HIS 102
Modern European History, 18th c. to the Present

Satisfies: GLO, SBS [DEC: F]

M/W, 4:25-5:20pm
(+ Recitations)

Instructor: Bonnie Soper

This course examines how Europe transitioned from the absolutist monarchies of the seventeenth century to the era of nation-states and world wars, ending with the fall of the Berlin Wall through discussion of major events and ideologies. These include the French Revolution and the Revolutions of 1848, industrialization, nationalism, colonialism and empire, the world wars, and the postwar welfare state. These will be interpreted through the lenses of gender, class, and ethnicity to better understand concepts such as “modernity” that shaped European culture and politics through the twentieth century.
This course surveys American history from the end of Reconstruction in 1877 through the end of the Trump presidency. Topics covered include the rise of Jim Crow; varied 19th and 20th century immigration flows and legislation; economic booms and depressions; World Wars I and II and the Cold War era; civil rights, peace, labor, feminist, and LGBTQ movements; heightened border militarization and restrictions; and the social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Crossing race, region, and class, this survey offers a multi-perspectival look at the enduring darkness and dreams held within the nation. Readings will be drawn from a textbook and supplementary historical documents and essays, amounting to roughly 75 pages of reading per week. Participation and writing in recitation section discussions, along with a final examination, serve as the basis for evaluation and final grade.
Ancient Rome
HIS 203

Satisfies: GLO [DEC: I]

Thematic Categories:
Arts, Ideas & Culture; Empires, Violence & Global Connections

Professor Eric Miller

Tu/Th 4:45pm-6:05

Rome developed from a humble city on the periphery of the civilized world to an empire which ruled Europe, North Africa and much of the Near East. This course will survey the political, sociological, and cultural development of Rome and the lands it controlled over the course centuries, from the first appearance of the city, through the development of the Republic, and following the transition from Republic to Empire. The impact of Rome on future history (up to our own day) will be discussed and highlighted throughout the course. Material evidence will be considered in conjunction with written documents. Diverse scholarly opinions regarding the historiography of Ancient Rome will also be analyzed. The class is in lecture format with active class discussions.
This course introduces students to the history of modern Latin America, from the early nineteenth century to the present. Our goal is to gain an understanding of some of the central historical themes that have shaped Latin American society and politics since achieving independence, thus leading students to acquire a basis for making sound observations and judgments about the political, economic, social, and cultural realities affecting Latin America today. The class will move chronologically as well as thematically, covering topics such as nationalism, political economy, U.S.-Latin American relations, revolutionary & counterrevolutionary struggle, and cultural practices. To do so we will approach the hemisphere comparatively, drawing similarities and differences between different nation-states and regions. Particular attention will be given to Argentina, Mexico, Cuba, and Guatemala, though other countries will also enter into our discussions. Course requirements include quizzes, midterm and an independent essay on any contemporary aspect of Latin America.
This course has two main purposes. One is to give you a broad perspective on the history of Medieval Europe from the eleventh through fifteenth centuries by reading selected primary sources in English translation. The second is to teach you how to analyze and contextualize narrative, non-narrative, and visual primary sources as we chart the major political, intellectual, social, religious, and economic developments in Europe during the Later Middle Ages. During the centuries between the first millennium and the beginning of the early modern period, Europe was repeatedly transformed in the political, social, and religious spheres, and the framework was laid for modern conceptions of the state, law, and family. Major topics to be covered include economic expansion, the revival of urbanism; the medieval Church; the Crusades; the relationships between secular and ecclesiastical power structures; the twelfth-century intellectual Renaissance; the rise of national monarchies, constructions of orthodoxy and heresy; the status of women, Jews, and workers; later medieval warfare, plague, and schism; and the beginnings of European exploration, conquest and colonization during the fifteenth century.
Europe Since 1945
HIS 251
Satisfies: GLO [DEC: I]

Thematic Categories:
Empires, Violence & Global Connections; Law, Politics & Social Justice

MWF 2:40-3:35
(Synchronous Online)

