

University of South Florida  
Department of History

**U.S. History, 1877-1920**

History 4936-901, T 6:00-9:45 PM, SOC 255  
Spring 2014

Instructor: Dr. K. Stephen Prince

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Office hours: Monday 2-4 PM, or by appointment

**Course Description:**

This is an intensive research seminar. Early in the semester, assigned course readings will familiarize students with major themes in U.S. history from the end of Reconstruction (1877) to the aftermath of World War I (1920), a period often dubbed the Gilded Age and Progressive Era. However, the majority of the semester will be spent preparing students to research and write an original 20 to 25 page paper based on primary and secondary sources. Topics must fall within the chronological bounds of the course, but otherwise students are free to work on a topic of their choosing (provided it is approved by the instructor).

This is a capstone seminar for history majors. I have high expectations for these research papers, and students should expect to put in a great deal of time and effort outside of our regular classroom meetings. Extensive research in primary and secondary sources is expected and required. As history majors, you have spent your college career reading the works of other historians. This is your opportunity to be a historian yourself.

**Objectives:**

By the end of the semester, students will:

1. Be able to enumerate central themes in United States from 1877 to 1920
2. Display an increased facility with the use of primary and secondary materials, with historiography, and with historical argumentation
3. Propose, research, and write a lengthy independent research paper on a topic of their choosing.

**Attendance and Participation:**

If you do not come to class, you cannot pass this course. By definition, a seminar requires your attendance and engagement. Class discussions are *the* place where ideas will be introduced and discussed. If you're not here, you're not learning. If you're not learning, you don't pass.

You should assume that absences are unacceptable *for any reason*. Please adjust your home and work schedules accordingly. Since seminar only meets once a week, missing a single class meeting deprives you of a significant portion of the class material. If you miss class you are still responsible for completing the reading and written work. If you know you will miss a class,

please consult with me as soon as possible. Three absences (excused or unexcused) constitute grounds for failing the class.

Class participation accounts for 20% of your grade in this course. You must arrive prepared to discuss the material and ready to take an *active part* in our classroom discussions and in-class activities. You must show up, but you also need to *talk*. The classroom should be an open and supportive place. This will be particularly important during our peer review sessions towards the end of the semester. Simple courtesy and a willingness to listen will go a long way.

After each class, I will calculate and post a participation grade for each student on a scale of zero to three (low to high). If you come to class on time, bring the required writing assignment, participate fully in our class discussion and activities, and display a commitment to the material and a respect for our collective endeavor, you will receive a three for the day. If you fail to do any of the above, your participation grade will decline accordingly.

### **Writing and Examination:**

Your major project this semester is the creation of a 20 to 25 page research paper based on primary sources from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. You will also be expected to incorporate and engage with modern historical works on your topic.

Simply put, it is impossible to write a high quality research paper in a couple days. The process takes time. For this reason, we will be working towards the final paper all semester. The goal here is not simply to produce a paper, it is to learn how to conceptualize, execute, and write an independent research project. This is a highly important skill – and not just for historians. Even when the weekly schedule below does not mention it specifically, I expect you to put in some hours on your final project *every week*.

You will also be expected to complete a variety of weekly writing assignments. Details are listed below. These activities are designed to introduce you to key steps in the research and writing process, and to help you organize and conceptualize your final research project. Failure to complete these weekly assignments will hurt your grade. All weekly assignments must be submitted both in hard copy and electronic format. They will be checked for plagiarism.

You will also submit a rough draft of your research paper, and read and comment on the drafts of your peers. Failure to complete these assignments will result in a lower final grade.

### **Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism will be taken very seriously. The University of South Florida has an account with TurnItIn, an automated plagiarism detection service that allows instructors and students to submit student assignments to be checked for plagiarism. Assignments are compared automatically with a huge database of journal articles, web articles, and previously submitted papers. The instructor receives a report showing exactly how a student's paper was plagiarized. *As per university policy, if you are found to have plagiarized an assignment, you will receive a grade of FF (academic dishonesty) for the course.*

The following is from the USF undergraduate catalog. Please note the reference to "intentionally or carelessly." Intent does not matter – if you copy someone's work without attribution, you have plagiarized. It is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to ensure that you properly credit and cite all of your work. See: <http://www.ugs.usf.edu/catalogs/1314/pdf/AcademicIntegrityOfStudents.pdf>

**(b) Plagiarism**

**Definition:**

Plagiarism is intentionally or carelessly presenting the work of another as one's own. It includes submitting an assignment purporting to be the student's original work which has wholly or in part been created by another person. It also includes the presentation of the work, ideas, representations, or words of another person without customary and proper acknowledgement of sources. Students must consult with their instructors for clarification in any situation in which the need for documentation is an issue, and will have plagiarized in any situation in which their work is not properly documented.

