

Spring 2015

**HIST 585-000: Special Topics in History:**

Topic: American Cultural History

Instructor	Day(s)	Time(s)	Maximum Enrollment
Goldstein	W	12:00 – 3:00 pm	12

**Semester Description:**

This course will explore the major themes in the field of U.S. cultural history, including both foundational texts and more recent works of influence. In surveying the field, it will introduce students to various interpretive theories—many of which originate outside the discipline of history—that are now regularly employed in the analysis of historical texts and discourses. Emphasis will be placed on using cultural approaches to understand relationships between various social groups in the U.S. from the colonial era to the present, with particular attention to how racial, ethnic, gender, and class identities have informed and have been informed by these relationships. Print culture, mass or “popular” culture, consumer culture, religious culture, and cultural hierarchy are among the arenas we will explore in probing how these relationships have played out and how they may be interpreted. Although the course focuses on U.S. history, students interested in other parts of the world will find many of its theoretical and methodological insights applicable to their own fields of study.

In addition to completing the regular readings for class discussion, students will:

1. help set the agenda and facilitate the discussion for one class session;
2. write a short (5-7 page) essay reflecting on the course readings for a week in which they are not facilitating; and
3. complete a final paper of 15-20 pages in which they put into practice one of the interpretive approaches we have discussed in a cultural analysis of one or more primary sources.

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

Readings will include books and articles by Robert Allen, Gail Bederman, Lizabeth Cohen, Michael Denning, Gary Gerstle, Marie Griffith, Stuart Hall, Robin D.G. Kelley, T.J. Jackson Lears, Lawrence Levine, George Lipsitz, Eric Lott, Roland Marchand, Robert Orsi, Kathy Peiss, David Roediger, George Sanchez, Joan Scott, and Sean Wilentz, among others.