HIS 101
Ancient Mesopotamia to Early Modern Europe

Satisfies: GLO, SBS

LEC: Tu/Th 3:30 – 4:25 PM
R01, F 11:00-11:55
R02,
R03,

Professor Alix Cooper

In this course we shall explore the politics, society, art, and culture of “the West” from the ancient world to 1789. This course is intended to 1) survey the historical and cultural influences that have shaped European (and, by extension, our own) society; 2) provide practice and training in critical reading of both primary and secondary historical sources; and 3) improve your understanding of the basic elements of historical inquiry: formulating questions, gathering, selecting, and interpreting evidence, organizing the results into a coherent idea, and effectively communicating the results to others. Monday and Wednesday lectures will introduce the basic historical narrative and historians’ interpretations of it: weekly mandatory recitations (discussion sections) will be devoted to reading, interpreting, and arguing about the primary sources themselves. Requirements consist of about 40 pages of reading per week, several short papers, participation in recitations, a midterm exam, and a cumulative final exam.
HIS 103
American History to 1877

Satisfies: DIV, SBS, USA

LEC: M/W 2:00 – 2:55 PM
REC 1 – 10: varies, please check SOLAR

Professor Donna Rilling

A survey of American history from the Age of Discovery to the end of Reconstruction. Topics include the transplantation of European culture to America, the rise of American nationalism, the democratization of American society, the institution of slavery, and the emergence of an industrial society.
The civilization that developed in Greece over the course of the first millennium BCE transformed the philosophical, political, and cultural foundations of the world of its time in ways which have had enormous influence on subsequent societies, particularly our own. Democracy, Philosophy and Drama, are just a few of the innovations that began in Ancient Greece. This course presents an overview of the ancient Greek world, beginning with the first evidence for the Greek language and the precursor civilizations of the Bronze Age Aegean, and ending with the Hellenic states’ loss of independence to Roman imperialism. While chronology and political history provide the general organizational framework for the course, there will be frequent diversions into social and intellectual topics. But the geographical focus is on a much larger area than what is included within the frontiers of modern Greece, as ancient Greek colonization embraced broad areas of Asia and the Mediterranean. Ultimately, Greek history is the basis of the vocabulary of history itself. The material will be conveyed both through class lectures and discussions, with a mid-term, final exam, and two research papers.
HIS/JDS 225  
Jewish History: From Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages  

Satisfies: GLO, SBS

Thematic Categories: “Arts, Ideas & Culture,”  
“Race, Religion, Gender & Sexualities”

Tu/Th, 11:00 – 11:55 AM

Professor Eric Miller

The Jews of late antiquity provide an excellent case study of a community seeking to preserve its existence and its distinctive ways of life in times of rapid and bewildering change. This course will deal with the life and history of the Jewish people, and the development of the Jewish religion, from Antiquity to just before the rise of Islam. We shall begin with the biblical heritage of ancient Israel and follow the continuing evolution of that heritage with special focus on the Babylonian exile, Persian rule, and the place of the Jews in the turbulent world of the Greeks and the Romans. The course will end with the “triumph” of Christianity on the "outside" of Jewish life and the consolidation of rabbinic leadership on the "inside." We will also spend considerable time in detailed study of important primary documents. Classes are based on lectures with discussion of readings, a mid-term, final exam, and two research papers.
Popular perceptions and representations of Islam and Muslims are often founded on ignorance and outright prejudice. Fundamental to these understandings are narrow and politicized notions of history, frequently accepted uncritically. This course seeks first to introduce analytical approaches crucial to developing nuanced understandings of historical and contemporary depictions of Islam and Muslims. The course then provides a broad outline of the history of Islamic civilization from Iberia and North Africa to South and Southeast Asia, and from the Mediterranean to Sub-Saharan Africa, and a basic understanding of key religious and secular institutions that characterize Muslim societies. The course is broadly chronological, and examines key topics in detail, including the life of the Prophet, conversion and the global spread of Islam, colonialism and imperialism, radical militant and progressive Islamist politics, media representations, and Muslims in the West. The course is not comprehensive but seeks to provide a basic understanding of the history of Islam and the Muslim world from Muhammad to the present, and a solid empirical and methodological foundation for further inquiry. Assessment is based on in-class performance, multiple analytical essay assignments, and a map quiz, all in English.
HIS 235
The Heirs of Rome: The Early Medieval World, 300-1000