Professor Lawrence Frohman

This course will examine the history of Europe--both West and East--from the end of World War II to the present. The course will be organized around three big questions: How did stable social orders coalesce on both halves of the continent in the first postwar decades to resolve--if only temporarily--the conflicts that had shaped European history since the French revolution and that had torn it apart between 1914 and 1945? How did this synthesis come apart between the late 1960s and 1989? What were the consequences of these changes, and what forces have shaped the history of Eastern and Western Europe since the fall of communism? We will approach the topic by looking at the competing visions of modernity and citizenship that shaped the broad contours of the history of the period in East and West and use this analytic framework to approach the many problem complexes that together make up the fabric of European history during this period. In particular, we will look at such topics as the Cold War and Cold War culture; decolonization, Europe's changing role in the wider world, and the meaning of continental integration; consumerism, the affluent society and its discontents; the dilemmas of democratization, 1968, and terrorism; the crisis of Fordism; stagnation in the East and the collapse of communism; feminism, environmentalism, and the changing parameters of democracy; and immigration, the politics of identity, and the resurgence of nationalism since the 1990s.
This course examines the period when the United States became a Modern Nation during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and into the early years of the twentieth century. Railroad lines crisscrossed the nation, and large numbers of immigrants, from Eastern Europe and Mexico, arrived in the United States. Developments at home and abroad seemed to promise a new era of prosperity and progress. The mass manufacturing of automobiles and other products proved a boon to the economy and transformed patterns of travel, leisure, and consumption. In connection with these changes the subjects to be discussed include the uses of vast reserves of coal, timber, and water that helped fuel a growing industrial economy, and the rise of social reform movements to address these changing conditions. Requirements include attendance and participation as well as writing assignments. In addition, there will be a mid-term, a final, and a short paper.
The Early Republic
HIS 264

Satisfies: DIV, USA [DEC K, Skill 4]

Thematic Categories:
Arts, Ideas & Culture; Empires, Violence & Global Connections;
Health, Science & Environmental Change

Tu/Th 3:00-4:20pm

Professor Donna Rilling

This course introduces you to critical developments in the history of the United States from the American Revolution to approximately 1848. It looks at the principles on which the nation was based, how those ideals evolved over the subsequent decades, and how a variety of groups and individuals contributed to the shape that the new nation took. Our endpoint, 1848, marks the moment that many—people living then and historians looking back in time—deemed the nation mature. No longer was it a “new” or “young” or an “early” republic, on the one hand full of the possibilities of sweeping change, and on the other hand fraught with anxieties that change would go too far. The young nation had been anxious about its very survival as a republic: could a nation with a republican form of government beat the track record of the few short-lived republics known to history? By 1848, the mature nation, full of a sense of its rising importance among western countries, nonetheless wondered whether it would fracture over the issue of slavery. By the later period, the United States had been both tested and strained and, many contemporary Americans then believed, had developed myriad social, economic and political problems characteristic of a mature nation.
Global History and Geography
HIS 281

Satisfies: STAS [DEC H]

Thematic Categories:
Empires, Violence & Global Connections; Health, Science & Environmental Change

Tues/Thurs 3:00-4:20 pm

Professor Richard Tomczak

This course will be conducted on the basis of two, interrelated goals. On the one hand we hope to gain a firm and useful grasp of the physical features of the Earth and of its contemporary political organization. On the other hand, we aim to achieve fluency in the major events and themes of global history. This second task will start with a brief look at planetary history and the arrival of humans, then skip to the 16th century, when the two hemispheres were re-united, and proceed through to the end of the twentieth century. We will consider the theoretical and methodological problems presented in trying to view the past from a global perspective while at the same time acknowledging and pondering the undeniably global nature of our contemporary problems and sensibilities. Requirements: attendance and participation; periodic quizzes and exercises; a midterm and a final exam.
History of Latinos in the United States
HIS 283

Satisfies: DIV, SBS, USA [DEC: K & 4]

Thematic Categories:
Empires, Violence & Global Connections; Law, Politics & Social Justice

Tu/Th, 9:45am-11:05

Prof. Lori Flores

What is a “Latino”? What is the difference between words like “Hispanic,” “Latin American,” “Chicano,” “Boricua,” “Latinx” or “Latiné”? Though Latinos continue to be the fastest-growing population in the nation, they are not a recently arrived group, and are often misunderstood and stereotyped in American society. This lecture course traces Latinos’ deep social, political, and cultural history in the U.S. from the 1600s to the present. Communities to be examined include Spaniards, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Cubans, Central Americans, and South Americans. Key course topics include war and conquest; migrations of the past and present; race and citizenship; labor and political activism; gender and family; and contemporary border debates around immigration, drugs, and the environment. This course aims to show the uniqueness of the Latino/x experience while making them more central figures in American history. Assignments include reading responses, a midterm and final, and an oral history of a Latino/x person in one’s family, friend group, or community. Readings include academic books and articles as well as popular novels by Junot Diaz (The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao), Angie Cruz (Dominicana), Esmeralda Santiago (When I Was Puerto Rican), Erika L. Sánchez (I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter), and Javier Zamora (Solito: A [Salvadoran] Memoir).
During the nineteenth century, the word *culture*, which referred to the *nurture of* something, came to mean “a thing in itself.” Culture is something people make or do. It is moral, intellectual, creative activity. It is also a response to personal and social relationships and to political and economic developments. It is a mode of interpreting our common experience, and even changing it. This lecture (and recitation) course looks at popular entertainments – from waterfall jumping, blackface Shakespeare, and newspaper reading, to circuses, Christmas rituals, and spectator sports – to see how cultural forms and practices reflected and shaped American society between the Revolution and Reconstruction. Course requirements will include regular attendance and participation, weekly readings, a weekly quiz, two short essays, two in-class midterms, and a word-game.
Wealth and Inequality in Early America

HIS 288

Satisfies: DIV, SBS, USA

Thematic Categories:
Empires, Violence & Global Connections; Law, Politics & Social Justice

Tu Th, 1:15 p.m. -2:35 p.m.

Professor Donna Riling

Focuses on Americans as producers, sellers and consumers from the earliest years of European colonization through the mid 1800s. Working thematically and chronologically, we will examine such topics as: the American colonies in the context of global trade; the Atlantic slave trade; early American colonies, the roles they played for imperial powers, and the connections among the backgrounds, goals, values, and local conditions; trade between native Americans and European Americans and the ways in which trade affected both societies; Americans as consumers; the financial system and the counterfeit financial system; the emergence of a middle-class in the late-18th and 19th centuries; early industrialization; slave economies; Americans as workers; and risk, success, and failure in an increasingly industrial nation and the ramifications of failure for American identity and democracy.
HIS 301.01
Prisons, Policing, and Surveillance in U.S. History
Satisfies: ESI
T/Th, 11:30-12:50
Prof. Robert Chase

Course Description: In the wake of George Floyd’s murder at the hands of police officers in 2020, the nation spent a summer in protest that has awakened many to the deep racial disparities and violent abuses of the U.S. criminal justice system. This research seminar takes up the study of the U.S. criminal justice system and all its key components – policing, incarceration, and migrant detentions – through the lens of the current protest moment for Black Lives and against systematic racism as represented through police brutality, migrant detention, and mass incarceration. With 2.2 million people in prison and nearly 6.5 million people under the auspices of the criminal justice system (via probation or parole), the United States, which has only 5 percent of the world’s general population, now imprisons twenty-five percent of the world’s prison population. How did the United States come to have the world’s highest rate of incarceration and one so sharply racially disproportionate? This course traces the development of what some have termed the “New Jim Crow” and a “prison empire” by viewing American history through the lens of race, crime, punishment policing, and prisons.

As a History Department requirement, the chief purpose of 301 is to teach History majors how to read, think, write, and research as a professional historian would. As an introductory course to the historian’s craft, HIS 301 teaches students practical research skills—such as: how to use the library and discover primary sources; how to convey research through oral presentations; how to assess primary and secondary sources through critical historical analysis; how to write a persuasive historical narrative based on primary and secondary research. By its conclusion, you will have learned the historian’s research methods and practices as you write your own historical narrative in a final research paper.
Biographies—are one of the most popular forms of non-fiction. In this course, we’ll read and critically analyze the biographies of a diverse array of Americans. Some achieved fame, fortune, or notoriety in their own day; others are little known, especially if they were socially marginalized or were never public figures. In the hands of a skilled historian, however, any person’s life story can be illuminating, providing insights to their time and place, their concerns and values, as well as critical issues and events that shaped their everyday realities. For each book, we’ll discuss how effectively its author reconstructs the biographical subject’s experiences, situates them within a meaningful historical context, and interprets the impact of social, political, and economic changes on them (or, vice versa, how they contributed to those changes). Delving into primary and secondary sources, students will also research and write their own biographical profile of a person, past or present. As preparation for the His 401 Capstone Seminar, this course is designed to introduce History majors and minors to the variety of sources and methodologies used in the discipline and to help them further develop their research and writing skills. Requirements: attendance and class participation (including discussion and in-class activities); reading approximately 1 book per week; short writing assignments; and a final research paper (8-10 pages), involving several stages of research, writing, and revision.
How globalized was the world before the modern period? What connected famous explorers like Marco Polo, Ibn Battuta, and Christopher Columbus to people who traveled the globe as part of their daily lives as merchants, diplomats, and sailors? Travel was a central feature of the medieval world and one of the primary factors that contributed to cultural contact, communication, exchange, and the diffusion of ideas between Europe, Africa and Asia in the pre-modern era. This course will explore the interconnected histories of the medieval world, focusing primarily on the Mediterranean world—Latin Christendom, Byzantium and the Islamic world—between roughly 500 and 1700. It will also devote attention to travel and travelers in the Atlantic world (including West Africa), the Indian Ocean, Central Asia, and China during the same period. Whether the motivation was exploration, piety, knowledge, survival, or profit, the act of travel involved the travelers in larger processes of interaction and exchange between cultures. We will examine the lives and accounts of pilgrims, merchants, scholars, slaves, and soldiers to investigate what motivated people to travel to, from, or within regions throughout the medieval world, and how they portrayed their experiences. With an emphasis on primary sources and class discussion, we will explore the writings of a diverse group of travelers and situate them within their larger social, cultural, and political contexts, while at the same time coming to terms with their reasons for travel and their particular worldview.
Nazi Empire