**Clarification:**

1. Every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or appropriate indentation and must be properly acknowledged by parenthetical citation in the text or in a footnote or endnote.
2. When material from another source is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in part in one's own words, that source must be acknowledged in a footnote or endnote, or by parenthetical citation in the text.
3. Information gained in reading or research that is not common professional knowledge must be acknowledged in a parenthetical citation in the text or in a footnote or endnote.
4. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to, the use of papers, reports, projects, and other such materials prepared by someone else.

**Grades:**

Your grades will be calculated as follows:

- Attendance and participation: 20%
- Weekly writing assignments (total): 30%
- Rough draft: 10%
- Final research paper: 40%

I use a +/- grading system. Grade distribution is as follows:

- A+ (100 – 97) / A (96 – 93) / A- (92-90)
- B+ (89-87) / B (86-83) / B- (82-80)
- C+ (79 – 77) / C (76 – 73) / C- (72-70)
- D+ (69-67) / D (66-63) / D- (62-60)
- F (below 60)

**Other stuff:**

Please turn off all cell phones.

Students MUST bring the assigned reading, a notebook, and a writing implement to class. Persistent failure to do so will negatively affect your participation grade.

I encourage all students to take advantage of my office hours. If you're not available during office hours, I'm happy to schedule another time to meet with you.

Students with disabilities are responsible for registering with Students with Disabilities Services in order to receive academic accommodations. SDS encourages students to notify instructors of accommodation needs at least 5 days prior to needing the accommodation. A letter from SDS must accompany this request.

### **Changes to the syllabus:**

I reserve the right to amend the syllabus mid-semester. I will add, remove, or amend assignments at my discretion. You will be notified in class and over e-mail should I make any changes. For this reason, the electronic version of the syllabus available on the course canvas site should be regarded as the **official** version of the syllabus. You should consult it frequently.

### **Reading:**

The following books are available for purchase at the USF bookstore:

Heather Cox Richardson, *West from Appomattox: The Reconstruction of America after the Civil War*

Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in American, 1870-1920*

William Kelleher Storey, *Writing History: A Guide for Students*

Kristen Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars*

### **Schedule of meetings:**

#### **Week 1 – January 7 - Introduction**

No reading or writing due.

In class: Introduction to USF library website, JSTOR, WorldCat, and other available resources.

#### **Week 2 - January 14 – The Gilded Age**

Reading: Richardson, *West from Appomattox* (all)

Writing: Bring a typed list of three possible paper topics to class. Describe each topic in three to four sentences. Each topic should include a historical question – what is that you want to KNOW about the topic? (In other words: don't say "I want to study lynching." Say "What is the relationship between lynching and gender roles?") Topics should be drawn from the first half of the course chronology – roughly 1877 to 1900 (note: Richardson's book starts in 1865. For the purposes of this assignment, it's okay to include topics from Reconstruction – 1865 to 1877).

In class: discuss Richardson and your proposed paper topics

### **Week 3 – January 21 – The Progressive Era**

Reading: McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent* (all)

Writing: Bring a list of three MORE possible paper topics to class. Describe each topic in three to four sentences. Each topic should include a historical question – what is that you want to KNOW about the topic? These topics should be drawn from the second half of the course chronology – roughly 1900 to 1920.

In class: discuss McGerr and your proposed paper topics

### **Week 4 – January 28 – How historians do what they do**

Reading: Storey, *Writing History* (all)

Writing: Based on your six proposed paper topics and comments from the instructor and your classmates, choose a topic for your semester research paper. Write a 300 word abstract of the topic. Be as specific as possible – smaller and more focused topics will be much easier than broad ones (example: rather than "the women's suffrage movement," try "women's suffrage in Florida). Make sure to include your historical questions. What question will your paper answer? What historical problem will you try to solve?

In class: discuss Storey and your abstracts.

### **Week 5 – February 4 – Reading for argument**

Reading: Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood*

Writing: Finding the argument – write a 300 word response to Hoganson's book. Describe Hoganson's thesis to the best of your ability. What does Hoganson tell us about the Spanish-American and Philippine-American war? How does she prove her argument? How effectively does she make her case?

In class: discuss Hoganson and the nature of historical argumentation.

### **Week 6 – February 11 – What is a historical article?**

Reading:

- On Canvas:
  - K. Stephen Prince, “Legitimacy and Interventionism: Northern Republicans, the ‘Terrible Carpetbagger,’ and the Retreat from Reconstruction,” *The Journal of the Civil War Era* (December 2012).
  - K. Stephen Prince, “Marse Chan, New Southerner; or, Taking Thomas Nelson Page Seriously,” in Jason Phillips, ed. *Masters of Storytelling: History, Literature, and the Postmodern South* (LSU Press, 2013).
- Using JSTOR, find an article related to your topic. It should:
  - be written by a historian (so set the search terms to search only history journals).
  - have been published since 1980

Writing: Write a 300 word analysis of your JSTOR article (the one you've chosen – not the Prince articles). What is the author seeking to understand? What argument does it make? What sources does it use? How did these particular sources allow the author to make his/her specific argument? What historiography does it engage?

