

**HIST 585-004: Special Topics in History:**  
(cross-listed in ANT 585-002)

Topic: Passing in America

| Instructor | Day(s) | Time(s)        | Maximum Enrollment |
|------------|--------|----------------|--------------------|
| Prude      | TU     | 4:15 – 7:15 pm | 12                 |

**Semester Description:**

What does it mean for people to transform themselves in a society devoted to self-improvement, on the one hand, and continuing authenticity, on the other? To reinvention and yet also to sincerity? When is acquiring a new identity permissible and commendable? When is it dangerous and subversive? Who decides? Under the broad flag of “Passing,” this seminar will explore such questions as they unfolded across American history from colonial times to the present and amidst transitions across boundaries of class, race, ethnicity, and gender. Materials for the course will include primary and secondary sources, fiction and non-fiction, texts, images, and film.

**Required Textbooks, Articles, and Resources:**

1. B. Franklin, Autobiography
2. Neil Harris, Humbug
3. H. Melville, The Confidence Man
4. K. Haltunnen, Confidence Men and Painted Women
5. H. Alger, Jr. Ragged Dick
6. Dale Cockrell, Demons of Disorder: Early Blackface Minstrels and Their World
7. Phelps, Silent Partner
8. N. Enstad, Ladies of Labor
9. Chauncy, Gay New York
10. N. Larsen, Passing
11. The Jazz Singer (movie)
12. B. Schulberg, What Makes Sammy Run?
13. Paris is Burning (movie)

Fall 2015

14. B. Ehrenreich, Nickel and Dimed

**Grading:**

Assessments will be based on robust and thoughtful participation in weekly class sessions and on two written assignments (approximately ten pages each).