HIS 315

Satisfies: GLO, SBS+

Thematic Categories:
Arts, Ideas & Culture; Empires, Violence & Global Connections

Prof. Young-Sun Hong

M/W, 2:40-4:00pm

The purpose of this course is to understand state-organized violence and racist terrorism of the Nazi empire. In this course students are also expected to learn the role of war in the Nazi plans for realizing their racial utopia and to understand a more complex understanding of human agency in mass violence. This presumes that students have already taken a survey of modern European history and mastered the basic elements of historical analysis.
This course will provide an introduction to the major movements in philosophy, social theory, and the arts in Europe in the 19th century. It will involve the close reading of difficult texts in order to understand both the theoretical issues with which the authors were grappling and the ways in which they sought to make sense of the political, social and cultural changes that were transforming European society. The precise content and themes of the course have yet to be determined. Tentatively, there will be two papers, a midterm, and a final. However, specific course requirements are subject to change.
Civil Rights and Black Power
HIS 325
Satisfies: SBS+
Thematic Categories:
Empires, Violence & Global Connections; Law, Politics & Social Justice;
Race, Religion, Gender & Sexualities

T/Th, 4:45-6:05pm
Professor Robert Chase

The course considers how the “long civil rights movement” and century-long struggles for Black Power were intertwined movements contained within the African American freedom struggle, rather than conventional narratives that conceive them as being opposed to one another. The course will therefore span the whole of the twentieth century, beginning with the founding of the United Negro Improvement Association and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and it will conclude with the turn from civil rights to economic justice, Black political empowerment, and campaigns against mass incarceration and police brutality. While historical figures like Martin Luther King and Malcolm X will receive attention, we will also encounter the less well known organizers on the ground who made a civil rights revolution possible. The course will introduce students to the latest scholarship on the Civil Right Movement and Black Power, particularly recent articles and monographs that move past the traditional celebrative narrative and examine instead how the civil rights revolution remains an ongoing struggle. Readings and discussion topics include: Garveyism; integration and legal campaigns; nonviolent philosophies and communitarian politics; militant civil disobedience and uncomfortable protest; local and grass-roots campaigns in the South and the North; women, gender, and sexuality; armed self-defense; urban uprisings; state violence and reprisal; police and incarceration; education and cultural identity; and civil rights politics and the presidency.
This course will explore the role and status of women in ancient, medieval, and early modern Europe. We will read both modern scholarship and primary sources, i.e. original documents that give us clues about women's lives, such as laws, religious texts, writings by men about women, and some of the relatively rare but extremely illuminating documents written by women themselves. Examples of topics we will discuss include what is (and isn't!) known about such issues as women and goddess-worship in prehistory; Greek and Roman matrons' lives; Christian traditions about women; the lives of nuns, queens/noblewomen, peasant women, and city women in medieval Europe; the witch-hunts of early modern Europe; and early modern women's struggles for participation in intellectual life. By learning about individual women's lives, as well as the broader social contexts within which women lived, we will aim to increase our understanding not only of these particular periods in history but of sex and gender more broadly, in the many ways in which they have come to shape our world. Course requirements will include participation, two brief papers, a midterm, and a final exam.
Postwar Japan

