Plan B reading list contains roughly 90 books, so taking effective and efficient notes is a critical skill. You should be using the notes to study for the exam (this means you won't have to re-read the books). You should learn to distill and critique a book in three and no more than four pages (Annotated Bibliography). Each meeting about notes is worth five points—you will earn full credit if you come, answer my questions, show your notes and engage with the process. Each batch of notes (and commentary and/or underlining in the books) is worth 20 points and is graded based on thoroughness, clarity, organization, and analytical rigor and focus.

Please consult the guide "How to Read a Secondary Source," posted on Canvas.

In Class Midterm (150 points, 15% of final grade)

This is a timed, individual writing exercise meant to prepare students for the Plan B exam, and it will be held online in class on March 12. You will have one hour to complete the essay followed by a discussion of the Johnson and Wilentz book. The essays will be graded like Plan B questions, but also assigned a grade. Plan B exams are graded on a pass/fail basis according to the following rubric:

<http://www.sjsu.edu/history/docs/General-Rubric-PlanB-Exams.pdf>

An essay earning a low B- or below is considered unacceptable according to Plan B standards. For this class, all essays, those deemed passing or failing by Plan B standards, will earn a grade and points (150 maximum) based on the Plan B rubric (Content, Focus, Literature, Interpretation, and Writing). Those considered unacceptable by Plan B standards will earn a B- or lower and those deemed passing will earn a B or higher.

Annotated Bibliography (300 points, 30% of final grade)

A fifteen to twenty-page annotated bibliography (roughly 6000 words) of course readings will be due in three parts. Instructions and grading information are posted on Canvas. You will write an annotated bibliography/book review for six of the monographs you read in this course, due in batches of two (see Course Schedule for due dates). Students will be allowed to incorporate instructor feedback and rewrite one of the first two entries for a higher grade. If you write a seventh annotated bibliography, I will drop the lowest grade.

Annotated bibliographies will be submitted to Canvas Assignments through turnitin.com. Please also share a google doc or word doc with me so I can make more extensive comments.

Historiographical Essay (300 points, 30% of final grade)

Each student will write a historiographical essay of approximately 12 pages (3000 words) due a week after the final class meeting. Students will choose a topic in consultation with the instructor. You can find detailed assignment instructions and grading information posted on Canvas as well as a sample historiographical essay. You will need to meet with me in office hours to discuss your potential topic. In addition, I will always read and comment on drafts, so if you want the opportunity to rewrite the paper

based on detailed comments and suggestions, you need to get a draft to me at least two weeks before the final paper is due. The Historiographical Essay is due on May 14th by midnight. Please submit a copy of the paper through Canvas Assignments and turnitin.com. For more extensive commentary, you should also share a google doc or word doc with me.

Final Examination or Evaluation

There is no final exam for this course. The Historiographical Essay constitutes the final evaluation (see above).

✓ Grading Information

Criteria

Type	Weight	Topic	Notes
Participation	20%		200 points possible
Notes	5%		50 points possible
In-Class Midterm	15%		150 points possible
Annotated Bibliography	30%		300 points possible
Historiographical Essay	30%		300 points possible

Breakdown

Grade	Range	Notes
A+	970 points and above	
A	930-969	
A-	900-929	
B+	870-899	
B	830-869	
B-	800-829	
C+	770-799	

Grade	Range	Notes
C	730-769	
C-	700-729	

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9 \(PDF\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Course Schedule

When	Topic	Notes
<p>Discussion Week 1 01/22/2026 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM DMH 135</p>	<p>Introduction</p>	<p><u>Reading:</u></p> <p>David R. Roediger, "Neither a Servant nor a Master Am I': Keywords in the Languages of White Labor Republicanism," and "White Slaves, Wage Slaves, and Free White Labor," in the <i>Wages of Whiteness: Race in the Making of the American Working Class</i>, 43-92. (ebook)</p> <p>Amy Dru Stanley, "Home Life and the Morality of the Market," in Melvyn Stokes and Stephen Conway, eds. <i>The Market Revolution in America: Social, Political, and Religious Expressions, 1800-1880</i> (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1996), 74-96. (Scanned copy on Canvas)</p> <p><u>Optional:</u></p> <p>Peter Kolchin, "Whiteness Studies: The New History of Race in America," <i>Journal of American History</i> 89, no. 1 (June 2002), 154-173. JSTOR</p>

