

Colloquium in US History since 1865

Wednesdays 3:30 - 6:20 pm
Powers 135

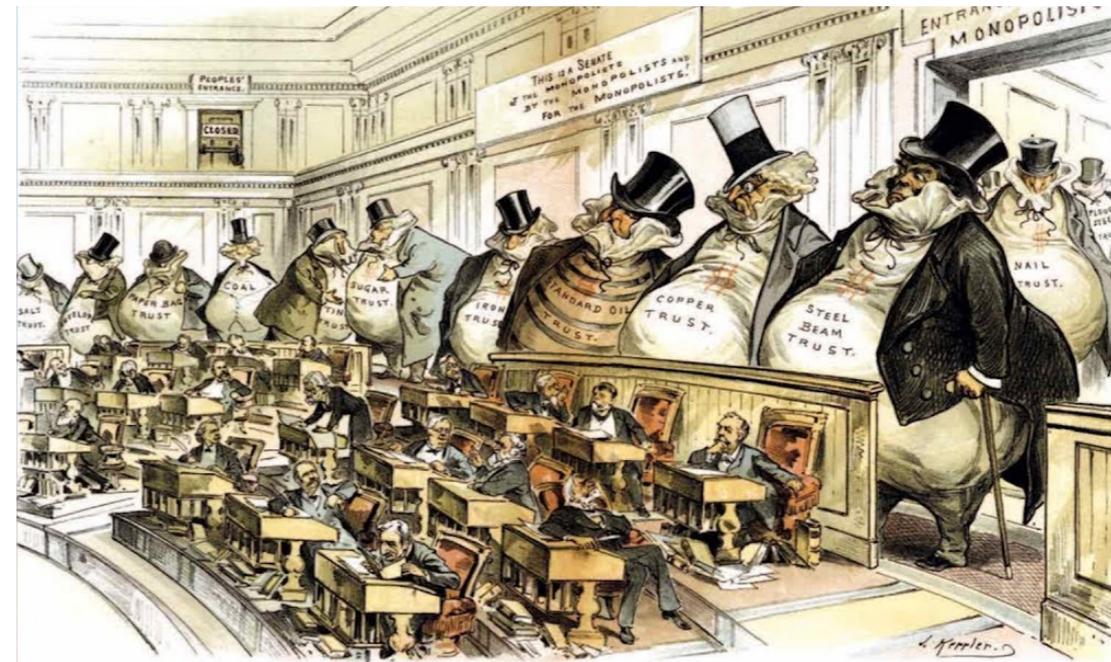
Dr. Brittany Fremion

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OH: T/TH 10-11:30 am & by appointment

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Joseph Keppler, "The Bosses of the Senate," *Puck* (lithograph), January 23, 1889.

Course Description

Oscar Wilde once quipped, "The only obligation we have to history is to rewrite it." History is a mode of collective self-discovery. Each generation of historians rewrites history to suit its own needs. The current generation of scholars seeks to transcend boundaries, rather than reinforce or replicate them, blurring the lines of both disciplines and fields (or so argued Lisa McGirr and Eric Foner in *American History Now*). To what extent do you agree with this stance? What is the future of post-Civil War American history? What shifts have historians already witnessed? What contributions will your generation make?

This course is designed to introduce students to US history and historiography since the Civil War. A colloquium is a reading-intensive course that challenges students to think deeply and critically about historiographical context, historic arguments, and the construction of historical narratives—content, structure, methodologies, the use of evidence, and application of theory. Each week, students are expected to read and critique a book and/or article(s), which we will discuss as a group. Beyond these discussions, students are responsible for completing a series of assignments, both in class and beyond, that advances their knowledge of American history and historiography. This semester, you will:

1. Explore compelling books (and articles) on US history since the Civil War to understand the major historiographical developments and debates, and grasp the complex interrelationships between history and historiography.
2. Strengthen your ability to read, understand, critique, and synthesize different arguments and narratives.
3. Better comprehend how historians pose questions, examine evidence, make arguments, and craft narratives.
4. Expand your knowledge of the roles played by different communities, critical issues, and processes in the American past, including political reform, racial oppression, state power, civil rights movements, and environmental change.
5. Improve your comfort and ability to engage in oral and written presentations, as well as group discussion and debate.