HIS/AAS 353

Satisfies: GLO, SBS [DEC: J]

Thematic Categories:
Arts, Ideas & Culture; Empires, Violence & Global Connections;
Race, Religion, Gender & Sexualities

Tu/Th, 8-9:20am

Professor Janis Mimura

Japan’s defeat in World War II, the atomic bomb, and the American Occupation have been defining moments in the formation of the country’s postwar identity and sense of place in the world. Perhaps more than any other nation, Japan has yet to completely shed its “postwar” conscience. After considering Japan’s wartime experience, we will inquire into its complex legacy and the political, economic, social, and cultural changes that took place in the transwar and postwar periods. What have been the key challenges, dilemmas, and choices made in Japan’s reconstruction and reintegration into the global order? How did ordinary Japanese experience these changes? Using a wide array of secondary and primary sources, such as government documents, novels, letters, and films, this course will explore the many facets of Japan’s postwar experience.
Oceans Past:
World History from a Maritime Perspective

HIS 364

Satisfies: STAS [DEC: K]

Thematic Categories:
Empires, Violence & Global Connections; Health, Science & Environmental Change

T/Th, 9:45-11:05am

Prof. Jennifer Anderson

Although approximately 70% of Earth’s surface is covered by water, this vast expanse is often regarded as an unfathomable space with no history. Despite intensive scientific investigation, there is still much about these submerged realms that remains mysterious. Yet for thousands of years, humans have negotiated the oceans' currents, plumbed their silent depths, harvested their natural bounty, and been humbled by their waves’ awesome force. In many ways, the modern world was profoundly shaped—and continues to be shaped—by human engagements with the oceans. In this course, we’ll explore the historical significance of oceans (and adjacent coastal zones) from social, economic, and environmental perspectives. We’ll also learn about the diversity of people's maritime experiences from the pre-modern period to today. Some of the subjects that we’ll investigate include: ocean exploration from the Atlantic to the Pacific; development of maritime technologies, navigation, and mapping; social history of sailors, pirates, fishermen, whalers, pirates (male and female), and other seafarers; and the development of oceanography and marine ecology. This interdisciplinary course incorporates videos, music, literature, visual and material culture. Requirements: attendance; class participation (including discussion and in-class activities); reading approximately 4 chapters/articles per week; 3 short writing assignments; and a final research project (8-10 pages), completed in stages during the semester.
This course examines the development of American society and culture from the late 19th century to the beginning of World War II. The broader themes examined in this course include the impact of industrialization, urbanization, immigration, and imperialism, as well as class, gender, and race relations. Additional emphasis will also be on political culture, consumerism, and reform in a broader sense. The weekly reading load will average at about 100-150 pages. Attendance and participation are mandatory. Assessments include quizzes, a midterm, and a final exam.
Global Commodity Histories, 1500-2000

HIS 381

Satisfies: DIV, GLO, SBS+ [DEC: J]

Thematic Categories:
Empires, Violence & Global Connections; Health, Science & Environmental Change

MW, 2:40-4pm

Professor Paul Gootenberg

The Americas have been a crucial part of globalization since 1500. This theme survey uses an exciting new historical literature—about the history of world commodities—to learn about the connections and contributions of the Americas to the world economy and world culture. Students will encounter such goods as cacao (chocolate), sugar, silver, cochineal (a dye), rice, coffee, guano (a fertilizer), rubber, bananas, and cocaine, and the unique ways their hidden histories and worldly trading and consumer cultures shed light on the history of the Americas and global consumption. Students read and discuss three class books and write brief book essays on the subject.
Why do we still care about Jane Austen? This lecture, reading, film and discussion course will answer that question by focusing, first, on the social and political contexts and legacies of Jane Austen’s famous novels, as well as details of her own life, in the period of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (1793 to 1820). Topics include class and sociability; the functions of the country house; gender and family relations; the pleasures and dangers of urban culture; slavery and abolition in Austen’s novels and in the empire, and the impacts of imperial wars and radical politics on social and political relations of the day. Then we turn to the remarkable popularity of Austen in past and contemporary global cultures, where Austen novels were appropriated by Victorian spiritualists and twenty-first century digital reading groups, filmmakers (both American and South Asian), and national scholarly associations. What accounts for the popularity of these novels over time and culture? We can test out some answers.
Modern Mexico

HIS 389

Satisfies: DIV, SBS+ [DEC: J]

Thematic Categories:
Empires, Violence & Global Connections; Law, Politics & Social Justice

