

HIS 400: Senior History Capstone Seminar  
University of Southern Mississippi  
Spring 2017  
Tuesdays 2:25PM - 5:05PM

Theme: Histories of Popular Culture

Professor Andrew Ross

Office: LAB 448

Office Hours: Tu 11-12 and 1-2; Th 11-12 and 1-4

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**Course Description:** History 400 is the capstone of the history major at the University of Southern Mississippi; it requires that students demonstrate their facility with historical thinking by crafting an original research paper and participating in advanced discussion of secondary texts on a central theme. This section of History 400 will use “Histories of Popular Culture” in order to understand the development of historiography, the research and writing process, and major themes within American and, to a lesser extent, European history.

**Course Objectives:** By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

- Assess and critique historical arguments
- Understand major themes in the history of popular culture
- Formulate an original research topic
- Conduct both primary and secondary source research
- Develop and defend a clear, original argument
- Orally present their research

**Required Texts:**

- 1) Rampolla, Mary Lynn. *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*. 8th Edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2015. (ISBN 978-1457690884)
- 2) Cook, James W. *The Arts of Deception: Playing with Fraud in the Age of Barnum*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2001. (ISBN 978-0674005914)
- 3) Lott, Eric. *Love & Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993. (ISBN 978-0195320558)
- 4) Lepore, Jill. *The Secret History of Wonder Woman*. New York: Knopf, 2015. (ISBN 978-0804173407)
- 5) De Grazia, Victoria. *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through Twentieth-Century Europe*. Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press, 2006. (ISBN 978-0674022348)
- 6) Dick, Philip K. *The Man in the High Castle*. New York: Mariner Books, 2011. (ISBN 978-0544817289)

Note on editions: While it is preferable that you purchase the editions listed above, it is acceptable to purchase any edition of the books, including electronic versions if available, with the exception of Rampolla, which must be the current (8<sup>th</sup>) edition.

**Course Format:** Class meets once a week. About half of our meetings will be in a seminar format, requiring active participation from all members of the class. Other class periods will have a variety of formats, including library work, independent research, and peer review.

**Course Requirements:**

1. **Attendance and Participation:** As an advanced seminar, participation in class is a requirement in order to pass. All students must contribute to the discussion of required readings (which requires having the readings with you in class). In addition, following instructions, completing in-class work, and maintaining attention and decorum during other class meetings all contribute to your participation grade. Just attending class, in other words, will not be sufficient to receiving full credit for participation. At the same time, attendance is a requirement in order to pass this course. Barring a true emergency (e.g. hospitalization), I make no distinction between an “excused” or “unexcused” absence. You will be allowed 1 “free” absence. Any absences after that will be assessed an automatic 5% deduction on your final participation grade. **Missing three or more classes will result in automatically failing the class.**
2. **Reading Responses:** You are required to submit a 1-2 page reading response about THREE of our readings. Response papers should reflect critically on the book’s argument, its evidence, and/or its structure in light of the course theme of “Histories of Popular Culture.” Consider, especially, the author’s success at proving its central claim. You may decide which books to respond to, but you must submit at least one paper by February 14. **Reading responses are due by midnight before class.** These responses will be assessed on a High Pass/Pass/Low Pass/Fail/Incomplete (10/8.5/7/5/0) scale.
3. **Research Proposal and Annotated Bibliography:** You will submit a 3-4 page research proposal and annotated bibliography. The research proposal should identify the initial claim or claim(s) of your project (these may change), your approach to proving those claims, and the evidence you will use to do so. You should include an annotated bibliography that identifies at least 7 primary sources and at least 5 secondary sources you will use in the project. You will annotated 5 of those sources (3 primary, 2 secondary).
4. **Rough Draft:** You will complete a rough draft of your final paper (at least 10 pages, no more than 20 pages). This draft should include all the apparatus of a final paper (proper formatting, citations, and punctuation, etc) and should be polished enough to be read and reviewed. It will be critiqued by peers and the instructor in preparation for revision for the final draft.
5. **Peer Review:** The class will be broken into groups to conduct peer review on rough drafts. All class members will complete a questionnaire about the papers they are assigned to read and will mark up individual papers. Peer review will be assessed on the quality of this written work and oral feedback.

