

# HIS3942: History Practicum

History and New York City

Fall 2019

Professor Sean Adams

E-mail: [spadams@ufl.edu](mailto:spadams@ufl.edu)

Phone: 352-273-3354

Office: 227 Keene-Flint

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 3-4 pm;

Thursdays, 9-10 am; and by appointment.



The View from Midtown in the 1930s

## Introduction and Objectives of the Course

What is history? What do historians do? At a basic level, we reconstruct the past. But the craft of history is much more complex than a simple retelling of events that occurred decades or even centuries ago. Good historians must gather evidence, interrogate the sources that they've accumulated, and then synthesize them into an accessible narrative that instructs, informs, and sometimes entertains their audience. It is a difficult process that can take years of training. In this course, you'll get a basic introduction to the discipline.

Over the course of the semester we'll work on analyzing primary and secondary sources, recognizing historiographic trends, developing historical arguments backed by evidence, and planning an original research project. There will be essays, as with most history courses, but we'll also be doing a number of workshop activities that will give you firsthand experience with reading, debating, and constructing history. The content matter in this particular practicum will involve New York City, which will serve as a kind of "laboratory" for you to develop your skills as a historian. My hope is that these skills will serve your academic career at the University of Florida and in your professional career after graduation. Whether that happens is up to you and your commitment to this course and your fellow classmates.

## Format

This class meets from 10:40-11:30 on Tuesdays and from 10:40 to 12:25 on Thursdays in CBD 0210. We will blend both lectures and discussion. The lectures will introduce some of the methodological concepts involved in the study of history and we'll use New York City's rich and diverse story as our "laboratory" this semester. The lecture sessions will provide the content matter for many of the assigned essays and will constitute the intellectual "backbone" of the course. The second component of the course will be the discussion sections, in which we talk about the readings and digital assignments of the course.

## Attendance Policy and Expectations

Your active participation is critical for your success in this class. For this reason, prompt attendance at all sessions is mandatory. You may miss three sessions without any consequence to your grade. Each absence following that **will result in the reduction of your participation grade by a full level** (i.e. a B+ will become a B, a B will become a B-, and so on). Please note that arriving for class more than ten minutes late will be considered an absence.

I will provide you with details regarding the guidelines, expectations, and evaluation of this written work over the course of the semester. This is yet another reason why regular attendance in this course is not optional, but mandatory. Please be respectful to your fellow students by turning off all cell phones, arriving on time, and avoid texting or making excessive noise. You may use a computer or tablet to take notes, but any distracting web surfing, game playing, or other behavior will not be tolerated. Students who do not abide by these simple rules of courtesy will be asked to leave and will not receive credit for that day's attendance and participation.

Please do not hesitate to contact the instructor during the semester if you have any individual concerns or issues that need to be discussed. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drp/>). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

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, which you can find at the following address:

<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>

Students in this class are participating in the pilot evaluation of the new course evaluation system called GatorEvals. The new evaluation system is designed to be more informative to instructors in order to enhance teaching effectiveness is linked seamlessly to UF's CANVAS learning management system. Students can complete their evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via the web at: <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Please note your other classes this semester may be evaluated in the current GatorRater online evaluation system at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Thank you for serving as a partner in this important effort.

## Required Texts

There are a number of required texts for this course. Three of them are books, available for purchase at the UF Bookstore or online:

1. Jules R. Benjamin, *A Student's Guide to History* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2010). Anything after the 11<sup>th</sup> edition should be fine.
2. William L. Riordon, ed., *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall. A Series of Very Plain Talks on Very Practical Politics* (New York: Signet, 2015). (there are many editions of this book—any of them are fine)
3. Jonathan Mahler, *Ladies and Gentlemen, the Bronx is Burning: 1977, Baseball, Politics, and the Battle for Soul of a City* (New York: Picador, 2005).

There are other History Practicums offered this semester, so be sure that you purchase the textbook for Section 14643.

The other readings will be available online at UF's e-learning site, which you can access at:

<https://lss.at.ufl.edu/>

## Grades

Grade Proportion	Grade Scale	Grade Value
Class Participation: 10%	100-93=A	A=4.0
Brief Assignments: 40%	92-90=A-	A-=3.67
First Review Essay 10%	89-87=B+	B+=3.33
Second Review Essay 15%	86-82=B	B=3.00
Final Project 25%	82-80=B-	B-=2.67
	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

## Contacts and Confidentiality

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 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>

## **Schedule of Lectures/Discussions (Subject to Change)**

### **Part One: Collecting and Interpreting the Raw Ore of History**

#### **Week One: Introduction to the Course and Discipline**

20 August                      Expectations and Goals

22 August                      What is History?

Online: UF History Department Webpage: <https://history.ufl.edu/>

Readings: Benjamin, *A Student's Guide to History*, 1-16.

#### **Week Two: Taking History Classes**

27 August                      Dutch New York

29 August                      How to Succeed in History Classes

Readings: Benjamin, *A Student's Guide to History*, 17-66.

