

History 510: 557  
Problems And Directed Readings in American History II  
Professor Jackson Lears  
31 Mine St., Wednesdays, 4:30-7:30 p.m.  
Office Hours: 1-3 p.m. Wednesday and by appointment

This course introduces main currents and important controversies in the recent historiography of the United States in the nineteenth century. It is designed to speed your preparation for qualifying exams, to enrich your sense of materials you will teach in the U.S. history survey, and to help you articulate the ways your dissertations will pose and answer questions that have engaged historians. We will read a few classic texts and several recent monographs—most of them revised dissertations. All of the books listed here appear (or will soon appear) on the Master List of reading for the comprehensive examination. Not all have to read in their entirety; parts of some can be skimmed for their argument; and others (I trust) can be savored for their writing as well as their interpretation. I have also included some articles assessing a “state of the field” or probing a new patch of real estate (e.g. the relation between slavery and capitalism.) There is a lot of reading here, and I will happily suggest short-cuts as we go forward, particular with respect to the books.

Of course the literature is vast and the “coverage” model is necessarily incomplete. We will try to uncover insights as well as cover interpretations and information. While the syllabus aims to be reasonably comprehensive, it inevitably reflects my own beliefs about what constitute the major themes of nineteenth century U.S. History. So the reading list embodies the common assumption that sectional tensions over slavery and the subsequent Civil War lie at the core of our concerns, but it also embodies the less common assumption that those conflicts were part of a broader history of capitalism—a history historians are only beginning to address explicitly.

Your written and spoken work, I hope, will also expand the reach of the course. Each week one student will be in charge of coming up with discussion questions and circulating them on Sakai the night before class, and another student will present a short (5 pp.) report that extends a major theme raised by the reading (e.g. the market revolution, the construction of collective memory, etc.) beyond what’s listed on the syllabus. The final assignment is a historiographical essay (3000 words) that either deepens the exploration of the questions raised by the report, or embarks (with my advice and consent) in a new direction altogether.

Articles are available on the course Sakai site. The following books are required and are available online:

Joyce Appleby, *Inheriting the Revolution: the First Generation of Americans*  
Anne Hyde, *Empires, Nations, and Families: a New History of the American West*  
Christine Leigh Heyrman, *Southern Cross: the Beginnings of the Bible Belt*  
Jeffrey Sklansky, *Sovereign of the Market: the Money Question in Early America*  
Seth Rockman, *Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery and Survival in Early Baltimore*  
Edward Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism*  
Jonathan Levy, *Freaks of Fortune: the Emerging World of Capitalism and Risk in America*

David Potter, *The Impending Crisis, America Before the Civil War, 1848-1861*  
Edward Ayers, *In the Presence of Mine Enemies: the Civil War in the Heart of America, 1859-1863*  
Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War*  
Eric Foner, *A Short History of Reconstruction*  
David Blight, *Race and Reunion: the Civil War in American Memory*  
Steven Hahn, *A Nation Under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration*  
Sven Beckert, *The Monied Metropolis: New York City and the Consolidation of The American Bourgeoisie*  
Charles Postel, *The Populist Vision*  
Richard White, *Railroaded: the Transcontinentals and the Making of Modern America*  
Jackson Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation: the Making of Modern America, 1877-1920*

Schedule of meetings and topics:

January 17	Paradigms Lost  Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" (1893).
January 24	New Americans  Joyce Appleby, <i>Inheriting the Revolution</i> Rosemarie Zagari, "The Significance of the 'Global Turn' for the American Republic: Globalization in the Age of Early Nation Building," <i>Journal of the Early Republic</i> (Spring 2011).
January 31	No Class (rescheduled for May 2)
February 7	Westward the Course of Empire  Anne Hyde, <i>Empires, Nations, and Families</i> Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, "From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in Between in North American History," <i>AHR</i> (June 1999). Pekka Hämäläinen and Samuel Truett, "On Borderlands," <i>JAH</i> 2011
February 14	The Icy Waters of Egotistical Calculation  Jeffrey Sklansky, <i>Sovereign of the Market: the Money Question in Early America</i> , Introduction and Parts One and Two. Seth Rockman, <i>Scraping By</i> Amy Stanley, "Home Life and the Morality of the Market," in Strokes and Conway, eds. <i>The Market Revolution in America</i>