Satisfies: GLO

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

M/W, 2:00 – 3:20 PM

Professor Sara Lipton

This course introduces students to the political, social, religious and intellectual history of early medieval Europe, as well as to the techniques of critical source analysis. Major topics to be covered include the fall of the Roman Empire in the West, the Christianization of Europe, the preservation and transformation of classical culture, Viking invasions and the disasters of the ninth century, commercial disintegration and recovery, and early medieval kingship and warrior culture. Particular attention will be paid to the interactions of material conditions and human society (we will also meet at least one elephant!). Requirements include 1) class participation (this consists of completing the readings prior to the relevant lecture, contributing to discussions, and taking occasional reading quizzes; 2) two brief writing assignments of about 2-3 pages each; 3) one in-class midterm exam; and 4) cumulative final exam.
The years between the outbreak of World War I and the end of World War II were a period of unprecedented ideological polarization, economic crisis, political revolution, ethnic violence, and expanding state power. The significance of the changes wrought during these years rivals that of the French and Industrial Revolutions in determining the shape of modern European society. The class will begin in the 1890s by examining the forces that were undermining both the bourgeois social order and the liberal political system. However, it was World War I that marked the definitive end of the 19th century. The Bolshevik Revolution, the collapse of the four old European empires, the expanding appeal of radical, conservative nationalism, the intensification of ethnic strife, and the willingness to use the greatly expanded power of the state to solve the problems of nation-making gave rise to a virtual civil war, which in every country pitted communism and radical right nationalism against both each other and the steadily shrinking bourgeois middle. However, the only way for states to solve these conflicts, transform their societies into more modern, powerful polities, and revise the Versailles settlement was to make war against both their own populations and the European order itself. This violence reached its zenith with Stalin’s purges, the Nazi plan for the racial restructuring of European society, and the bitter civil wars that were fought in every European country as an integral part of the great wartime struggle against Nazi Germany.
HIS 261
Change & Reform in the United States, 1877-1919

Satisfies: USA, SBS, DIV

Thematic Categories: “Arts, Ideas & Culture,”
“Law, Politics & Social Justice,” “Race, Religion, Gender & Sexualities”

M/W, 3:30 – 4:50 PM

Professor Mark Chambers

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.
In this course we will explore, analyze, and interrogate the ways disease, and responses to it, have both reflected and determined the course of American history from the late 19th C. to the present. From the “Age of Epidemics” to the revolution in genetics, to the AIDS epidemic, and the current COVID-19 pandemic, we will examine how our understanding of disease changed over time, how different diseases were seen and approached differently (hereditary, communicable) and how those changes related (or contradicted) the science and why. We will explore the public communication of science and the growth of government concern and involvement in all aspects of public health and how these programs were shaped in relation to questions of citizenship, race, class, and gender. In this course we will consult a variety of primary and secondary sources, including books, journal, news, and magazine articles, images, as well as documentary films.
Biographies—books that focus on the lives of real people, past and present—are among the most popular forms of non-fiction today. In this class, we’ll read the biographies of a diverse array of Americans. Some achieved fame, fortune, or notoriety; others were more ordinary or socially marginalized and never became public figures. Yet in the hands of a skilled historian, as this course demonstrates, anyone’s story can be illuminating, providing insights into the times and places where they lived, their concerns and values, and the critical issues and events that shaped their everyday realities. Students will learn about the origins and development of biographical writing as a genre. Delving into primary and secondary sources, they will then research and write their own biographical profile of a person. As preparation for the History Senior Seminar (His 401), this course is designed to introduce majors and minors to the fundamentals of History as an academic discipline—including analyzing and critiquing a wide variety of sources, developing convincing arguments and evidence-based interpretations, and honing their written and oral communication skills.
HIS 301.02
How Did Science Become Western?

