

California State University, Long Beach
History 510, Section 03 (Schedule Number 5307)
The Literature of U.S. History
Dr. Brett Mizelle

Fall Semester 2003
Tuesdays, 6:30 - 9:15 p.m.
Room FO2-101a

Office: Room FO2-109
Office Hours: Tuesdays & Wednesdays 4:00–6:00 p.m.; Thursdays 12:00–1:30 p.m. and by appointment
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Course Description:

This seminar on the literature of U.S. history is shamelessly focused on areas of the instructor's expertise and interest. Accordingly, it will not provide you with a general overview of U.S. history, but, after all, we assume that entering M.A. students already possess more than a pedestrian understanding of both the American past and the major trends and themes in its historical interpretation. While this course will critically engage the ways historians and cultural critics have approached American history, partly in an effort to understand the relevance, if any, of serious historical inquiry and critical intellectual work in our late capitalist, imperialist, globalized, consumer culture, its major focus is upon recent work on race, gender, class, nation, and culture in nineteenth-century America. Because developments in the early republic and antebellum America profoundly shaped the modern United States, I hope that our studies of this period (and our reading of its arguably most important literary production) will raise issues pertinent to history graduate students in a wide variety of concentrations.

Required Books:

The following books are required reading for this course. These books are supplemented by a course packet (number 2055) available at Copy Pro (corner of Palo Verde and Atherton, 562-431-9974).

- Ann Fabian, *Card Sharps & Bucket Shops: Gambling in Nineteenth-Century America* (1999).
Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick*, ed. Hershel Parker & Harrison Hayford, 2nd ed. (2001).
Dana D. Nelson, *National Manhood: Capitalist Citizenship and the Imagined Fraternity of White Men* (1998).
David W. Noble, *Death of a Nation: American Culture and the End of Exceptionalism* (2002).
Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth Century America*, New Edition (2003).
Shelley Streeby, *American Sensations: Class, Empire, and the Production of Popular Culture* (2002).

This course assumes and requires a basic understanding of American history. Those of you who feel you lack sufficient background should either plan on taking a U.S. 510 at a later date, or, purchase and read one of the many U.S. history textbooks that are available (ask me for suggestions). You may also wish to consult the outlines of American history provided by the U.S. Information Agency from 1954 to 1994 that are available on-line at [<http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/H/index.htm>]. These outlines, by the way, raise interesting questions about both the presentation of American history to foreign audiences during the Cold War and post-WW2 changes within the historical profession.

Because you will be primarily assessed through written work I have placed an order with our bookstore for copies of Mary Lynn Rampola, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, 3rd ed. (Bedford/St. Martin's, 2001). This book provides guidance on appropriate history citation form and instruction in historical research and writing. I assume, frankly, that all students have some experience in primary and secondary source research and are, at a minimum, proficient writers. I also assume that all students already possess both a quality dictionary and a well-worn style manual.

Course Requirements:

1. Attendance and Participation (20%). Because this class is a cooperative effort your lively, informed, and constructive participation is a requirement for a successful seminar. You are expected to come to class fully prepared to discuss all assigned readings. Any absences will be reflected in your final grade.

As part of the assessment of your participation, I expect participants in the seminar to come to each class session with at least three typewritten questions drawn from the week's reading. One question should engage the argument, method, sources, or any other aspect of the reading; another should address the larger implications raised by the reading in the context of the course, and the third should reflect your own interpretation of the reading. You should bring two copies of these questions (which should never extend beyond a single, single-spaced page) to our meetings, one for your use and one for my perusal and comment. We will use your questions to plan and advance our in-class discussions. You may wish to think about the following as you formulate your questions: what's the best big idea here? what's the most interesting concrete evidence? do you agree with the author's reading? where is the greatest vulnerability to criticism? what about method? presentation? does it go against or along with other readings? Please make sure that your questions address both the monograph and the articles that are required reading.

