

U. S. History: Establishing Community and Disestablishing Oppression
(Integrated two-course program in U.S. History, Spring '03)

Narratives of American Identities in U.S. History
Karen Waldron

This is the literature component of an integrated two-credit course program in U.S. History: Establishing Community and Disestablishing Oppression. The program introduces some of the principle types of historical narrative (e.g. ecological, diplomatic, political, economic, social, religious, intellectual, autobiographical, quantitative, pictorial, graphic) and uses them to survey factual claims and alternative interpretations of U.S. history from 1491 onwards. To practice interdisciplinary study and historical interpretation we look, in particular, at ways different methods of historical narrative can illuminate (and be illuminated by) case studies of individuals and groups. We also focus on peoples' attempts to establish sustainable communities and their struggles to overcome oppression. The team that is teaching this course is especially interested in the relationship – in a variety of kinds of texts/narratives – between textuality and truth. Readings for the literature component include: *Classic American Autobiographies*; *The Coquette* (Hannah Foster) or *Our Nig* (Harriet Wilson); *Ragged Dick* (Horatio Alger); *Life in the Iron Mills* (Rebecca Harding Davis); *The 42nd Parallel* (John Dos Passos); additional selections highlighting Native American and African American experience; and short stories. There will also be several major narrative films viewed during the lab sessions. Students will complete a series of weekly methodological exercises and a major community history project. The lab fee is intended to cover a series of field trips during which we can investigate local historical resources. Introductory/Intermediate. *HS* *HY* Lab Fee: \$50.00.

Texts:

Classic American Autobiographies
The Coquette (Hannah Foster)
Hobomok & Other Writings on Indians (Lydia Maria Child)
Our Nig (Harriet Wilson)
Life in the Iron Mills (Rebecca Harding Davis)
The 42nd Parallel (John Dos Passos)
Selected supplementary readings and short stories.

Patterns of Community in U. S. History
Gray Cox

This is the historiography and social theory component of an integrated two-credit course program in U.S. History: Establishing Community and Disestablishing Oppression. The program introduces some of the principle types of historical narrative (e.g. ecological, diplomatic, political, economic, social, religious, intellectual, autobiographical, quantitative, pictorial, graphic) and uses them to survey factual claims and alternative interpretations of U.S. history from 1491 onwards. To practice interdisciplinary study and historical interpretation we look, in particular, at ways different methods of historical narrative can illuminate (and be

illuminated by) case studies of individuals and groups. We also focus on peoples' attempts to establish sustainable communities and their struggles to overcome oppression. The team that is teaching this course is especially interested in the relationship – in a variety of kinds of texts/narratives – between textuality and truth. Readings for the historiography and social theory component include: *Albion's Seed*, *A Different Mirror*, *Crabgrass Frontier*, *Strike!* and a variety of selections from classic texts in U. S. historical studies. There will also be several major narrative films viewed during the lab sessions. Students will complete a series of weekly methodological exercises and a major community history project. The lab fee of \$50 is intended to cover a series of field trips during which we can investigate local and regional historical resources. Introductory/Intermediate. *HS* *HY* Lab Fee: \$50.00.

Note: Total lab fee of \$100.00 for integrated two-course program.

Assignments (projects and assignments are for both classes):

- [1] Reading and preparing for class.
- [2] One 1-3 minute memorization of a key community text such as a song, poem, story, or legend — each student will do one over the course of the term. Sign ups on Day 1.
- [3] Eight weekly assignments, due on Fridays, based on methodological exercises related to your term project. There will be class review and preparation for methodological exercises during the Tuesday sessions.
- [4] Term Project — Writing a community history. The narrative and its conclusion should be directed toward one of two analyses: of a contemporary historical fact, issue, or population and its relation to the community's history; or of a contemporary literary text by or about a member or members of the community which can be illuminated by historical knowledge.
- [5] Final Exercise — Commentary on syllabus, due Tuesday, June 1.

Evaluation (projects and assignments are for both classes):

Class participation, reading and preparation, one minute presentation – 25%

Eight weekly assignments – 30%

Term Project and Presentation at “Conference” – 30%

Final Exercise – 15%

Class Schedule:

**Part One — Introduction: Looking Back from the Present;
What Can History Tell Us?**

Tues. April 1 Introductions [and mini-lectures?]. [First day: meet at 9 to do intros and definition of community. Send them off to read. Reconvene at 1 for discussion, movie, and timeline prep.]
Albion's Seed: Preface.

[reading time] Additional readings: "New England Forest History."
[?excerpt from *Savagism and Civilization* (Pearce)?]; Literature of discovery, Native American literature (creation story next to *Genesis*?), early Puritan texts (city on a hill paragraph).

Prep. for annotated Timeline and definition of community.

Lab Session Movie: *Paris is Burning*

Fri., April 4 **History as Patterns of Community.** *Albion's Seed*: i-13; Conclusion, 783-898.

Lab Session Movie: *Amistad*

Choose a community for Term Project.

Methodology Assignment 1: Define Community chosen and write draft of annotated Timeline for Community. Due Tuesday, April 6.

Part Two — The European Founding of National Identity/Community

Tues., Apr. 8 *Classic American Autobiographies*: Rowlandson (26-69)
Albion's Seed: Puritans, pp. 13-206 (selections).
A Different Mirror: pp. 1-50.

Timeline and Community Definition due.