Satisfies: ESI
Tu/Th, 2:00 – 3:20 PM
Professor Tamara Fernando

The story of the “history of science” used to be told as a deeply Western, Euro-centric narrative, stretching from Galileo through to Newton, culminating in the present moment of quantum computing and genetic technology. In this class we will ask “when did science become Western?” Students will be introduced to the field of the history of science but focused on the global and non-West. We will ask, instead, what science looks like from the perspective of seventeenth-century Istanbul, nineteenth-century Bombay, or twentieth-century Iran. Answering this question will help us to fine tune core skills in the craft of history, including how to read critically, engage with something called “historiography,” and to write clear, analytic, argumentative essays.
This course offers an introduction to historical research and writing for history majors. We will practice “thinking like historians” and mastering its core competencies. As our object of practice, we will examine the historical aspects of various types of mineral mining and practices. Since the time of John Smith until today, the Americas have been perceived as one of the earth’s greatest storehouses of industrial metals, coal, and minerals. To take one example from today, the EV battery depends on five critical minerals: lithium, cobalt, manganese, nickel, and graphite. Mining history in the Americas extends back into pre-Columbian times, and we will explore the many changes in the last 150 years or so with the advance of mechanized techniques to extract and refine minerals for global demand. Throughout this period, mining and refining have created negative environmental and health impacts, from worker deaths to polluted air and water. Although readings focus primarily on the U.S., students are welcome to explore other time periods and countries. We will tailor the course to your individual interests.
HIS 307
Silk Roads and Spice Routes

Satisfies: GLO, DIV, and SBS+

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

Tu/Th, 9:30 – 10:50 AM

Professor Mohamad Ballan

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.
This course will provide an introduction to German history in the first half of the 20th century: World War I, the impact of total war and revolution, the problematic modernity of the Weimar Republic, the rise of National Socialism, the path to World War II, the meaning of the Holocaust, and the division of the country after 1945. We will also examine the key historiographical debates over the course of German history. Course requirements will include numerous quizzes, a short critical paper, midterm and final exam.
HIS 314
Indigenous-Settler Relations in the United States

Satisfies: SBS+, CER, DIV


M/W, 9:30 – 10:50 AM

Professor Paul Kelton

This course surveys the relations that the first peoples—Indigenous Peoples—to inhabit the territory that becomes the United States had with European and Euro-American colonizers. It investigates instances of violence, exploitation, removal, and assimilation through the concepts of genocide, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. Students will critically explore the ethical decisions that settlers made that impacted Indigenous Peoples, the political choices that settlers and their governments (both state and federal) made to foster the expansion of the United States, legal actions that Indigenous Peoples initiated and still continue to take to preserve their sovereignty, and the movement for social justice that Indigenous Peoples and their allies are currently undertaking.
HIS 315  
Nazi Empire  

Satisfies: GLO, SBS+  

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

M/W, 3:30 – 4:50 PM  

Prof. Young-Sun Hong  

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.
HIS 318
Modern European Intellectual History

Satisfies: SBS+

Thematic Categories: "Arts, Ideas & Culture,"
"Law, Politics & Social Justice," "Race, Religion, Gender & Sexualities"

M/W/F, 2:00 – 2:55 PM

Professor Lawrence Frohman

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.
History 325
Civil Rights and Black Power

Satisfies: SBS+
Thematic Categories: "Empires, Violence & Global Connections," "Law, Politics & Social Justice," "Race, Religion, Gender & Sexuality"

M/W, 5:00 – 6:20 PM

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 anti-police 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.
HIS 328
History of New York City: From Mannahatta to the Gilded Age

Satisfies: SBS+

Tu/Th, 11:00 AM – 12:20 PM

Professor Jennifer Anderson

In this course, students will explore how the small island of Mannahatta, long an integral part of the Lenape people’s ancestral homeland, was transformed into one of the most important and cosmopolitan urban centers in the world. In the semester’s first half, we’ll learn about the island’s unique ecology and Indigenous inhabitants; the arrival of Dutch settlers and their founding of New Amsterdam; the English takeover of the city and its 18th-century development into a leading seaport—with an increasingly diverse population of Europeans and enslaved Africans—culminating with the British occupation during the American Revolution. In the semester’s second half, we’ll examine New York City’s astonishing growth—from the “new nation” era of the 1810s to the “Gilded Age” of the 1890s—into a vibrant global hub of immigration, culture, commerce, communications, and capitalism. For each period, we’ll consider how the city both mirrored and shaped national political, economic, social, and cultural trends.
HIS 340
Beastly Encounters:
Animal History Across Asia in the Long Nineteenth Century