6. **Final Paper:** You will revise your rough draft into a 15-20 page, polished, piece of original research. Not only will you be assessed on the quality of the argument presented in the paper, but also on the revisions you completed between drafts. Note that it is possible to receive a lower grade on the final paper than on the rough draft, depending on the quality of your revisions.
7. **Oral Presentation 1:** Members of the class will historicize a single example of popular culture that you are using in your research. This presentation will be 3-5 minutes long.
8. **Oral Presentation 2:** At the end of the semester, members of the class will present their research in a formal presentation of between 5-7 minutes.

Handouts with greater detail regarding all these assignments will be provided throughout the semester.

### **Grade Breakdown:**

- Attendance and Participation: 15%
- Reading Responses: 5%
- Research Proposal and Annotated Bibliography: 10%
- Rough Draft: 15%
- Peer Review: 5%
- Final Paper: 25%
- Oral Presentation 1: 10%
- Oral Presentation 2: 15%

### **Grade Scale:**

- A: 90 – 100%
- B: 80 – 89%
- C: 70 – 79%
- D: 60 – 69%
- F: 59 and below

*Nota bene: In order to graduate with a BA in history, you must receive a C or above in HIS 400.*

### **Course Policies:**

1. **Submission of Written Work:** All written work will be submitted electronically via turnitin.com on our course Blackboard site. All assignments are due at the day and time listed on the syllabus.

2. **Late Assignments:** Late assignments will not be accepted in this course; no make ups will be given for missed presentations.
3. **Contacting Me:** The best way to get in touch with me is through e-mail ([andrew.ross@usm.edu](mailto:andrew.ross@usm.edu)). In order to guarantee a rapid response, e-mails should include a clear subject, your name, the course the message is regarding, and your question or message. Further information on e-mail etiquette can be found at <http://www.usm.edu/arts-letters/now/student-resources/email-etiquette.html>.

*I will respond to your e-mail within 24 hours.* If you have not heard from me after that time, you may send me another note. Do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions regarding the course material or any other concerns, but I will not respond to questions that can be answered by reading the syllabus.

My office hours and office phone number are at the top of this syllabus; if those times are not convenient for you I am happy to make other arrangements.

4. **Technology:**
  - **Phones:** All phones must be on silent (not vibrate) or turned off during class.
  - **Computers and Tablets:** Feel free to use your laptop or tablet to bring your readings to class or to take notes if that suits you, but refrain from using such devices for tasks unrelated to the class. *Note that research consistently demonstrates that students retain information more readily by taking notes by hand.*
5. **Classroom Environment:** As in most college courses, this class encourages a high level of active engagement, sometimes with controversial and sensitive material. Some of this material may challenge received wisdom, contrast with your personal beliefs, or make you otherwise uncomfortable. Please help us foster an atmosphere that encourages critical reflection on and greater understanding of these issues by always remaining respectful to your peers, even when you disagree. I am always available to discuss course material or class discussion one-on-one during office hours or by appointment.

All student activities in the University, including this course, are governed by the University's "Policy on Classroom Responsibilities of Faculty and Students," as outlined in the Student Handbook and at <http://www.usm.edu/provost/classroom-conduct-policy>. Students who engage in behavior that disrupts the learning environment may be asked to leave the class.

6. **Academic Integrity:** All students at the University of Southern Mississippi are expected to demonstrate the highest levels of academic integrity in all that they do. Forms of academic dishonesty include (but are not limited to):
  1. Cheating (including copying from others' work)
  2. Plagiarism (representing another person's words or ideas as your own; failure to properly cite the source of your information, argument, or concepts)
  3. Falsification of documents

4. Disclosure of test or other assignment content to another student
5. Submission of the same paper or other assignment to more than one class without the explicit approval of all faculty members' involved
6. Unauthorized academic collaboration with others
7. Conspiracy to engage in academic misconduct

Engaging in any of these behaviors or supporting others who do so will result in academic penalties and/or other sanctions. If a faculty member determines that a student has violated our Academic Integrity Policy, sanctions ranging from resubmission of work to course failure may occur, including the possibility of receiving a grade of "XF" for the course, which will be on the student's transcript with the notation "Failure due to academic misconduct." For more details, please see the University's [Academic Integrity Policy](#). Note that repeated acts of academic misconduct will lead to expulsion from the University.