February 21     The Making of an Evangelical Ethos

- Christine Leigh Heyrman, *Southern Cross*  
Daniel Wickberg, "What is the History of Sensibilities? On Cultural Histories, Old and New," *AHR*, 2007  
Elizabeth Clark, "'The Sacred Rights of the Weak': Pain, Sympathy, and the Culture of Individual Rights in Antebellum America," *JAH*, 1995  
Nora Doyle, "'The Highest Pleasure of Which Woman's Nature is Capable': Breastfeeding and the Sentimental Maternal Ideal in America 1750-1860," *JAH* (March 2011).  
Mary Kelley, "Reading Women/Women Reading: The Making of Learned Women in Antebellum America," *JAH* (September 1996 )

February 28     Slavery and Capitalism

- Edward Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told*, selections.  
Sven Beckert and Seth Rockman, eds., *Slavery's Capitalism*, "Introduction," pp. 1-27.  
Caitlin Rosenthal, "Slavery's Scientific Management: Masters and Managers," in *Slavery's Capitalism*, pp. 62-86.  
Bonnie Martin, "Neighbor to Neighbor Capitalism: Local Credit Networks and the Mortgaging of Slaves," in *Slavery's Capitalism*, pp. 107-121.  
Calvin Schermerhorn, "The Coastwise Slave Trade and a Mercantile Community of Interest," in *Slavery's Capitalism*, pp. 209-224.  
Alfred Brophy, "The Market, Utility, and Slavery in Southern Legal Thought," in *Slavery's Capitalism*, pp. 262-276.

March 7         The Road to Disunion

- David Potter, *The Impending Crisis*  
Michael Woods, "What Twenty-first Century Historians Have Said About the Causes of Disunion: a Civil War Sesquicentennial Review of the Recent Literature," *JAH* (September 2012)  
John Majewski, "Why Did Northerners Oppose the Expansion of Slavery?" in *Slavery's Capitalism*, pp. 277-298.

March 21       The Civil War as Ideology and Experience

- Drew Faust, *This Republic of Suffering*  
Edward Ayers, *In the Presence of Mine Enemies*

March 28       Nothing But Freedom

- Eric Foner, *A Short History of Reconstruction*  
Stephen Hahn, *A Nation Under our Feet*, selections  
Elliott West, "Reconstructing Race," *Western Historical Quarterly* (Spring 2003).

- April 4            Manufacturing Collective Memory  
David Blight, *Race and Reunion*
- April 11            The Creation of a National Ruling Class  
Sven Beckert, *Monied Metropolis*  
Jackson Lears, “The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and  
Possibilities,” *AHR* (June 1985).
- April 18            Capitalism as a Way of Life  
Jonathan Levy, *Freaks of Fortune*, selections  
Sean Patrick Adams, “Soulless Monsters and Iron Horses: the Civil War,  
Institutional Change, and American Capitalism” in Michael Zakim and  
Gary Kornblith, eds. *Capitalism Takes Command*  
Jean-Christophe Agnew, “Afterword: Anonymous History” in *ibid.*
- April 25            Westward the Course of Empire, Revisited  
Richard White, *Railroaded*  
Sarah Keyes, “ ‘Like a Roaring Lion’: The Overland Trail as a Sonic Conquest,” *JAH*  
(June 2009).
- May 2              Toward the Twentieth Century  
Jeffrey Sklansky, *Sovereign of the Market*, Part Three and Conclusion  
Charles Postel, *The Populist Vision*, selections  
Jackson Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation*