

History 152 Syllabus

The United States from the Civil War Era to the Present

Mondays/Wednesdays, 5:30-6:45pm

Thomas Hunter Building, Room 407

Instructor: Danielle Bennett

Welcome! I'm looking forward to working with you this semester. Below you will find a schedule, descriptions of assignments, and answers to many questions. If you have any other questions about the course, please let me know.

Who is teaching this course?

Danielle Bennett (she/her)

Email: dbennett@gradcenter.cuny.edu

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 4pm-5pm in W1545 or over Zoom by appointment.

What are we going to learn about?

The Civil War tore apart a young country that had contradictions embedded in its founding. The different ways that Americans remember that conflict have had lasting effects on the country. This class asks us to consider what and how Americans thought about government and the law, money and work, immigration and race, war, religion, sex and love, and other big issues, and how those ideas changed (or did not change) over time. How did the United States recover and remake itself following the Civil War? How did Americans of all kinds rebuild after the Civil War? How did the US handle economic changes, shifts in who was counted as American, or demands from Americans who were not treated as first class citizens? *US History from the Civil War to the Present* examines the development of the modern United States by looking at moments of connection and conflict between Americans. We are particularly interested in how events were remembered, and how memories are used by later Americans (historians and regular people) to create narratives about history. We will explore these events through readings, lectures, and by analyzing various primary source materials that will help us to understand the circumstances and mindsets of people who experienced and recorded these moments. As we do, I invite you to ask questions about the people who created these documents and discuss the narratives they advanced.

What are you going to be able to do by the end of this course? (Course Objectives)

- Identify and discuss the importance of struggles for equal rights, the increasing engagement of the U.S. in the world, the development of the American economy, the expanding scope and power of the federal government, and shifting attitudes and policies regarding diversity in U.S. history since the Civil War.
- Identify and apply the key historical concepts of change-over-time, cause-and-effect, agency, historical empathy, and continuity and discontinuity, and recognize how these concepts are employed in the historical method
- Analyze and interpret primary sources with attention to audience, authorship, and context
- Recognize some of the ways in which historians have conflicting interpretations of the past
- Produce a paper with a clear thesis and appropriate citations based on strong evidence drawn from historical sources
- Identify the ways that memories and narratives are produced and used to create change
- Learn how to negotiate databases to perform historical research

Who should we think about as we begin this work? (Land Acknowledgement)

We must acknowledge that the land on which we gather is the traditional and unceded territory of the Lenape. We, especially as historians, acknowledge that academic institutions, and indeed the nation-state itself, were founded upon and continue to enact exclusions and erasures of Indigenous Peoples. This acknowledgment demonstrates a commitment to beginning the process of working to dismantle ongoing legacies of settler colonialism, and to recognize the hundreds of Indigenous Nations who continue to resist, live, and uphold their sacred relations across their lands. We also pay our respect to Indigenous elders past, present, and future and to those who have stewarded this land throughout the generations.

What are your responsibilities in this course?

- Read this syllabus carefully and request clarification right away if anything is unclear or if you have concerns about the course requirements.
- Attend class and take careful notes/annotations on lectures and assigned readings. All assignments, including the final paper, will be based on lectures, discussions, primary sources, and the readings.
- Come prepared to discuss the assigned readings and participate in the class discourse respectfully.
- Complete all course assignments and the final paper.

Where are we going to meet and what happens if there's a change?

This class will be held in person in Thomas Hunter, Room 407. Any announcements regarding class changes will be sent via a Brightspace announcement. **Please make sure you are checking Brightspace/your email regularly.**

Do I need a textbook for this class?

You are not required to purchase any textbooks for this course. All readings will be made available to you via our Course Reader on Manifold or Brightspace.

What happens if I miss class?

You are expected to attend all class meetings. Class participation is a part of your grade and failing to actively attend class will affect your grade, not to mention your ability to keep up with the material. If you are unable to attend, I expect that you will give me notice before class by emailing me at dbennett@gradcenter.cuny.edu and that you will contact another student to obtain any missed notes.

Students will not be penalized for absence if they have contacted me and make good efforts toward regular participation. The key thing here is to keep the lines of communication open! Please reach out if you anticipate an issue and we will work things out.

Class participation is part of your grade. Simply attending class is not the same as participating. You must be present and engaged. Active participation in class can include:

- Being prepared for class by doing the readings
- Making contributions to class discussions and activities
- Taking notes/annotating documents in Manifold
- Asking thoughtful questions, in class or during office hours

How will you hand in work and what happens if it is late?

Assignments must be uploaded to Brightspace in PDF or Word format by the deadline indicated on the course calendar. If you are having trouble submitting it, email your assignment to me by the deadline. Late assignments will only be able to receive 80% of the original possible points. I will not accept any work after Tuesday, December 16th.

If you have an extenuating circumstance, you must write to me at dbennett@gradcenter.cuny.edu before the assignment is due for me to waive the grade penalty. No explanation of your personal circumstance or documentation is required, but please provide me with a new deadline for the work.

I will not grade rewrites on any assignments.

How can you get in touch with me, your professor?

My email is dbennett@gradcenter.cuny.edu. If you have a question about the course that cannot be answered by reading the syllabus, please reach out to me! Barring an exceptional circumstance, I will respond to all emails within 48 hours. If your question pertains to the class as a whole, I may respond in class so that all students can benefit from this information. Office hours will be held on Wednesdays at 4pm in W1546. I can also meet with students by appointment if needed, likely over Zoom. Please email me to arrange a time.

How can you use office hours in this course?

- Ask questions or for clarification on your assignments
- Workshop a piece of your writing together
- Discuss your progress in the course: what you're excelling at, what you can improve on
- Chat about history, college, note-taking or writing strategies, etc.
- Whatever else you might find useful!

What tech will we use in the class/do you need to bring anything to class?

We will be doing writing in class and I will collect it, so you should bring a notebook and pen to class. We will also be using some internet resources, so having a laptop, tablet, or phone that can access the internet is helpful, but not required. We will use several tech tools over the semester to facilitate our learning experience.

- **Brightspace:** We will use Brightspace for accessing the syllabus and assignments, checking in on the readings, handing in assignments, and accessing some course materials. If you are having trouble with your Brightspace account, you can find help here: <https://hunter.cuny.edu/center-for-online-learning/brightspace-resources/>
- **Manifold** is a platform that we can use to annotate readings and documents so that we can share our thinking with each other. This is where you will find readings for each week. We will go over using this tool in class.
- **Google Slides/Docs:** We will use Google to access lecture slides.
- **Zoom:** We'll use Zoom for 1/1 meetings with me. Zoom works best if you download the desktop or mobile client onto your laptop or device. More help for Zoom can be found at their support page: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us>

What will the assignments look like and how will I be graded?

Assignments Breakdown

25% - Reading/Annotation & Discussion Participation
25% - In-class writing assignments
25% - Midterm
25% - Final Paper

Assignment Descriptions

- **Reading/Annotation & Discussion Participation:** Engaged participation in class is part of your grade. There are three major ways to participate:
 - Doing the **readings** and filling out the review questions on Brightspace before class.
 - **Annotating** the readings using Manifold.
 - Coming prepared to class and participating in discussions **verbally**.
- **In-class Writing:** We will do a number of different short writing projects in class. More information will be provided as we go.

- **Midterm:** The midterm will be an in-class exam, short essay format. More information about the exam will be provided closer to the date.
- **Final Paper - Monument Analysis & Reflection:** You will research and write a 3-5 page research paper about the historical context and current understanding of a monument somewhere in the city. This assignment will be broken up into several tasks. You will also write a 1-2 page reflection paper on your experience of the course. More information will be provided in class.

Extra Credit: There may be opportunities to earn extra credit this semester. I will let you know in class.

All assignments will be graded according to the Hunter College grading scale, as follows:

A+	97.5-100%	B	82.5-87.4%	D	60.0 - 69.9%
A	92.5-97.4%	B-	80.0-82.4%	F	59.9% & below
A-	90.0-92.4%	C+	77.5-79.9%	INC	Incomplete
B+	87.5-89.9%	C	70-77.4%		

What are the important dates you need to know about this semester?

- August 26 - First day of classes
- September 1 - College Closed (Labor Day)
- September 1 - Last day to drop a course with a "WD" grade
- September 15 - Grade of W is assigned to students who officially withdraw from a course
- September 24-25 - No Classes
- October 9 - College Closed
- October 10 - Classes follow a Monday schedule
- November 22-24 - No Classes
- December 11 - Last day of classes
- December 11 - Last day to withdraw from course with a grade of W
- December 12-13 - Reading Days
- December 14-20 - Final Examinations

* Disclaimer: I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus. I may add to or amend this document, including the weekly course schedule, as needed throughout the semester. If I do that, I will upload a new version of the syllabus to Brightspace and let you know.

What should you do if you need a Disability Accommodation?

I want to make sure you have a good and equitable experience in this course, regardless of disability. For us to figure out what accommodations you need for that, you must speak with the [Office of](#)

[AccessABILITY](#). In compliance with the ADA and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Hunter is committed to ensuring educational access and accommodations for all its registered students. Hunter College's students with disabilities and medical conditions are encouraged to register with the Office of AccessABILITY for assistance and accommodation. For information and appointments, contact the Office of AccessABILITY located in Room E1214, or call (212) 772-4857/or TTY (212) 650-3230.

Email: AccessABILITY@hunter.cuny.edu Web: <http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/student-services/access>

What is Hunter's policy on academic integrity?

Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures.

The History Department's position on plagiarism is as follows: "Plagiarism is a very serious academic offense which will result in penalties ranging from reduction of class grade to failure in the course. Plagiarism occurs when the ideas and words, published or unpublished, of others are presented as one's own without citing the original source. Plagiarism also occurs when the papers, research, or works of another person are presented as one's own work."

Please see the full Statement on Plagiarism on the Department's website:

<http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/history/departamental-policy-on-plagiarism/>

The CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity can be found here:

<https://hunter.cuny.edu/students/student-affairs/office-of-student-conduct/academic-integrity/>

What about using AI?

Generative AI tools like ChatGPT, Gemini, Grok, Copilot, Deepseek, or other tools are **not** permitted in this course. We will discuss the reasons why in class, but the major reason is that I want to know your thoughts about the course, not what a computer thinks. Assignments completed with the help of AI will not be graded. If you have any questions about this, please feel free to ask me.

What should you do if you need help this semester with sexual harassment or other kinds of misconduct?

In compliance with the CUNY Policy on Sexual Misconduct, Hunter College reaffirms the prohibition of any sexual misconduct, which includes sexual violence, sexual harassment, and gender-based harassment retaliation against students, employees, or visitors, as well as certain intimate relationships. Students who have experienced any form of sexual violence on or off campus (including CUNY-sponsored trips and events) are entitled to the rights outlined in the Bill of Rights for Hunter College.

- a. Sexual Violence: Students are strongly encouraged to immediately report the incident by calling 911, contacting NYPD Special Victims Division Hotline (646-610-7272) or their local police precinct, or contacting the College's Public Safety Office (212-772-4444).
- b. All Other Forms of Sexual Misconduct: Students are also encouraged to contact the College's Title IX Campus Coordinator, Dean John Rose (jtrose@hunter.cuny.edu or 212-650-3262) or Colleen Barry (colleen.barry@hunter.cuny.edu or 212-772-4534) and seek complimentary services through the Counseling and Wellness Services Office, Hunter East 1123.

The CUNY Policy on Sexual Misconduct can be found here:

<https://hunter-undergraduate.catalog.cuny.edu/policies-and-requirements/institutional-policies/cuny-policy-on-sexual-misconduct>

What are we doing each day in class? (Schedule)

Wednesday, August 27: Introductions, Syllabus Review, History & Memory

Wednesday, September 3: What is a Primary Source?

Monday, September 8: Slavery & the Civil War

Reading:

- Prologue, Intro, & Ch 1 of *Denmark Vesey's Garden: Slavery and Memory in the Cradle of the Confederacy*, Blain Roberts and Ethan J. Kyrle

Wednesday, September 10: Reconstruction & Black Citizenship

Reading:

- Chs 2-4 of *Denmark Vesey's Garden*, Blain Roberts and Ethan J. Kyrle

Monday, September 15: Indigenous America and the State

Readings:

- Introduction, *Wounded Knee*, Heather Cox Richardson
- Primary accounts of Cherokee Removal and Wounded Knee

Wednesday, September 17: Labor and Wealth in the Gilded Age

Readings:

- "Clara Lemlich Shavelson, Crusading Leader of Labor Rights," *New York Times*
- "The Gospel of Wealth," Andrew Carnegie
- "Social Darwinism," William Graham Sumner

Monday, September 29: Immigration & Migration

Readings:

- Introduction, *The Chinese Must Go!*, Beth Lew-Williams
- "How the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands Became Spaces of Crime and Violence," *The American Historian*, Erik Bernadino
- "Introduction" from *Bad Mexicans: Race, Empire, and Revolution in the Borderlands*, Kelly Lytle Hernández

Monday, October 6: "New Imperialism"

Readings:

- Ch 8 "Gender Transgressions in the Age of US Empire," *True Sex*, Emily Skidmore
- "American Imperialism in the Philippines," Emilio Aguinaldo, 1899
- Short Videos:
 - "Why Puerto Rico is Not a US State"
 - "The First and Last Queen of Hawaii"

Wednesday, October 8: World War One, Pacifism, 1918 Flu

Reading:

- "Fighting on Two Fronts," Elizabeth Cobbs
- Podcast: "Dispatches from 1918," *Radiolab* (Listen to the first part of this podcast, about Woodrow Wilson and the Treaty of Versailles, until the 22:38 minute mark. There's also a transcript available on the page in case it is helpful for you to follow along with the text.)

Tuesday, October 14: Jim Crow and the Great Migration

Reading:

- "Prologue," and "Ch 7" from *"They Say": Ida B. Wells and the Reconstruction of Race*, James West Davidson
- Excerpts from Ch 5, *Denmark Vesey's Garden*, Blain Roberts and Ethan J. Kyrtle
- Excerpt, *Growing Up with the Country: Family, Race, and Nation after the Civil War*, Kendra T. Field

Wednesday, October 15: The Harlem Renaissance

Reading:

- Selected poetry by Langston Hughes
- Excerpt from *The New Negro*, Alain Locke, 1925
- Excerpt from *12 Million Black Voices*, Richard Wright, 1941
- "Black Women, Urban Labor, and New York's Informal Economy" from *Sex Workers, Psychics, and Numbers Runners: Black Women in New York City's Underground Economy*, LaShawn Harris

Wednesday, October 22: Gender and Politics in the Progressive Era

Readings:

- Introduction & Ch 1, *Public Faces, Secret Lives: A Queer History of the Women's Suffrage Movement*, Wendy Rouse

- “Free Motherhood” from *Woman and the New Race*, Margaret Sanger, 1920

Friday, October 24: The Great Depression

Reading:

- Ch 2, “Welfare in Black and White,” *When Affirmative Action was White*, Ira Katznelson
- Excerpts from Chs 7 & 8, *Denmark Vesey’s Garden*, Blain Roberts and Ethan J. Kyrle
- Primary sources from workers

Monday, October 27: Americans Respond to the Rise of Fascism

Reading:

- “Let my people know”, Mendy Mendelson & Friends, 1938
- CUNY Digital History Archive OER on Anti-Fascism & Academic Freedom Protests of the 1930s

Wednesday, October 29: Midterm

Monday, November 3: TBD - Library Day

Wednesday, November 5: WWII & The Home Front

Readings:

- Dropping the bomb primary sources
- Ch 1, “Getting In,” *Coming Out Under Fire*, Allan Berube
- “Hitler’s American Dream,” *Slate*, Timothy Synder, 2017

Monday, November 10: WWII - Japanese Internment

Reading:

- Campu podcast, Episode 8: “Food”

Wednesday, November 12: Postwar America & the Cold War

Reading:

- “Baselandia,” *How to Hide an Empire*, Daniel Immerwahr

Monday, November 17: The Red & Lavender Scares

Reading:

- Excerpts from *The Deviant’s War: The Homosexual Vs. the United States of America*, Eric Cervini
- “Paul Robeson’s Unread Statement before the House Committee on Un-American Activities,” 1956
- Pete Seeger, “Thou Shall Not Sing,” 1989

Wednesday, November 19: Black Freedom Movements

Reading:

- Excerpts from Chs 9, *Denmark Vesey’s Garden*, Blain Roberts and Ethan J. Kyrle
- “SNCC Women, Denim, and the Politics of Dress,” Tanisha C. Ford

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letters from a Birmingham Jail"

Monday, November 24: The Vietnam War

Reading:

- "Last man to die: Vietnam and the citizen soldier," *All in the Family: The Realignment of American Democracy since the 1960s*, Robert O. Self
- "The Rest Is History," Mary Turfah, The Los Angeles Review of Books
- "Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, Position Paper on Vietnam," 1966

Wednesday, November 26: The War on Poverty

Reading:

- "If It Wasn't for You, I'd Have Shoes for My Children" from *Storming Caesar's Palace: How Black Mothers Fought their Own War on Poverty*, Annalise Orleck

Monday, December 1: Freedom For All

Readings:

- Video: "Takeover: How We Occupied a Hospital and Changed Public Health Care"
- Excerpt from *Monumental Mobility: The Memory Work of Massasoit*, Lisa Blee & Jean M. O'Brien
- "Bodies on trial: the politics of reproduction" from *All in the Family: The Realignment of American Democracy since the 1960s*, Robert O. Self
- Combahee River Collective Statement, 1977

Wednesday, December 3: Reagan, Movement Conservatism, & the Rise of the Evangelical Right

Readings:

- Part III, "Family values, 1973-2011" from *All in the Family: The Realignment of American Democracy since the 1960s*, Robert O. Self
- Podcast: *Throughline*, "The Evangelical Vote" (If you want to follow a transcript, you can find it here: <https://www.npr.org/2020/09/23/916048798/the-evangelical-vote>)
- *Let the Record Show* film

Primary Source

- Phyllis Schlafly, "Testimony in front of Congress"
- Vito Russo, "Why We Fight," 1988

Monday, December 8: Changes to Immigration, Work, & Technology in the 90s

Readings:

- Ch 4, *Making the Latino South: A History of Racial Formation*, Cecilia Márquez

Wednesday, December 10: Elections, Money, and War

Readings:

- Ch 5, *Making the Latino South: A History of Racial Formation*, Cecilia Márquez
- Podcast: *It's Been A Minute*, "What Bush v. Gore Can Tell Us About Election 2020"
- "The Toppling," *The New Yorker*, Peter Maass

-

Monday, December 15: Wrap-up

Reading:

- Excerpts from Ch 10, *Denmark Vesey's Garden*, Blain Roberts and Ethan J. Kyrtle
- "Eulogy at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church," Barack Obama, 2015

Tuesday, December 16: Final Paper Due