

History 651 Reading Seminar
20th Century U.S. Politics, Culture, and Society
Tuesday, 6:00-8:50, University Hall 319

Instructor: Darren Dochuk, Ph.D.

Office: University Hall, 125

Office Hours: M/W, 3:30-4:30 (and by appointment)

Office Phone: 49-47684; **Email:** ddochuk@purdue.edu

BRIEF OVERVIEW

This course is designed for maximum breadth. Through weekly readings drawn from a variety of historical and scholarly contexts touching on an array of individuals, groups, movements, ideas, and interests, seminar participants will gain access to the latest exemplary works and historiographical trends in the long history of twentieth-century U.S. politics, culture, and society. By the end of the term participants will have a better command of key books, issues, and debates in this expansive field, as well as the ability (should they choose) to craft a twentieth-century U.S. history reading list for preliminary exams.

Practicalities aside, our goals for the course will be threefold. First, each week we will tackle a book dealing with a pivotal moment/development/theme in twentieth-century American history. Through close reading and discussion we will flesh out the nuances of scholarship evidenced in the core reading and (if relevant) corresponding, supplementary readings. Secondly, we will use these books to launch into broader conversation about current and future historiographical trends; gaining a sense of where historians are headed in their analytical treatment of key issues and themes will be just as important to the class as understanding the substantive forces of historical change. Thirdly, we will engage questions of style and method. A first-time author wrote each of the core texts for this class. With that in mind, we will spend considerable time asking such questions as: How do these historians write good history? What is good history, and which books fall short of the ideal? What kind of history do I/you want to write? Where do I want to make my contribution?

Core List:

- Carl Bon Tempo, *Americans at the Gate: The United States and Refugees during the Cold War*
- Leslie Brown, *Upbuilding Black Durham: Gender, Class, and Black Community Development in the Jim Crow South*
- Adrian Burgos, Jr., *Playing America's Game: Baseball, Latinos, and the Color Line*
- Jennifer Burns, *Goddess of the Market: Ayn Rand and the American Right*
- Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America*
- Jeffrey Engel, *Cold War at 30,000 Feet: The Anglo-American Fight for Aviation Supremacy*
- Matthew Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South*
- Bethany Moreton, *To Serve God and Wal-Mart: The Making of Christian Free Enterprise*
- Kim Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands: The Businessmen's Crusade Against the New Deal*
- Charles Postel, *The Populist Vision*
- Jarod Roll, *Spirit of Rebellion: Labor and Religion in the New Cotton South*
- Adam Rome, *The Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of American Environmentalism*

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This is a reading seminar that will be centered on discussion of the assigned texts. However, in order to enter into fruitful exchange each week, it will be essential for each participant to come to class not only having read the material closely but also having written about it in a thoughtful way. So, in addition to attending class and participating, each of you will be required to:

- **Write 6 short book reviews** on readings of your choosing. These will be 600 words long (2-3 pages double-spaced) and resemble a review found in the *Journal of American History*.
- **Write 2 longer book reviews** that place the core readings of your choosing in the context of a broader historiographical discussion. These should be roughly 3,000 words (12-15 pages double-spaced) and resemble a review found in *Reviews in American History*. You will be provided with a list of additional books that must/might be included in these longer reviews.
- **Lead discussion on the days for which you wrote short book reviews.**

EVALUATION AND GRADING

Grades will be based on:

Short Reviews	30%
Long Reviews	40%
Participation in class discussions	30%

SCHEDULE

August 24	<u>Introductory Session</u>
August 31	<u>Populism</u> Charles Postel, <i>The Populist Vision</i>
September 7	<u>Race and Community</u> Leslie Brown, <i>Upbuilding Black Durham</i>
September 14	<u>Labor and Religion</u> Jarod Roll, <i>Spirit of Rebellion</i>
September 21	<u>Corporate Conservatives</u> Kim Phillips-Fein, <i>Invisible Hands</i>
September 28	<u>Intellectual Conservatives</u> Jennifer Burns, <i>Goddess of the Market</i>
October 5	<u>Sport and Culture</u> Adrian Burgos, Jr., <i>Playing America's Game</i>
October 12	NO CLASS/First Long Review Due (electronically)
October 19	NO CLASS
October 26	<u>Suburbs and the Sunbelt</u> Matthew Lassiter, <i>The Silent Majority</i>
November 2	<u>Environmentalism</u> Adam Rome, <i>The Bulldozer in the Countryside</i>
November 9	<u>Sexuality and Citizenship</u> Margot Canaday, <i>The Straight State</i>
November 16	<u>Cold War Diplomacy</u> Jeffrey Engel, <i>Cold War at 30,000 Feet</i>
November 23	NO CLASS
November 30	<u>Immigration</u> Carl Bon Tempo, <i>Americans at the Gate</i>
December 7	<u>Religion and Entrepreneurialism</u> Bethany Moreton, <i>To Serve God and Wal-Mart</i>
December 14	Second Long Review Due (electronically)