Online: "The Dutch Among the Natives," Exhibit by the New Netherland Institute:  
<https://www.newnetherlandinstitute.org/history-and-heritage/digital-exhibitions/the-dutch-among-the-natives-american-indian-dutch-relations-1609-1664/>

Assignment: Lecture Notes

#### **Week Three: How to Reconstruct the Past**

3 September                      A Society with Slaves or a Slave Society?

5 September                      Reconstructing Conspiracies

Readings: "'The Outcasts of the Nations of the Earth,'" from Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the*

*Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000), pp. 174-210. This reading is on the e-learning website.

Online: Marissa Fessenden, "Database Sheds New Light on New York's Historic Ties to Slavery," Smithsonian.com, 7 February 2018: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/database-explores-details-new-york-states-history-slavery-180968060/>

Assignment: Finding Arguments and Summarizing Secondary Sources

#### **Week Four: Using Evidence**

10 September            Wasting Shots? Alexander Hamilton's New York City

12 September            History vs. Memory

Readings: Joanne B. Freeman, "Will the Real Alexander Hamilton Please Stand Up?" and Nancy Isenberg, "'Make 'em Laugh': Why History Cannot Be Reduced to Song and Dance," in *The Journal of the Early Republic* 37 (2017): 255-262; 295-303. This reading is on the e-learning website.

Online: "The Ham Channel" at the Hamilton Website: <https://hamiltonmusical.com/new-york/>

Assignment: Historical Memory—Friend or Foe?

#### **Week Five: Reading with Purpose**

17 September            The Rise of the Empire City

19 September            Sources and History

Readings: "The Landscape of Municipal Food Access," from Gergely Baics, *Feeding Gotham: The Political Economy and Geography of Food in New York, 1790-1860* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), 57-93. On the e-learning website.

Online: New York Heritage Digital Collections: <https://nyheritage.org/>

Assignment: Citation

#### **Week Six: Interrogating Your Sources**

24 September            Culture Wars in the Bowery

26 September            Eyewitness to History

Readings: *New York Herald*, 12 May 1849; *Home Journal*, 12 May 1849; Excerpts from Philip Hone Diary; Images of the Bowery B'Hoys and G'Hals (on the e-learning website); Benjamin, A Student's Guide to History, 67-86.

Online: "The Ever-Changing Bowery": <https://ny.curbed.com/2017/10/4/16413696/bowery-nyc-history-lower-east-side>

Assignment: Primary Source Analysis

### **Week Seven: Digital History**

1 October                      Sharps and Hayseeds

3 October                      Digital Reconstructions

### **First Review Essay Due**

### **Week Eight : When Historians Disagree**

8 October                      The Civil War in New York City

10 October                     The Historiography of the Draft Riots

Reading Assignment: "Draft Riot Readings" packets available on the e-learning website.

Online: Riots of New York: <https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/new-york-citys-history-of-resistance-in-one-riotous-map>

Assignment: Historiographic Analysis of the Draft Riots

### **Week Nine: The History Major**

15 October                      Gilded Age New York

17 October                      Doing History for a Living

Online: Ephemeral New York on the Gilded Age:  
<https://ephemeralnewyork.wordpress.com/tag/gilded-age-new-york/>

### **Part Two: The Many Ways to Make History**

### **Week Ten: Research Questions**

22 October                      A City of Immigrants

24 October                    Researching a Project on New York City

Readings: Benjamin, *A Student's Guide to History*, pp. 88-127; Begin *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall*

Online: The Tenement Museum (NYC): <https://www.tenement.org/>

Assignment: Three Research Questions

### **Week Eleven: The Fundamentals of Research**

29 October                    Tammany Hall and Politics in New York's Progressive Era

31 October                    Research Strategies

Readings: Finish *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall*; Benjamin, *A Student's Guide to History*, 140-185.

Online: Gracy Olmstead, "Boss Trump," in *The Week*, 4 May 2017:  
<https://theweek.com/articles/695758/boss-trump>

Assignment: Research Strategies

### **Week Twelve: Delving Deep into Context**

5 November                    The Depression

7 November                    King Kong, Tammany Hall, and Little Mayors: The Importance of Context

Readings: Suzanne Wasserman, "'Our Alien Neighbors': Coping with the Depression on the Lower East Side," *American Jewish History* 88 (June 2000): 209-233.

Online: Laurie Gwen Shapiro, "The Little Mayors of the Lower East Side," *Lapham's Quarterly*, 1 August 2018: <https://www.laphamsquarterly.org/roundtable/little-mayors-lower-east-side>

Assignment: Brief Paragraph

### **Week Thirteen: History as the Humanities**

12 November                    The Center of the World?

14 November                    NYC's Golden Age

**Second Review Essay Due**

**Week Fourteen: Popular History**

19 November            The End of the City?

21 November            NYC as Dystopia

Reading: Begin *Ladies and Gentlemen, the Bronx is Burning*

Online: Blackout! [https://gothamist.com/2017/07/12/blackout\\_1977\\_revisited.php](https://gothamist.com/2017/07/12/blackout_1977_revisited.php)

**Week Fifteen: Your Research**

26 November            Popular History

Reading: Finish *Ladies and Gentlemen the Bronx is Burning*

Assignment: Brief Prospectus

28 November            Thanksgiving Break

**Week Sixteen: Memory and History**

3 December            The Renaissance and the Attack

Assignment: Brief Annotated Bibliography

**Final Project Due: Thursday, 12 December 2019, 5 p.m.**