When	Topic	Notes
<p>Discussion Week #2 01/29/2026 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM DMH 135</p>	<p>Economic Transformations and Labor in the Early Republic</p>	<p><u>Reading:</u></p> <p>Seth Rockman, <i>Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore</i> (2009).</p> <p>or</p> <p>Tiya Miles, <i>The Dawn of Detroit: A Chronicle of Slavery and Freedom in the City of the Straits</i> (2017).</p> <p>(This is the only week in which the book choices do not include an ebook option, so plan ahead).</p> <p><u>Optional:</u></p> <p>Seth Rockman, "What Makes the History of Capitalism Newsworthy?" <i>Journal of the Early Republic</i> 34, no. 3 (Fall 2014), 439-466.</p> <p>Sven Beckert, "History of American Capitalism," in Foner and McGirr, eds., <i>American History Now</i> (ebook).</p>
<p>Discussion Week 3 02/05/2026 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM DMH 135</p>	<p>Antebellum Political Transformations</p>	<p><u>Reading:</u></p> <p>Daniel Walker Howe, <i>What God Hath Wrought</i>, Introduction, Chapters 6, 9-11, 13-15 (ebook).</p> <p>or</p> <p>Sean Wilentz, <i>The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln</i> (2005). Preface, prologue, Section II and more specifically Chapter 6 (181-182, 196-217), Chapter 7 and 8 (all, but gut), Chapter 9 (301-311), 10 (skim, super interesting but not critical) 11 (all) and 12 (IMPORTANT), 13 (all), 14-16 (all, but gut and focus on the reading questions). The main focus should be on chapters 12-16.</p> <p>Eric Foner, "Free Labor and Nineteenth-Century Political Ideology," in Melvyn Stokes and Stephen Conway, eds. <i>The Market Revolution in America: Social, Political, and Religious Expressions, 1800-1880</i> (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1996), 99-127. (Scanned copy on Canvas-- along with Stanley from Week 1).</p> <p><u>Optional:</u></p> <p>Seth Rockman, "Jacksonian America," in <i>American History Now</i> (ebook).</p>

When	Topic	Notes
<p>Discussion Week 4 02/12/2026 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM DMH 135</p>	<p>Antebellum Social Transformations</p>	<p><u>Reading:</u> Manisha Sinha, <i>The Slave's Cause: A History of Abolition</i> (ebook). or John Stauffer, <i>Black Hearts of Men: Radical Abolitionists and the Transformation of Race</i> (2022), ebook. <u>Alternate Reading:</u> Howe, <i>What God Hath Wrought</i>, chapters 5, 8, 12, 16.</p>
<p>Discussion Week 5 02/19/2026 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM DMH 135</p>	<p>Expansion</p>	<p><u>Reading:</u> Ned Blackhawk, <i>Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West</i> (2006), ebook. or Brian DeLay, <i>War of a Thousand Deserts: Indian Raids and the U.S.--Mexican War</i> (2008), ebook. <u>Optional:</u> Ned Blackhawk, "American Indians and the Study of U.S. History," in <i>American History Now</i> (ebook).</p>
<p>Discussion Week 6 02/26/2026 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM DMH 135</p>	<p>Slavery</p>	<p><u>Reading:</u> Tera Hunter, <i>Bound in Wedlock: Slave and Free Black Marriage in the Nineteenth Century</i> (2017), ebook. or Edward Baptist, <i>The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism</i> (2014), ebook. <u>Alternate Reading:</u> Thavolia Glymph, <i>Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household</i> (2008), ebook. <u>Optional:</u> Walter Johnson, "On Agency," <i>Journal of Social History</i> 37, no. 1 (2003): 113-124. FIRST SET OF ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES DUE</p>

When	Topic	Notes
<p>Discussion Week 7 03/05/2026 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM DMH 135</p>	<p>Women</p>	<p><u>Reading:</u></p> <p>Lisa Tetrault, <i>The Myth of Seneca Falls: Memory and the Women's Suffrage Movement, 1848-1898</i> (2014), ebook.</p> <p>or</p> <p>Christine Stansell, <i>City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789-1860</i> (1987), ebook.</p> <p>Amy Kaplan, "Manifest Domesticity," <i>American Literature</i> 70.3 (1998): 581-606.</p> <p><u>Alternate Reading:</u></p> <p>Martha Saxton, <i>Being Good: Women's Moral Values in Early America</i> (2003).</p> <p><u>Optional:</u></p> <p>Rebecca Edwards, "Women's and Gender History," in <i>American History Now</i>.</p>
<p>Midterm/Discussion Week 8 03/12/2026 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM DMH 135 (May meet in regular classroom for Exam)</p>	<p>The Second Great Awakening and Reform/Midterm</p>	<p><u>Reading:</u></p> <p>Paul E. Johnson and Sean Wilentz, <i>The Kingdom of Matthias: A Story of Sex and Salvation in 19th-Century America</i>, ebook.</p> <p>IN-CLASS MIDTERM FOR FIRST HOUR OF CLASS</p>
<p>Discussion Week 9 03/19/2026 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM DMH 135</p>	<p>Sectionalism and the Causes of the Civil War</p>	<p><u>Reading:</u> (choose one of the following)</p> <p>Adam Rothman, <i>Slave Country: American Expansion and the Origins of the Deep South</i> (2007), ebook.</p> <p>Edward Ayers, <i>What Caused the Civil War? Reflections on the South and Southern History</i> (2005).</p> <p>Matthew Karp, <i>This Vast Southern Empire: Slaveholders at the Helm of American Foreign Policy</i> (2018).</p> <p>James Oakes, <i>The Scorpion's Sting: Antislavery and the Coming of the Civil War</i> (2014).</p>