2. Short Paper (15%). You will write a 4-7 page paper, due at the third class meeting, on the questions raised by our readings about American exceptionalism and the futures of American studies.
3. Book Review (15%). You will write a 4-7 page critical review essay on one of the books listed under recommended readings and report on it during our seminar. Please make copies of your review for your classmates.
4. Paper Proposal and Annotated Bibliography (15%). You will write formal proposal for your final research paper and include an annotated bibliography which will serve as the reading list for your final paper. Due November 11th.
5. Presentation of Research Project (10%). You will present your findings at one of the last two scheduled class meetings.
6. Final Research Paper (25%). You will write a 15-20 page final paper on the literature of U.S. history on a topic of your choice that addresses the themes and the period we have been grappling with in the seminar. This paper is due at our regularly scheduled exam time on December 16th.

Additional information about these assignments will be distributed and discussed in class.

Course Policies:

Attendance: Because we cover a great deal of material in this interactive seminar, prompt and regular attendance is a necessity. Students who miss classes run the risk of receiving a lower grade than the student might have secured with regular attendance. Excused absences must be documented by a doctor's note, a note from the Dean, or advance notice from the Athletic Director. Absences for religious observances are excused; please let me know of dates in advance.

Classroom Environment: You are strongly urged to ask questions and express opinions in this course, approaching readings and ideas actively and critically. As you do so, however, please strive to be courteous to your fellow students. To create a respectful and productive environment please avoid unnecessary distractions (such as ringing cell phones, beeping pagers, and conspicuous food consumption) during class meetings.

Course Readings: You are expected to have completed the day's readings prior to coming to class and to be prepared to participate in discussions. Always bring the texts we will be discussing to class.

Disability Accommodation: Any student who feels that he or she may need an accommodation for any sort of disability should make an appointment to see me during my office hours so we can make arrangements for you to complete the requirements of the class.

Papers: All work written outside the classroom, with a few exceptions to be described later, must be typed or word-processed in a standard 10 or 12 point font, double-spaced, with one-inch margins. Your papers should, at a minimum, both present and critically analyze the main theoretical and historical arguments in your reading. All quotations must be cited by using parenthetical references, footnotes, or endnotes. All papers should have your name, the course title and number, the due date, and an appropriate title or label for the assignment at the top. I strongly recommend that you keep copies of all your work, either on paper or on disk, for your protection.

Your work will be evaluated for earnest effort and, more importantly, thoughtful, coherent content. Remember to clearly state your thesis and support your arguments with examples. Usage and grammar are not major concerns of grading, but I expect much more than just a minimum mechanical competence (or basic "readability") from students who are hoping to get a graduate degree in history. I fully expect that you will proofread your assignments before handing them in. All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the day assigned unless otherwise noted. Electronic submission of papers is not allowed. If you know you are going to miss class on dates assignments are due you must be proactive and request an extension in advance. Late assignments will be penalized and will not be accepted more than one week past their due date without a previously agreed to extension.

Plagiarism & Academic Integrity: Students in this class will be held to a high standard of academic integrity, which is defined as "the pursuit of scholarly activity free from fraud and deception." Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating of information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. If I suspect all or part of an assignment may not be your own intellectual work I will ask to see your notes or drafts. I also may require electronic submission of the paper to facilitate running the paper through plagiarism-detecting databases. If you have any questions about academic integrity, please talk with me. I can and will fail a student for major infractions.

Technology: The CSULB Technology Help Desk is available for students. Help is available on a wide range of computer issues including: BeachBoard, Windows and Mac OS, CSULB Internet Accounts, Remote Connectivity, Microsoft Desktop Applications, Anti-Virus, Internet and Web related topics. Visit them on the web at <http://helpdesk.csulb.edu> or contact the THD by phone at 562-985-4959 or send Email

to helpdesk@csulb.edu. All students should e-mail me (dmizelle@csulb.edu) during the first week of class in order to sign up for the class distribution list.