Satisfies: GLO, SBS+

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

Tu/Th, 9:30 – 10:50 AM

Professor Tamara Fernando

Did you know that the most vital workers in British Burma’s lucrative teak industry were elephants? Or that the most populous colonizers of Australia were sheep, first introduced in 1797? Is history solely the purview of humans and human activity? Can we include animals in our historical narratives, and if so, how? We are still coming to terms with how the “Age of Empire” has dramatically changed our view of the nonhuman, especially animals. Ranging across time and space, we will meet animals, both real and imagined, including white ants in India, elephants in Myanmar and tigers in Malaya. We will ask how the burgeoning field of animal studies helps us to approach older concerns of power, race, capitalism, and environment in the context of empire. As debates about climate, race, species, and our place in an increasingly interconnected world grow more urgent, this course invites you to leave behind the comfortable anthropocentric view of world history.
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. By studying the history of American criminality and ideas concerning punishment and policing, students will consider two distinct periods of prison reform: 1) the Progressive era of “scientific treatment” and the “new penology”; 2) the post-World War II focus on the rehabilitative and therapeutic ideal. The course will also focus on periods of reaction, revolt, and retrenchment and how the American prison has shaped racial formation, particularly the development of convict labor in the New South; the prison uprisings of the 1920s, 1950s, and 1970s; the rhetoric of “law and order” America and the “war on drugs” in the post-Civil Rights era; and the massive prison building project of our own time.
This course explores the history of the United States from Roosevelt (TR) to Roosevelt (FDR) to analyze how three big trends --the second industrial revolution, the rise of the city, and new kinds of immigration– turned the U.S. into a more modern, diverse, and divided nation. We will follow Americans on their journey to a different way of life between the 1890s and the 1940s with the following questions in mind: how did they adapt nineteenth century traditions of political democracy and social equality to a new twentieth century corporation-dominated economy? How did a traditionally white Anglo-Saxon Protestant nation respond to the massive influx of not-WASP immigrants from abroad and Black migrants from the South? How did the rise of a new kind of consumer-oriented culture, including new forms of mass media, advertising, and popular entertainment (vaudeville, movies, and radio) reshape American culture? How did the expected roles of men and women change because of all of the above? By exploring these themes, this course will help you understand the foundations of contemporary American politics and popular culture. Required books include Steven Diner, *A Very Different Age* and Lynn Dumenil, *The Modern Temper: American Culture & Society in the 1920s*. Other required readings will be available via electronic reserve on Brightspace. There will be a take-home midterm, a 7-10 page paper, and a final exam.
This course explores the intertwined relationship between “rebels and revolutionaries” embodied in the figure of Ernesto “Che” Guevara in Latin America during the Global 1960s. With his long hair, irreverence toward authority, and militancy, Guevara became a symbol of countercultural rebellion as well as social revolution. Through a close reading of primary sources, the class will focus on different concepts of “rebellion,” “liberation,” and “revolution,” set against the backdrop of guerrilla insurgency, military repression, student protest, and U.S. interventionism. Students will write short, critical analyses of primary documents and produce a longer essay that draws upon course materials.
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.
HIS 390
Medieval Spain

Satisfies: SBS+

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

Tu/Th, 12:30 – 1:50 PM

Professor Mohamad Ballan

Medieval Spain was home to diverse peoples and cultures who established prosperous communities and kingdoms which shaped its history and culture between 500 and 1500. While being marked by extraordinary linguistic, ethnic and religious diversity, medieval Spain was also characterized by a constant struggle between Muslim and Christian kingdoms for territorial and political hegemony. This course explores these two historical processes, providing insight into the various historical factors and developments that shaped the delicate coexistence between Jews, Christians and Muslims in Spain, while grappling with the important role played by violence, religious persecution, and expulsion in the unravelling of this multicultural society. Through a critical engagement with scholarly debates and a close reading of primary sources (in English translation) from Spain between roughly 500 and 1500, this course examines the major political, cultural, intellectual and social transformations across medieval Spain. Major themes to be covered include borderlands and frontiers; social and political institutions; women and gender; literary and cultural efflorescence; networks of learning; cross-cultural contact; kingship and sovereignty; diplomacy and trade; military organization and warrior culture; conversion and acculturation; military organization; diplomacy and trade; intellectual culture and the transmission of knowledge; toleration and persecution; history and memory.