U.S. History as His Story: Biblical rhetoric in Puritan narratives.

Prep. for Etymology assignment.

Fri. Apr. 11 *Classic American Autobiographies*: Franklin (71-228).
Democracy in America, Alexis de Tocqueville, selections.
Samuel de Champlain and Jesuit missionaries, selections.

Prep for graph and table sequence assignment using demographic statistics from census.

Methodology Assignment 2 Due: Etymology of a key word defining your community.

Tues., Apr. 15 Foster, *The Coquette*.
Annette Kolodny: “Unearthing Herstory,” “Surveying the Virgin Land” and pp. 26-28 from “Laying Waste Her Fields of Plenty” in *The Lay of the Land: Metaphor as Experience in American Literature*. [possibly use DeTocqueville too]

U.S. History as Herstory: Feminist Methodology Meta-Narrative / Micro-Narrative.

Fri., Apr. 18 *Albion’s Seed: Back Country Scotch Irish*, pp. 605-783.
Frederick Jackson Turner’s Thesis, selections.

Lab Session: Prep for map sequence assignment.

Methodology Assignment 3 Due: Graph and Table Sequence.

Part Three — The American Struggle in Different Identities and Different Communities: The Nineteenth Century

Tue., Apr. 22 *Hobomok* (through Chapter X for discussion Friday)
[selections from *Last of the Mohicans* and lecture (as example for Ed students. Debrief on lecture]
Excerpt from Diamond, *Guns, Germs and Steel*. [? More]

U.S. History as Natural History: Ecological Methodology Meta-Narrative / Micro-Narrative — and History as Kings and Wars (Realist History).

Fri., Apr. 25 Finish and discuss *Hobomok*.
A Different Mirror: Chapters 4, 6, and 9.

Lab Session Movie: *The Black Robe*.

Prep for close reading assignment.

Methodology Assignment 4 Due: Map Sequence.

Tue., Apr. 29 *Classic American Autobiographies: Douglass (230-327)*.
Albion’s Seed: The South, pp. 207-310.
A Different Mirror: Ch. 3 and 5.

U.S. History as Racial/Ethnic History: History from the Disenfranchised, Part One. Race in the U.S. and Race/Ethnicity Methodology Meta-Narrative / Micro-Narrative.

Lab Session Movie: Selections from *Roots*.

Fri., May 2 *Our Nig.* Baldwin, [Gosset? “Everybody’s Protest Novel”]
Albion’s Seed: The South, pp. 311-418.

Lab Session Movie: *Birth of a Nation*.

Prep for Sketch of Theoretical Model and Annotated Bibliography.

Methodology Assignment 5 Due: Close Reading.

Criteria for annotated bibliography. Each entry should note the following: the article’s theoretical point of view, kinds of data used, methodology, experimental basis, and a summary value judgment (good, excellent, limited, etc.).

Midterm Evaluation and Discussion of Community Histories.

Tue., May 6 Horatio Alger, *Ragged Dick*.
Crabgrass Frontier: pp. 1-86.

U.S. History as Class Struggle: Marxist / Class Analysis Methodology
Meta-Narrative / Micro-Narrative.

Prep for telling of a story.

Part Four — The American Struggle in Different Identities and Different Communities: Into The Twentieth Century

Fri., May 7 Rebecca Harding Davis, *Life in the Iron Mills*.
Strike! : pp. xxx
Classic American Autobiographies: Zitkala-Sa.

History from the Disenfranchised, Part Two: Making It in the U.S.A.?

Lab Session Movie: *Matewan*

Continued prep for theoretical model and annotated bibliography.

Methodology Assignment 6 Due: Telling a Story.

Tue., May 13 Dos Passos, *The 42nd Parallel*: first third (through “The Camera Eye (13)”).
A Different Mirror: Ch. 11,13,14.
Crabgrass Frontier: TBA.

Fri., May 16 **Field Trip: Boston**

Selected short readings on National Park Historic Interpretation, Boston, etc.

Tue., May 18 Dos Passos, *The 42nd Parallel*: second third (through “J. Ward Moorehouse”).
Crabgrass Frontier: TBA.
Selections from *The Power Elite* (C. Wright Mills) and Paul Fussell’s *Class*.

U.S. History as News: The Camera Eye and Headlines.

Lab Session Movie: *Citizen Kane*

Fri., May 21 Finish *The 42nd Parallel*.
A Different Mirror: Ch. 7 and 12.

Prep for visual / image project (collage, drawing(s), photo(s), pictures (representations through art history, bookplates, etc.).

Methodology Assignment 7 Due: Theoretical Model and Annotated Bibliography.

Tue., May 27 Selections from *The Journal of John Woolman* and “A Plea for the Poor.”
Albion’s Seed: Quakers, pp. 419-604, selections.
Strike! TBA.

U.S. History as Chronology.

Fri., May 28 Continue with *Albion’s Seed*.
A Different Mirror: Ch. 8.

Lab Session Movie: *The Joy Luck Club*

Methodology Assignment 8 Due: Visual/Image project.

Tue., June 1 Short Story Selections by contemporary ethnic Americans.
Crabgrass Frontier: TBA

Lab Session: Preparation for Conference.

Conclusions in U.S. History: The Present, the Past, and Methodological Questions.

Final Exercise due: Syllabus Commentary and Critique.

Fri., June 4 **History Conference: Presentation of Community Histories.**

Course evaluations.