Course Schedule:

Note: This syllabus is a work in progress and may be changed during the semester as necessary and appropriate. Changes will be announced in class and posted on the course web page. You are responsible for knowing about any changes.

Week 1: September 2 Introduction and Seminar Organization

Week 2: September 9 The Quest for a Usable Past

Required: David W. Noble, *Death of a Nation: American Culture and the End of Exceptionalism* (2002), through chapter 4; George Lipsitz, "In the Midnight Hour: American Studies in a Moment of Danger"; Amy Kaplan, "'Left Alone with America': The Absence of Empire in the Study of American Culture" (CP).

Recommended: John Carlos Rowe, ed., *Post-Nationalist American Studies* (2000); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983); Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (1988); Emily S. Apter, *Continental Drift: From National Characters to Virtual Subjects* (1999); Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (1996); Myra Jehlen, *American Incarnation: The Individual, the Nation, and the Continent* (1986); Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti, Ella Shohat, eds., *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nations and Postcolonial Perspectives* (1997); Russell Reising, *The Unusable Past: Theory and the Study of American Literature* (1986); George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics* (1998); Arlif Dirlik, *The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism* (1997); Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century* (1996); E.J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (New York, 1990); Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* (London, 1991); Homi K. Bhabha, ed., *Nation and Narration* (London & New York: Routledge, 1990); Amy Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture* (2002); Donald E. Pease and Robyn Weigman, eds., *The Futures of American Studies* (2002).

Week 3: September 16 The Futures of American History & American Studies

Required: David W. Noble, *Death of a Nation*, chapters 5 to end; Alice Kessler-Harris, "Cultural Locations: Positioning American Studies in the Great Debate"; Barbara Brinson Curiel, David Kazanjian, et. al., "Introduction" to *Post-Nationalist American Studies* (CP).

Recommended: More of the above, or any one of the "classic" works of American history, such as Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (1950) or F.O. Matthiessen, *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman* (1941).

Paper Due: Based upon our readings and discussions thus far, what aspects of the approaches to the American past offered by historians, literary critics, and cultural studies scholars seem to be most useful to you as an aspiring historian? Why? What are the benefits and limitations of the theories and methods that you potentially find most useful? So what?

Week 4: September 23 Explaining the Possessive Investment in Whiteness

Required: Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth Century America* (1990, 2003); Teresa Zackodnik, "Fixing the Color Line: The Mulatto, Southern Courts, and Racial Identity" (CP).

David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (1991); Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (1995); Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (1993); Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents: Dime Novels and Working Class Culture in America* (1987); Cheryl Harris, "Whiteness as Property," *Harvard Law Review* 106 (June 1993), 1707-1791; David Henkin, *City Reading: Written Words and Public Spaces in Antebellum New York* (1998); David Lubin, *Picturing a Nation: Art and Social Change in Nineteenth-Century America* (1994); Susan Scheckel, *The Insistence of the Indian: Race and Nation in Nineteenth Century American Culture* (1998); Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (1997).

Week 5: September 30 Gender, Race, and Nation

Required: Dana Nelson, *National Manhood: Capitalist Citizenship and the Imagined Fraternity of White Men* (1998); Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "Dis-Covering the Subject of the 'Great Constitutional Discussion,' 1786-1789" (CP).

Recommended: Andrew Parker, et al., eds., *Nationalisms and Sexualities* (New York, 1992); David Leverenz, *Manhood and the American Renaissance* (Ithaca, 1989); Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago, 1995); Susan Jeffords, *The Remasculinization of America: Gender and the Vietnam War* (Bloomington, 1989); E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York, 1993); Andrew Burstein, *Sentimental Democracy: The Evolution of America's Romantic Self-Image* (New York, 1999); Robyn Weigman, *American Anatomies: Theorizing Race and Gender* (1995); Russ Castronovo, *Fathering the Nation: American Geneologies of Slavery and Freedom* (1995); Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Rereading Sex: Battles Over Sexual Knowledge and Suppression in Nineteenth-Century America* (2002); Cheryl Walker, *Indian Nation: Native American Literature and Nineteenth-Century Nationalisms* (1997).

