



History & the News

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Summer Session III: July 11 – August 17

Mondays 1-4:40pm EDT on Zoom

Instructor: Alison Hight

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Office Hours: by appointment via Zoom

Course Description:

How do ideas about the past play out in today's news? How can historical knowledge deepen our understanding of contemporary issues? What role should historians play in influencing how history is used in the present?

This course examines the relationship between “history” and our present-day world. We’ll explore the historical genealogies of topics that have dominated recent headlines and consider how these issues have developed over time. We will also consider how conceptions of and arguments about the past are mobilized to serve contemporary discourses. Students will practice thinking historically about present-day issues and learn how historical literacy can inform how we engage with the world around us.

Course Structure & Pedagogical Principles:

This course will meet synchronously once every week over Zoom. Please be sure you are available during the designated time slots throughout the summer session and are prepared to make the most of our meetings. In addition to the synchronous meetings, students will be required to complete and submit work asynchronously each week.

Please note: This course is based on discussing topics that are prevalent in today's news, much of which have become increasingly politicized and partisan. The purpose of this course is NOT to debate contemporary politics, but rather to focus on how historical literacy can help us better understand issues that command our attention today.

Course Objectives:

- Research the genealogies of contemporary issues prevalent in today's news
- Evaluate primary and secondary sources
- Create evidence-based historical arguments
- Practice historical thinking
- Hone critical reading and writing skills

- Develop pedagogical skills through final peer-to-peer presentations

Course Policies:

Professionalism: I heartily encourage students to share their thoughts about course content and learn from each other. However, it is imperative that our class interactions are professional and respectful of one another. Unprofessional behavior will not be tolerated in this course.

Attendance: Students are expected to attend the weekly synchronous sessions. If you have an emergency or are unable to attend, please let me know as soon as possible. "Attendance" in this course also means keeping up with asynchronous components. Please let me know ahead of time if you anticipate having to miss a class or assignment. If circumstances prevent that, please be in touch as soon as possible.

Preparation: In addition to being present, students are also expected to come to class prepared. This means having completed the reading and assignments for each day and being ready to participate in class.

Late work: Work submitted after the deadline will lose one letter grade for each day it's late unless other arrangements have been made in advance. Keep in mind that it will be difficult to keep up to date if you begin accruing much late work because this course is condensed into a short summer session. Try to plan your weeks so you can give yourself time to meet the deadlines. If you have medical or family related circumstances that prevent you from completing an assignment on time, please get in touch with me as soon as possible.

Grade Breakdown:

- Weekly writing assignments (50% -- 10% each week)
- Preparation for and participation in synchronous discussions (25%)
- Final project (25% total -- 5% presentation, 5% annotated bibliography, 15% paper)

Required Texts:

There are no textbooks for this course. However, students must activate their Rutgers-provided subscriptions to *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*, and must also set up personal subscriptions to *The Washington Post* (look for the \$1/month academic rate). Any additional readings for this course will be available as PDFs on Canvas.

Course Schedule:

Week 1: "History" and "the news"

Week 2: "History" in the Headlines

Week 3: Historicizing the News 1 (topic tbd)

Week 4: Historicizing the News 2 (topic tbd)

Week 5: Historicizing the News 3 (topic tbd)

Week 6: Presentations & Reflections

Final papers due by 11:59PM on the last day of the summer session