M, W. 4:25-5:45pm

Professor Paul Gootenberg

Mexico has a dramatic history that sharply distinguishes its political and cultural heritage from the shadow of its northern neighbor. As such, the purpose of this course is two-fold. First, we learn about the major events that shaped Mexico's modern history: its turbulent but conservative independence (1810-1821); the 19th-century breakdown into militarist chaos (1821-1876); the modernizing Porfirián dictatorship (1876-1910); the great Mexican Revolution (1910-20s); the country's unique 20th-century one-party PRI state and its post-68 political, social, and economic crises (1929-2000); and Mexico's ongoing 21st-century struggles for democracy and social progress in the face of challenges like drug trafficking, violence, inequalities, and a now unstable partner to the north. Second, we delve deeper to analyze Mexico’s history. Course books provide a social analysis of Mexico's long-term agrarian, political, and cultural conflicts, which lead into discussions of Mexico’s contemporary dilemmas. Students closely read and write about three historical monographs.
From Franklin Delano Roosevelt to Shark Tank. This course examines the evolution of capitalism—an economic system whose defining feature is its unrelenting quest for competitive profit. Capitalism is by far the world’s dominant ideology, but how much do we understand about the different ideologies that have shaped capitalism through its many phases? This course will explore the modern history of capitalism in four phases: (1) Laissez-faire capitalism (mid-19th century-1930s); (2) Welfare state capitalism (New Deal and post-WWII era); (3) Neoliberalism (1970s-2007/09); (4) The fourth phase, which some have dubbed Precarity capitalism, is now underway.
Cross-Cultural Encounters: Europe & the World, 1400-1800

HIS 401.01

Satisfies: EXP+, SPK, WRTD

Mondays, 1-3:50pm

Prof. Alix Cooper

This course will explore the ways in which, during the early modern period, European cultures came into contact with non-European ones, changing the course of history in the process. Examining a series of case studies, from the discovery and conquest of the Americas, through interactions between Christians, Muslims, and Jews on the European continent itself, all the way through Enlightenment Europe's contacts with Asia and ultimately the violent era of the French and American Revolutions, which swept away much of the old order of both Old World and New, the course will investigate the many different forms cross-cultural encounters can take and have historically taken. During this period, new avenues for contact between peoples were opened up; yet hopes were also shattered by tragedy. The course will study the moral dilemmas early modern people faced as their world became a global one, and as they came to struggle with issues of "civilization" and "barbarism", slavery and freedom, and "nature" and human rights. Course requirements will include doing the readings (approx. 60-80 pages per week), regular attendance and participation in discussion of the readings, carrying out occasional in-class writings in class, and work on a series of assignments (like a preliminary bibliography) designed to lead up to the writing of an 8-10 page research paper based on primary sources.
Childhood is assumed to be a phase of life that people pass through, with some qualities in common—innocence, protection, youth, play, experimentation, and preparation for adulthood. Yet history shows us that childhood is constructed and experienced very differently for people depending on geography, race, socioeconomic status, gender, sexuality, able-bodiedness, global conflict, and other circumstances. This senior seminar pairs classic and innovative works of history alongside narratives of childhood in other disciplines (memoirs, psychology, law, medicine) to explore the following questions. Does “childhood” today mean something totally different from childhood in the past? Is childhood “disappearing”? Who gets to experience a childhood, and for how long? How do we research and write about children in history, and give them space and voice as historical agents instead of passive receivers of history? Topics include children, slavery, and labor; boarding schools and youth education; race and innocence; violence, war, and kidnapping; gender, sexuality, and pop culture; delinquency and criminality; and unaccompanied or DREAMer migration. As this is a capstone seminar, high verbal participation is expected in weekly discussion. Shorter writing assignments will culminate in a final original research paper (with primary and secondary source work) on an episode in the history of childhood in the United States, another part of the world, or between places/countries. In a “mini-conference” at the end of the semester, each student will share a 10-minute presentation about their research.
How people dance can tell you a lot about their society. But because dance is a physical activity, its meaning is difficult to comprehend unless you dance the dances. Similarly, it is impossible to understand the meaning of dance unless you know in what historical context it was performed. In this colloquium students read, write, and dance through 200 years of American history. But this is not a history of dance class. It presents dance as an embodiment of the economic, social, cultural and political world in which people danced their dances. It is a seminar on American history that uses the experience of dancing to deepen our understanding the past.