Assigned Books

1. Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (2009)
2. Boyd Cothran, *Remembering the Modoc War: Redemptive Violence and the Making of American Innocence* (2017)
3. Charles Postel, *The Populist Vision* (2009)
4. Thomas Andrews, *Killing for Coal: America's Deadliest Labor War* (2010)
5. Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (2014)
6. Deborah Fitzgerald, *Every Farm a Factory: The Industrial Ideal in American Agriculture* (2010)
7. Kate Brown, *Plutopia: Nuclear Families, Atomic Cities, and the Great Soviet and American Plutonium Disasters* (2015)
8. Andrew Kirk and Kristian Purcell, *Doom Towns: The People and Landscapes of Atomic Testing: A Graphic History* (2016)
9. Danielle McGuire, *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance—A New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power* (2011)
10. Beth Bailey, *Sex in the Heartland* (2002)
11. Darren Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt: Plain-Folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism* (2012)
12. Linda Nash, *Inescapable Ecologies* (2007)
13. Alessandro Portelli, *They Say in Harlan County: An Oral History* (2012)

*Additional reading materials listed in the calendar of classes will be made available on BlackBoard or are accessible via university databases.

Course & University Policies

Statement on Assignments: Students must complete all assignments for this class in order to earn a grade, unless alternate arrangements have been made with the instructor prior to noted deadlines.

Course Changes: The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the class outline and syllabus policies, as needed.

Academic Integrity and Dishonesty: Please refer to CMU's policy [here](#).

Late Assignments: Assignments are late if submitted after the start of class on the due date. Assignments submitted more than 10 days late, without any communication with the professor, are worth zero.

Get/Stay Connected

Flyers for special events are included at the end of this syllabus. I encourage you to attend as many as you may find helpful throughout the course of the semester. They will also help you to grow your CVs and demonstrate your commitment to ongoing professional development. Moreover, they have the potential to provide additional insight into topics we are able to briefly address in this class.

Grading Scale

This course is worth 200 points total. The distribution and assignments are included in detail on the next page.

200 - 180 points = A/A-
179 - 160 points = B+/B/B-
159 - 140 points = C+/C/C-
139 - 120 points = D+/D/D-
119 - 0 points = E



Course Projects & Responsibilities

Attendance/Participation (25% or 50 points): This class requires active participation and regular attendance. Attending class and nodding appropriately will not cut it. The idea behind the class is to develop an understanding of the major historiographical developments and debates, and grasp the complex interrelationships between history and historiography. To accomplish this, you will be discussing assigned reading material, participating in class activities, and otherwise collaborating with your classmates. Attendance will be factored into your participation grade. Frequent absences, late arrivals, and early departures will adversely affect your grade. If you miss two or more classes, you may fail the course. That said, life happens. Notify me if you need to miss a class—communication, early and often, is important to your success in this course and beyond.

Response Papers (15% or 30 points): After you complete the required readings, I expect you to write an informal response essay of 500 to 700 words. You must post your response on Blackboard by 7 p.m. on the Tuesday night prior to our Wednesday meeting. The response papers are not an exercise in formal academic writing; rather, they offer an opportunity to try out arguments; to reflect upon your own reactions to a work's argument, narrative, evidence, tone, style, use of sources, and so forth; to pose questions about the required readings that you feel merit fuller discussion in seminar; and to probe the historical, historiographical, theoretical, and methodological implications of the reading you're doing. All members of the colloquium should read the responses posted by classmates before class each week. (Thomas Andrews, University of Colorado-Boulder; see also Leonard Cassuto, "Student-Centered Graduate Teaching," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2013).

Discussion Teams (15% or 30 points): You and a partner will be responsible for reading through the response papers and using them to launch productive and provocative discussions during one week of class (designated in calendar). Your team will have 10 minutes to: a) introduce the book and/or essay(s) and b) pose three to five questions that emerge from the responses posted on Blackboard (bring a hard copy to project on the visualizer). (Lane Demas and Jay Martin, Central Michigan University)

Argument Visualization (20% or 40 points): You are responsible for developing a one-page diagram designed to help everyone better understand the mechanics of a week's core text. Creativity will be rewarded! Your goal is to translate a complex and intricate argument that unfolds over several hundred pages into a format that will help everyone better understand, analyze, and interrogate the books. Think especially about how the book's various parts—its sections, chapters, themes, narratives, and so forth—work together. Or don't work. This demands that you move beyond the "big picture" of the author's central claim to assess the quality, structure, and content of the narrative. Each student will be responsible for two (2) book visualizations. You may find platforms like MindMup, Voyant, Canva or Infogram useful. (Thomas Andrews, University of Colorado-Boulder; Digital Writing and Research Lab, University of Texas-Austin; see also, Cullen, et. al, "Improving analytical reasoning and argument understanding," *Science of Learning* 2018)