When	Topic	Notes
<p>Discussion Week 10 03/26/2026 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM DMH 135</p>	<p>The Civil War and Emancipation</p>	<p><u>Reading:</u></p> <p>Chandra Manning, <i>What this Cruel War was Over: Soldiers, Slavery, and the Civil War</i> (2008), ebook.</p> <p>or</p> <p>Stephanie McCurry, <i>Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South</i> (2012), ebook.</p> <p>Amy Dru Stanley, "Instead of Waiting for the Thirteenth Amendment: The War Power, Slave Marriage, and Inviolable Human Rights," <i>American Historical Review</i> (June 2010): 732-765.</p> <p><u>Alternate Reading:</u></p> <p>Gary Gallagher, <i>The Union War</i> (2012), ebook.</p> <p><u>Optional:</u></p> <p>Adam Rothman, "Slavery, The Civil War, and Reconstruction," in <i>American History Now</i>.</p> <p>SPRING RECESS, March 30-April 3</p>
<p>Discussion Week 11 04/09/2026 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM DMH 135</p>	<p>The Aftermath of the Civil War</p>	<p><u>Reading:</u></p> <p>David Blight, <i>Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory</i> (2002), ebook.</p> <p>or</p> <p>Hannah Rosen, <i>Terror in the Heart of Freedom: Citizenship, Sexual Violence, and the Meaning of Race in the Postemancipation South</i> (2009), ebook.</p> <p><u>Alternate:</u></p> <p>Amy Dru Stanley, <i>From Bondage to Contract: Wage Labor, Marriage, and the Market in the Age of Slave Emancipation</i> (1998), ebook.</p> <p><u>Optional:</u></p> <p>Carole Emberton, "Unwriting the Freedom Narrative: A Review Essay," <i>Journal of Southern History</i> 82, no. 2 (May 2016), 377-394.</p>

When	Topic	Notes
<p>Discussion Week 12 04/16/2026 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM DMH 135</p>	<p>Reconstruction</p>	<p><u>Reading:</u></p> <p>Heather Cox Richardson, <i>West from Appomattox: The Reconstruction of America after the Civil War</i> (2008), ebook.</p> <p>or</p> <p>Eric Foner, <i>A Short History of Reconstruction, 1863-1877</i> (1990).</p> <p><u>Optional:</u></p> <p>Catherine A. Jones, "Women, Gender, and the Boundaries of Reconstruction," <i>Journal of the Civil War Era</i> 8, no. 1 (March 2018), 111-131.</p> <p>Second set of Annotated Bibliographies Due</p>
<p>Discussion Week 13 04/23/2026 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM DMH 135</p>	<p>The West</p>	<p><u>Reading:</u></p> <p>Stacey Smith, <i>Freedom's Frontier: California and the Struggle over Unfree Labor, Emancipation, and Reconstruction</i> (2013), ebook.</p> <p>or</p> <p>Patricia Nelson Limerick, <i>A Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West</i> (1987), ebook.</p> <p>Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" (1893). (copy on Canvas).</p> <p><u>Optional:</u></p> <p>Stephen Aron, "Frontiers, Borderlands, Wests," in <i>American History Now</i>.</p> <p>Pekka Hamalainen and Samuel Truett, "On Borderlands," <i>Journal of American History</i> 98, no. 2 (2011), 338-361.</p>

When	Topic	Notes
<p>Discussion Week 14 04/30/2026 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM DMH 135</p>	<p>Immigration</p>	<p><u>Reading:</u></p> <p>Mae Ngai, <i>The Chinese Question: The Gold Rushes and Global Politics</i> (2021).</p> <p>or</p> <p>Moon-Ho Jung, <i>Coolies and Cane: Race, Labor, and Sugar in the Age of Emancipation</i> (2006), ebook.</p> <p><u>Optional:</u></p> <p>Mae Ngai, "Immigration and Ethnic History," in <i>American History Now</i>.</p> <p>Anna Pegler-Gordon, "Debating the Racial Turn in U.S. Ethnic and Immigration History," <i>Journal of American Ethnic History</i> 36, no. 2 (Winter 2017), 40-53.</p>
<p>Discussion Week 15 05/07/2026 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM DMH 135</p>	<p>The Gilded Age</p>	<p><u>Reading:</u></p> <p>Charles Postel, <i>The Populist Vision</i> (2009), ebook.</p> <p>Final Set of Annotated Bibliographies Due</p>