In class: Discuss my articles, introduce the peer review process, talk about the article format.

### **Week 7 – February 18 – Primary Sources**

No reading.

Writing: Annotated bibliography of primary sources. Consult Storey for guidance. Your bibliography should include at least FIVE primary sources you plan to consult. (Note: five newspaper articles will be insufficient. For your final paper, you will be required to use three different types of sources, and at least one source from the library rather than the internet. Try to build in some diversity at this point.). For each primary source, write at least five sentences. Tell me how you plan to use these documents. What perspectives do they allow you to uncover? Will you need to approach any of these documents with caution? Finally, tell me where these documents are. Are they available online? At USF? Do you plan to travel to another archive? Will you need to use interlibrary loan? (If you need to interlibrary loan any items, you should do it NOW. They often take weeks to arrive).

In class: More discussion of primary sources. Creating a hierarchy of primary materials. How to read and analyze a primary source. Primary source analysis exercise.

### **Week 8 – February 25 – Secondary Sources**

No reading.

Writing: Annotated bibliography of secondary materials. Your bibliography should include at least FIVE secondary sources (books or articles written by historians). For each source, write at least five sentences. Describe the source's arguments and methodology. Most importantly, explain how your work is similar to or different from each work under consideration. (Note: your final paper will have a historiography section in which you place your work in the larger historical literature. Start to think in these terms now).

In class: discuss secondary sources. What is historiography and why should we care? Read sample historiographical essays.

### **Week 9 – March 4 – Writing Tips and Strategies**

No reading.

Writing (two short assignments):

- Get writing! Write 250 words about your topic. Tell us a story that you've discovered in your research. Or try to write an introductory paragraph for your paper. Or start to analyze a primary source. The goal for this exercise is not the content – it's the *writing*. Focus on your authorial voice. Try to keep your prose interesting. Vary your sentence length. Avoid passive voice.

- Prepare a detailed outline of your final research paper. Follow the steps outlined in Storey. What ideas will you present first? What sources will you use to make each part of your argument? How will you guide your reader towards your argument? Your outline should be 3-4 pages long.

In class: discuss writing and editing strategies. Discover why writing is the most difficult skill in the world. And also the most important. Plus: the wonderful world of footnotes (!)

**\*\*SPRING BREAK -- March 10-March 14\*\***

**Week 10 – March 18**

No class meeting. Individual meetings with professor. (All students are required to meet with me either this week or next)

**Week 11 – March 25**

No class meeting. Individual meetings with professor. (If I didn't see you last week, I want to see you this week)

Writing:

- *Group 1*: rough drafts due by noon on Thursday, March 27. Drafts should be e-mailed to the class and uploaded to Canvas (they will be checked for plagiarism).
- *Groups 2 and 3*: none

**Week 12 – April 1 – Peer Review, Group 1**

Reading: Group 1 rough drafts

Writing:

- *Group 1*: none
- *Groups 2 and 3*: Write a 300 word response to each draft. Bring two hard copies of each response to class (one for me, one for the author). Offer *constructive* criticism. Be respectful, but remember that peer review is an essential component of the research process. Note: you do not need to upload your responses to Canvas.
- *Group 2*: rough drafts due by noon on Thursday, April 3. Drafts should be e-mailed to the class and uploaded to Canvas (they will be checked for plagiarism).

In class: discussion of rough drafts.

**Week 13 – April 8 – Peer Review, Group 2**

Reading: Group 2 rough drafts

Writing:

- *Group 2*: none

- *Groups 1 and 3*: Write a 300 word response to each draft. Bring two hard copies of each response to class (one for me, one for the author). Offer *constructive* criticism. Be respectful, but remember that peer review is an essential component of the research process. Note: you do not need to upload your responses to Canvas.
- *Group 3*: rough drafts due by noon on Thursday, April 10. Drafts should be e-mailed to the class and uploaded to Canvas (they will be checked for plagiarism).

In class: discussion of rough drafts

### **Week 14 – April 15 – Peer Review, Group 3**

Reading: Group 3 rough drafts

Writing:

- Group 3: none
- Groups 1 and 2: Write a 300 word response to each draft. Bring two hard copies of each response to class (one for me, one for the author). Offer *constructive* criticism. Be respectful, but remember that peer review is an essential component of the research process. Note: you do not need to upload your responses to Canvas.

In class: discussion of rough drafts

### **Week 15 – April 22**

No class. Optional meetings with professor.

**\*\* The final drafts of your research papers are due by 8 PM on Tuesday, April 29 \*\***  
 Final drafts must be uploaded to Canvas (they will be checked for plagiarism). You are also required to leave a hard copy in my mailbox in SOC 260 or under my office door (SOC 211).