Historiographical Essays (25% or 50 points): For the first essay you will examine a combination of assigned and supplementary texts to assess the development of a field or question over time. Then, in a 6-8 page paper, you will explore how a historical subfield has evolved, or how successive generations of U.S. historians have posed different answers to a shared query (due 2/27). The second essay will provide a state-of-field in 6-8 pages answering a pressing historical question (due 5/1). This paper should draw upon assigned reading and one or two additional works to examine recent interpretations of a given event, process, personage, or historical problem. (Kathy Donohue, Central Michigan University; Thomas Andrews, University of Colorado-Boulder)

Calendar of Classes

Any changes to the syllabus will also be announced in class/Blackboard (hereafter, BB).

The schedule below includes lists of suggested readings divided by week, designed to give you a sense of other important books in particular areas; they thus offer prime candidates for historiographical essays, comprehensive exam reading lists, and leisure reading. You may also wish to extend your understanding of the historical and historiographical questions we'll be exploring by reading reviews of some of these books to discern their basic arguments and core contributions.

Week: Topic	Readings	Responsibilities & Opportunities
Week 1 (1/9): Welcome		Supplements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter Novick, <i>That Noble Dream</i> • Lisa McGirr and Eric Foner, <i>American History Now</i>
Week 2 (1/16): Remembering the Civil War, 1861-	Drew Gilpin Faust, <i>This Republic of Suffering</i>	Submit response paper via BB discussion board by 7:00 pm Tuesday. Supplements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Blight, <i>American Oracle</i> • David Blight, <i>Race and Reunion</i> • Amy Dru Stanley, <i>Race and Reunion</i> • Eric Foner, <i>A Short History of Reconstruction</i> • Glenda Gilmore, <i>Gender and Jim Crow</i> • Gary Wills, <i>Lincoln at Gettysburg</i> • John Witt, <i>Lincoln's Code</i>
Week 3 (1/23): American Expansion	1) Cothran, <i>Remembering the Modoc War</i> 2) Elliott West, "Reconstructing Race," <i>Western Historical Quarterly</i> 34 (online)	Submit response paper via BB discussion board by 7:00 pm Tuesday. Discussion Team 1 Supplements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ari Kelman, <i>Misplaced Massacre</i> • Karl Jacoby, <i>Shadows at Dawn</i> • Margaret Jacobs, <i>White Mother to a Dark Race</i> • Patricia Nelson Limerick, <i>The Legacy of Conquest</i> • Linda Gordon, <i>The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction</i> • Elliott West, <i>The Last Indian War</i> • Heather Cox Richardson, <i>Wounded Knee</i>
Week 4 (1/30): American Populism	1) Postel, <i>Populist Vision</i> 2) Daniel T. Rodgers, "In Search of Progressivism," <i>Reviews in American History</i> 10 (1982), 113-132.	Submit response paper via BB discussion board by 7:00 pm Tuesday. Discussion Team 2 Supplements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robert Wiebe, <i>The Search for Order, 1877-1920</i> • Daniel Rodgers, <i>Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age</i> • Elizabeth Sanders, <i>Roots of Reform</i> • Lawrence Goodwyn, <i>The Populist Moment</i> • Michael Kazin, <i>The Populist Persuasion</i> • Maureen Flanagan, <i>America Reformed</i> • Michael McGerr, <i>A Fierce Discontent</i>
Week 5 (2/6): Labor, Society, & Environment in the Early 20th Century	1) Andrews, <i>Killing for Coal</i>	Submit response paper via BB discussion board by 7:00 pm Tuesday. Discussion Team 3 Supplements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gail Bederman, <i>Manliness and Civilization</i> • Katherine Benton Cohen, <i>Borderline Americans</i> • David Montgomery, <i>Fall of the House of Labor</i> • Gunther Peck, <i>Reinventing Free Labor</i> • Alice Kessler-Harris, <i>In Pursuit of Equity</i> • Erika Lee, <i>At America's Gates</i>