Week 6: October 7 Gambling and the Dynamics of Market Revolution

Required: Ann Fabian, *Card Sharps & Bucket Shops: Gambling in Nineteenth-Century America* (1990, 1999); AHR Forum: Michael O'Malley, "Specie and Species: Race and the Money Question in Nineteenth-Century America" (CP).

Recommended: John F. Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility: Manners in Nineteenth-Century Urban America* (1990); Karen Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-Class Culture in America, 1830-1870* (1982); Michael Sappol, *A Traffic in Dead Bodies: Anatomy and Embodied Social Identity in Nineteenth-Century America* (2002); Ann Fabian, *The Unvarnished Truth: Personal Narratives in Nineteenth-Century America* (2000); Russ Castronovo, *Necro Citizenship: Death, Eroticism, and the Public Sphere in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (2001); Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815-1846* (1991); Benjamin Reiss, *The Showman and the Slave: Race, Death, and Memory in Barnum's America* (2001); Melvyn Stokes and Stephen Conway, eds., *The Market Revolution in America: Social, Political, and Religious Expressions, 1800-1880* (1996).

Week 7: October 14 Library Skills and Research Strategies

Class meets in the Spidell room in the Library for a seminar with history librarian Greg Armento.

Week 8: October 21 Popular Culture and American Imperialism

Required: Shelley Streeby, *American Sensations: Class, Empire, and the Production of Popular Culture* (2002); David G. Gutiérrez, "Significant to Whom? Mexican Americans and the History of the American West"; Arnold De León, "In Pursuit of a Brown West"; Vicki L. Ruiz, "Interpreting Voice and Locating Power" (CP).

Recommended: Priscilla Wald, *Constituting Americans: Cultural Anxiety and Narrative Form* (1995); Tomás Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California* (1994); David Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity* (1995); José David Saldívar, *Border Matters: Remapping American Cultural Studies* (1997); Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (1981); Robert Johannsen, *To the Halls of the Montezumas: The Mexican War in the American Imagination* (1985); Angela Miller, *The Empire of the Eye: Landscape Representation and American Cultural Politics, 1825-1875* (1993); Richard Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization, 1800-1890* (1985); George Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (1993).

Please bring *Moby-Dick* to class with you tonight. It would be great if you've read the first six chapters, but it's not necessary.

Week 9: October 28 Melville, *Moby-Dick*, and America

Required: Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick*, through chapter 57, "Of Whales in Paint..."; Melville, "Hawthorne and His Mosses" and "Letters at the Time of *Moby-Dick*" (pp. 517-548 in Norton edition).

Recommended: Geoffrey Sanborn, *The Sign of the Cannibal: Melville and the Making of a Postcolonial Reader* (1998); Carolyn Karcher, *Shadow Over the Promised Land: Slavery, Race, and Violence in Melville's America* (1980); Nancy Fredricks, *Melville's Art of Democracy* (1995); Michael Rogin, *Subversive Genealogy: The Politics and Art of Herman Melville* (1983); Samuel Otter, *Melville's Anatomies* (1999); Charles Olson, *Call Me Ishmael* (1947, 1967); Hershel Parker, *Herman Melville: A Biography* (2vols., 1996, 2002); David Reynolds, *Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville* (1988).

Week 10: November 4 "Surely all this is not without meaning"?

Required: Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick*, to end; C.L.R. James, chapters 1-3 from *Mariners, Renegades, and Castaways* (CP).

Week 11: November 11 Research Proposal Workshop

Proposals and Annotated Bibliographies Due

Week 12-13: November 18 & 25 Individual Meetings

Week 14-15: December 2 & 9 Research Presentations

Exam: December 16 Final Papers Due from 7:30pm at Limerick's Pub, 5734 E. 2nd St.