

University of Florida  
Department of History  
Fall 2022

## **AMH4930: Research Seminar on Railroads in American Life**

Professor Sean Adams

Wednesdays, Period 7-9 (1:55-4:55 p.m.)

Keene-Flint 0111

### **Course Introduction and Objectives**

This research seminar explores the role that railroads played in the economic, social, and cultural development of the United States. From their origins in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century through their decline during the era of the automobile, the railroad served as an engine of development, a symbol of mobility, an agent of colonialism, and much more. Railroads could knit the nation together and conquer time and space; they also could provoke violent strikes, inspire anger among farmers, and serve as a magnet for criminals, hucksters, and unsavory elements looking for a fast getaway. The railroad therefore was much more than a transport device, it was an American icon.

As this is both a reading and research seminar with a thematic focus, the course will split time between a broad survey of themes in the history of railroads in the United States and a hands-on research workshop allowing students to explore their own particular interests within this topic. The end result of this seminar will be a 15 to 20 page paper based upon primary sources. Along the way, students will develop skills in historical research that will involve the use of manuscript, published, microfilmed, and online source materials. They will also hone their writing skills with various short papers and the aforementioned research paper.

### **Required and Recommended Readings**

There are several required texts and some film for this course. Five (5) of these books are available for purchase both online and at the UF Book Store; you will have a choice of readings and can secure them by whatever method you choose. Since this is a seminar, the success of the course depends upon the students completing, contemplating, and discussing the weekly readings. The reading schedule will provide a structure for completing these readings, and it is of the utmost importance that you adhere to this schedule. Not doing the readings will likely result in a failing grade for this course, as a hefty portion of the grade depends upon participation.

The core books required for purchase are:

Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2014 [1977]).

Richard White, *Railroaded: The Transcontinentals and the Making of Modern America*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2012.

R. Scott Huffard, *Engines of Redemption: Railroads and the Reconstruction of Capitalism in the New South*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2019.

Scott Reynolds, *Steel Drivin' Man: John Henry, The Untold Story of an American Legend*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008

Mark Wyman, *Hoboes, Bindlestiffs, Fruit Tramps and the Harvesting of the West*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2010.

### Grading Policy

Students will be evaluated on a number of assignments in this class. Most important will be the final paper, which will be due on Monday, 12 December 2022. Students will also write various response papers at various points of the semester. More details on these response papers, along with formal guidelines for the research prospectus, report and presentation, will be made available in class.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

The final grade breakdown is as follows:

Grade Calculation	Grading Scale	Grade Value
Participation 20%	100-93=A	A=4.0
Short Response Papers 20%	92-90=A-	A-=3.67
Paper Prospectus 10%	89-87=B+	B+=3.33
Research Report 10%	86-82=B	B=3.00
Research Presentation 10%	82-80=B-	B-=2.67
Final Paper 30%	79-76=C+	C+=2.33
	75-72=C	C=2.00
	71-69=C-	C-=1.67
	68-66=D+	D+=1.33
	65-62=D	D=1.00

	61-60=D-	D-=0.67
	59-0=E	E=0.00

Please do not hesitate to contact the instructor during the semester if you have any individual concerns or issues that need to be discussed in terms of accessibility. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Disability Resource Center (<https://disability.ufl.edu/>). The DSO will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code.” On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor and Student Conduct Code (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor in this class.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this class, as it constitutes intellectual theft and academic dishonesty. If you turn in the work of others and try to pass it off as your own, you will fail that assignment and risk expulsion from the University of Florida. I will give you the guidelines, expectations, and other information regarding the written work in this course, so you really have no reason to cheat. I take these matters very seriously and will prosecute vigorously if provoked. Any possible rewards derived from plagiarism simply don’t justify the risk! All students must conform to UF’s honesty policy regarding cheating, plagiarism, and the use of copyrighted materials. Your major assignments will be monitored with the Turnitin AntiPlagiarism Service, so please keep in mind that cheating on the assignments in this course will be much more difficult than actually doing the work.

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via

<https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

### **Contacts, Confidentiality and Recording Policies**

It's always a good idea to meet with an instructor to track your progress in a college course. I am happy to meet with you in person during office hours—keep in mind that you can schedule a meeting with me outside of the scheduled hours—to discuss grades, assignments, or other course-related concerns during my regular office hours or appointments. If you have a brief question about the course, feel free to drop me an e-mail. However, I cannot accept assignments as e-mail attachments in this course without prior arrangement. I also cannot discuss grades over e-mail or the phone, as student records are confidential. UF views each student, not their parent(s), as the primary contact for all communication. For more information, see:

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/ferpa.html>

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

I may keep a personal recording of class sessions, but am bound by the same restrictions on publication and distribution. These audio recordings are for my own use only.

### **Seminar Schedule (Subject to Revision by Instructor)**

24 August                      Course Introductions and Expectations

31 August                      The Human Impact of Railroads  
 Reading: Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*

7 September                      Three Episodes of American Railroad History  
 Reading: David Schley, "A Natural History of the Early American Railroad," *Early American Studies* 13 (2015): 443-466; Will Mackintosh, "'Ticketed Through': The Commodification of Travel in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of the Early Republic* 32 (2012): 61-89; Troy Rondinone, "Guarding the Switch: Cultivating Nationalism During the Pullman Strike," *The Journal of the Gilded Age & Progressive Era* 8 (2009): 83-109; Rosemary Pearce, "Murder on the Kansas City Special? Pullman Porters, Emotions, and the Strange Case of J.H. Wilkins," *Journal of American Studies* 53 (2019): 683-702. These readings are available on the Canvas site.

#### **Brief Essay Due**

14 September                      Railroaded, Part 1  
 Reading: White, *Railroaded*, pp. 1-224.

21 September                      Railroaded, Part 2  
 Reading, White, *Railroaded*, pp. 225-518

#### **Brief Essay Due**

28 September	Railroading in the South Readings: Huffard, <i>Engines of Redemption</i>
5 October	Building the Lines and Making a Legend Readings: Nelson, <i>Steel Drivin' Man: John Henry, the Untold Story of an American Legend</i>
12 October	Riding the Rails Readings: Wyman, <i>Hoboes, Bindlestiffs, Fruit Tramps, and the Harvesting of the West</i> <b>Brief Essay Due</b>
19 October	Primary Sources, I
26 October	Primary Sources, II <b>Prospectus Due</b>
2 November	Research/Individual Conferences
9 November	Research/Individual Conferences
16 November	Writing Workshop <b>Research Report Due</b>
30 November	Conference Session
7 December	Final Session

Final Paper Due: 12 December 2022, 11:59 p.m.

**Contact Information**

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Office Hours: Mondays, 1-3 pm; Wednesdays, 1-2 pm; & by appointment