Week: Topic	Readings	Responsibilities & Opportunities
Week 6 (2/13): Citizenship, Race, and State Power, 1920-	1) Ngai, <i>Impossible Subjects</i> 2) Eric Arneson, "Whiteness and the Historians' Imagination," <i>International Labor and Working Class History</i> 60 (2001), 3-32.	Submit response paper via BB discussion board by 7:00 pm Tuesday. Discussion Team 4 Supplements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oscar Handlin, <i>The Uprooted</i> • Kelly Lytle Hernandez, <i>Migra! A History of the US Border Patrol</i> • Roger Daniels, <i>Guarding the Golden Door</i> • Andrea Geiger, <i>Subverting Exclusion</i> • Nayan Shah, <i>Contagious Divides</i> • Donna Gabaccia and Vicki Ruiz, eds, <i>American Dreaming, Global Realities</i> • Steven Hahn, <i>A Nation Under Our Feet</i> • David Kennedy, <i>Over Here</i>
Week 7 (2/20): Industrializing Agriculture, 1920-1980	Fitzgerald, <i>Every Farm a Factory</i>	Submit response paper via BB discussion board by 7:00 pm Tuesday. Discussion Team 5 Supplements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sarah Phillips, <i>This Land, This Nation</i> • Lizbeth Cohen, <i>Making a New Deal</i> • Dana Frank, <i>Purchasing Power</i> • Katznelson, <i>Freedom From Fear</i> • Patricia Sullivan, <i>Days of Hope</i> • Alan Brinkley, <i>The End of Reform</i> • Robin D. G. Kelley, <i>Hammer and Hoe</i>
Week 8 (2/27): Affluence & Anxiety	1) Brown, <i>Plutopia</i>	Submit response paper via BB discussion board by 7:00 pm Tuesday. Historiographical Essay 1 Due Supplements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Lewis Gaddis, <i>We Now Know</i> • Odd Arne Westad, <i>The Global Cold War</i> • Elaine Tyler May, <i>Homeward Bound</i> • Ellen Schrecker, <i>Many Are the Crimes</i>
Week 9 (3/6): No Class - Spring Recess		
Week 10 (3/13): Flex Day		
Week 11 (3/20): Cold War Homefront	1) Kirk & Purcell, <i>Doom Towns</i> 2) <u>Nevada Test Site Oral History Project</u>	Submit response paper via BB discussion board by 7:00 pm Tuesday. Supplements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul Boyer, <i>By the Bomb's Early Light</i> • Lizbeth Cohen, <i>A Consumer's Republic</i> • Barbara Ehrenreich, <i>The Hearts of Men</i> • Kenneth Jackson, <i>Crabgrass Frontier</i> • Eileen Luhr, <i>Witnessing Suburbia</i> • Lisa McGirr, <i>Suburban Warriors</i>

Week: Topic	Readings	Responsibilities & Opportunities
Week 12 (3/27): Race, Rape, and Civil Rights	1) McGuire, <i>At the Dark End of the Street</i> 2) Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," <i>Journal of American History</i> 95 (2005), 1233-1263	Submit response paper via BB discussion board by 7:00 pm Tuesday. Discussion Team 6 Supplements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barbara Ransby, <i>Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement</i> • Sara Evans, <i>Personal Politics</i> • David Johnson, <i>The Lavender Scare</i> • Gilmore, <i>Defying Dixie</i> • James Goodman, <i>Stories of Scottsboro</i> • Chana Kai Lee, <i>For Freedom's Sake</i> • Mary Dudziak, <i>Cold War Civil Rights</i> • Zaragosa Vargas, <i>Labor Rights are Civil Rights</i> • Thomas Sugrue, <i>Sweet Land of Liberty</i> • Jones, <i>March on Washington</i>
Week 13 (4/3): The Sexual "Revolution," 1945-1980	Bailey, <i>Sex in the Heartland</i>	Submit response paper via BB discussion board by 7:00 pm Tuesday. Discussion Team 7 Supplements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K.A. Cuordileone, <i>Manhood and American Political Culture in the Cold War</i> • Sara Dubow, <i>Ourselves Unborn</i> • Eileen Luhr, <i>Witnessing Suburbia</i> • Todd Gitlin, <i>The Sixties</i> • Ricki Solinger, <i>Wake Up Little Susie</i> • Margot Canaday, <i>The Straight State</i> Extra Credit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option A: Attend the International Graduate Historical Studies Conference this weekend, attend two panels, and ask at least one question at one of the panels you attend. Then, write a two-page paper that explains the question, the response, and connects the experience to the course in some way. • Option B: Write a mock-blog post for the Department of History's [Re]Collection History. Your post should be approximately 500 to 700 words and complement other content.
Week 14 (4/10): Rise of the New Right and Modern Conservatism	Dochuk, <i>From Bible Belt to Sunbelt</i>	Submit response paper via BB discussion board by 7:00 pm Tuesday. Discussion Team 8 Extra Credit Due Supplements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gil Troy, <i>Morning in America</i> • Jefferson Cowie, <i>Stayin' Alive</i> • Natasha Zaretsky, <i>No Direction Home</i> • Thomas Frank, <i>What's the Matter With Kansas</i> • Daniel Rodgers, <i>Age of Fracture</i> • Schulman and Zelizer, <i>Rightward Bound</i> • Gerstle and Fraser, <i>The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order</i> • Dan Carter, <i>The Politics of Rage</i> • Rick Perlstein, <i>Before the Storm</i> • Donald Critchlow, <i>Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism</i>
Week 15 (4/17): Intersections — Environmental History — Medicine, Labor, and Environment	Nash, <i>Inescapable Ecologies</i>	Submit response paper via BB discussion board by 7:00 pm Tuesday.
Week 16 (4/24): Intersections — Oral History — Class Conflict, Poverty, and Labor Struggles	1) Portelli, <i>They Say in Harlan County</i> 2) Hardy and Portelli, "I Can Almost See the Lights of Home" Essay in Sound	Submit response paper via BB discussion board by 7:00 pm Tuesday.
Exam Week		Historiographical Essay 2 Due by 3:30 pm on Wednesday (5/1)