**In this course, any act of academic dishonesty will automatically result in a grade of XF. Any alternate sanctions will be completely at the discretion of the instructor.**

#### **HIS 400 Resources:**

1. **Writing Center:** The Writing Center is a free tutorial service available to any USM student who wants assistance with a writing project. We offer one-on-one writing instruction that's designed to help students become more effective writers. This tutorial service is offered on a walk-in basis or by appointment (on the hour for 45 minutes). Make an appointment using the online scheduler today (<https://usm.mywconline.com/>). Walk-ins are also available depending on tutor availability. Call (601) 266-4821 or stop by The Writing Center (located on the first floor of Cook Library just past Starbucks). Their website is: <http://www.usm.edu/writing-center>
2. **The Speaking Center:** The Center is a free peer-tutoring center, focused on improving students' oral communication through consulting. Consultants (undergraduate and graduate students) meet one-on-one with students, at any stage of the speech-writing process, working on organizing, outlining, developing, and delivering speeches. The Center offers speaking handouts, a speaking library, and practice rooms to practice and record your speeches. For more information about the center, visit it at: Cook Library 117, [eduprod.usm.edu/speakingcenter](http://eduprod.usm.edu/speakingcenter), 601-266-4965.

#### **ADA Syllabus Statement:**

If a student has a disability that qualifies under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and requires accommodations, he/she should contact the Office for Disability Accommodations (ODA) for information on appropriate policies and procedures. Disabilities covered by ADA may include learning, psychiatric, physical disabilities, or chronic health disorders. Students can contact ODA if they are not certain whether a medical condition/disability qualifies.

#### Address:

The University of Southern Mississippi

Office for Disability Accommodations

118 College Drive # 8586

Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

Voice Telephone: 601.266.5024 or 228.214.3232 Fax: 601.266.6035

Individuals with hearing impairments can contact ODA using the *Mississippi Relay Service* at 1.800.582.2233 (TTY) or email [oda@usm.edu](mailto:oda@usm.edu)

Web: <http://www.usm.edu/oda>

## **Course Schedule:**

### **Week 1: January 17: Introductions**

Research Process: Introducing the course; basic terms; expectations; choosing a research topic; Evaluating sources

### **Week 2: January 24: Library Orientation and Workshop**

Assignment: Have a tentative research topic ready by class

Reading: Rampolla, ch. 1-3

*Tuesday, January 24: Last day to add/drop full-term classes without instructor permission and receive 100% financial credit*

### **Week 3: January 31: Class and Popular Culture**

Reading: Cook, *The Arts of Deception*; Rampolla, ch. 5a-d

Research Process: Moving from topic to question; conducting research; preparing an oral presentation

### **Week 4: February 7: Primary Source Workshop**

### **Week 5: February 14: Race and Popular Culture**

Reading: Lott, *Love and Theft*; Rampolla, ch. 4a-c, 5 (finish) and 6

Research process: Developing an initial thesis; taking notes; plagiarism and how to avoid it

*Note: One reading response paper must have been submitted by this date*

### **Week 6: February 21: Presentations**

*Monday, February 27 – Tuesday, February 28: Mardi Gras Holiday*

### **Research Proposal and Annotated Bibliography Due by Friday, March 3 at 5:00p**

### **Week 7: March 7: Gender and Popular Culture**

Reading: Lepore, *The Secret History of Wonder Woman*; Rampolla, ch. 4d-e and 7

Research Process: Documenting sources; drafting

*Monday, March 13 – Friday, March 17: Spring Break*

**Week 8: March 21: Globalization and Popular Culture**

Reading: de Grazia, *Irresistable Empire* (selections)

Research process: Presenting your research

**Week 9: March 28: Research Week**

Required: Check-in with Prof. Ross at the Library or let him know in advance of an alternate research plans (such an archive trip); documentation will be required.

**Week 10: April 4: History and Popular Culture**

Reading: Dick, *The Man in the High Castle*

Research process: Peer Review and revision

*Wednesday, April 5: Last day to withdraw from full term classes and receive a grade of W*

**Week 11: April 11: Free Research Week**

**Rough Draft Due by Friday, April 14 at 5:00p to both Prof. Ross and your peer-review group (decide in advance whether your group wants electronic or physical copies)**

**Week 12: April 18: Peer Review**

Assignment: Bring your questionnaire and a copy of marked up papers (electronic or physical) with you to class

**Week 13: April 25: Individual Meetings**

Assignment: Arrive at your assigned meeting time with your first draft, ready to discuss how you plan to revise

**Week 14: May 2: Presentations**

**Final Papers Due Wednesday, May 10 by 5:00p**