Resources

Blackboard (BB): This course uses Blackboard, a virtual learning program and course management system. I will upload grades, assignment handouts, reading materials, as well as important resources to the course site. If you have questions or have never used BB, please let the instructor know.

Writing Center: The Writing Center is a free resource providing assistance with any writing, at any level, from any discipline. It is open to all current students, faculty, and staff. We regularly work with undergraduate and graduate students from various disciplines, including non-native English speakers. The Writing Center has three locations: Anspach 154, Towers (Wheeler basement), and Park Library on the third floor, room 360 (our brand new location!). Visit "[Hours and Locations](#)" for more information.

Documents on Demand: This service provides access to books, articles, and other materials not available at CMU. For instance, you may get a book from interlibrary loan, request a book chapter from scans on demand, and access WorldCat.

Databases: You may find research databases like JSTOR useful in this class, which you may access via the Libraries "Research" tab or the research guide for [History](#).

Research Guide: The Reference Librarian for History is Professor Rob Faleer, who has expertise in historical research and database use. He built [this](#) reference guide for history students and faculty. He's also available for individual consultations—to schedule an appointment, email: falee1ra@cmich.edu

The Clarke Historical Library: CMU is home to one of the region's most valuable research collections and archives—[The Clarke](#). It houses the university's papers, has one of the largest collections related to Native American history in state, maintains a vast cache of historic maps, and preserves rare books. We will be working with one of the unit's most exciting resources: the Michigan Historical Newspaper Portal ([DigMich Newspapers](#)). This is a digital collection of newspapers from across the state that we'll use for our service-learning project. The Clarke also hosts a series of special events and exhibit space. Check out their [list of upcoming events](#).

The Museum of Cultural and Natural History (MCNH): CMU also has a museum! The museum supports research and teaching in cultural and natural history, and serves as a laboratory for students enrolled in the museum studies and public history programs at CMU. Exhibits are open to the public, and we offer tours and classroom activities for teachers and students. The MCNH also has a vast collection that contains cool artifacts: biological specimens, one of the first transport trucks made in Mt. Pleasant, a one-room schoolhouse, and more. Check out the museum website [here](#).

Counseling Center: Mental health professionals and a few carefully selected graduate student trainees staff CMU's Counseling Center. The center provides free and confidential counseling services on the Mount Pleasant campus for currently enrolled CMU students dealing with various issues and concerns that may affect their academic success, interpersonal relationships, health, or safety. Services include short-term/time-limited individual and group counseling, consultation, and referral. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call 989-774-3381, drop in (Foust 102), email counsel@cmich.edu or visit their [homepage](#).

Student Disability Services (SDS)/ADA: CMU is committed to providing students with disabilities the academic accommodations and auxiliary aids necessary to ensure access to all university services, programs and activities. SDS is responsible for determining these accommodations. Students needing accommodations should contact [SDS](#).