

History 389-DL4: Topics in U.S. History  
*Gender & Race at the Turn of the Twentieth Century*  
Spring 2021, George Mason University

Professor Laura Moore  
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Virtual Office Hours: Vary by week and readily by appointment

This advanced seminar will introduce you to how historians use gender and race analysis to understand U.S. history from approximately 1890-1920. From wild west shows to race riots, boxers to belly dancers, anti-lynching activists to women's suffrage opponents – Americans in this period debated and altered their interrelated racial and gender identities. We will travel to a time when Black women led a movement against racial violence and voter suppression and joined a women's rights movement that transformed American politics; when many Americans celebrated the nation's cultural diversity while others feared that immigrants endangered the American way of life; when the meaning of "white man" itself was in flux; when, eventually, these political and cultural conflicts influenced responses to a global pandemic. In other words, we will explore a historical period that may sometimes seem eerily similar to our own, and yet also sometimes shockingly different.

### READINGS

Our main activity during class time will be discussing the assigned readings. A seminar-style course like this one will only be successful if every student comes well-prepared to every class meeting. Always complete the assigned readings before class and keep them and your notes handy during class time.

We will be reading substantial portions of several scholarly books. They are mostly available online through the GMU Libraries, and I will provide scanned pdfs of those that are not. You will find links to the readings on our Blackboard page. We will go over the books in more detail at our first meeting, and I'll give you advice about which ones you may choose to buy.

### TECHNOLOGY

This course being online and synchronous, I assume you have reliable, daily, internet access. Please alert me to any potential technology or access issues you might encounter.

I expect you to check your **GMU email** at least once every twenty-four hours, including weekends. It is our official university communication method, and I am required to use it when emailing with you. Keep in mind that what I email you is official course content. In other words, make sure you get my emails.

Every week you will download, read, and submit materials on our **Blackboard** page, reached via <https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu/>.

You will find the **Zoom** link to our class meetings on our Blackboard page. You will need to be logged into Zoom *with your GMU email* to access the Zoom classroom.

## ADVICE

My favorite college professor used to say that true learning begins when you admit that you're confused. In that spirit, I encourage you to **ask questions** of the professor, other students, and yourself, both during class time and out of it. I really enjoy talking with students – please don't hesitate to get in touch with me.

The keys to doing well in this course are to participate actively, keep up with the reading, and bring imaginative questions to course materials and discussions. Class meetings will focus on discussion. To contribute to and benefit from these sessions, you will need to allow enough time each week to prepare for class. Expect to spend on average about seven hours each week, outside of class time, on this course – and sometimes more when written assignments are due. But don't expect to become overwhelmed. If you are averaging considerably more than seven hours a week, or are feeling overwhelmed for whatever reason, TALK TO ME.

This class focuses on issues that many of us find both emotionally and intellectually challenging. That is to be expected and respected. We recognize that each of us comes to this class with our own experiences, backgrounds, and values that are not all the same and that will affect how we approach course materials. Those differences are welcomed. At the same time, no one should feel obliged to disclose personal information. In other words, let's all strive to maintain an open, congenial, and comfortable setting for our academic discussions. And, please remember that you are always welcome to TALK TO ME in confidence about any concerns you may have about class topics or discussions.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

I take my obligations under the University Honor Code seriously and expect you to do the same. You have signed the Honor Code, and all the work you do in this course is subject to the policy. It is especially important that you do not commit **plagiarism** – that is using others' wording *or* ideas without attribution. You can avoid it by **using proper citation methods** (including to internet sources) and quotation marks when quoting. Remember that summary, paraphrasing, and quoting all require citations. And remember, as well, that plagiarism includes not only published sources, but also the writing or ideas of friends, family, or classmates without acknowledging them. Please review the Writing Center's plagiarism handout available here: <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/writing-resources> and the Honor Code statement on plagiarism: <https://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/what-is-plagiarism/> For the full Honor Code, go here: <https://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/full-honor-code-document/>

Please remember as well that sharing materials created by the instructor or other students – including recordings of class – such as uploading them to sites outside of our course, violates the Mason Honor Code as does uploading your own coursework to online study sites. Please check the Office of Academic Integrity webpage for more information.

## RESOURCES

I encourage you to utilize the many support services available to GMU students. For example, **Learning Services** offers useful workshops in academic skills, many of which are well-suited to advanced history courses: <https://learningservices.gmu.edu/>.

I appreciate students reaching out to me about how I might best support them while in my course, and you are always welcome to TALK TO ME. That said, I strongly encourage you to turn to Mason's confidential resources as appropriate, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (**SSAC**) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (**CAPS**) at 703-993-2380.

A commitment to diversity and inclusion is central to my teaching philosophy, and I strive to do my part to foster a welcoming, safe, and equitable learning environment. I encourage all students to review the university's **diversity statement** at <https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/knowledge-center/general-teaching-resources/mason-diversity-statement/>

As an instructor, I also have certain legal obligations, including under **FERPA** (<https://registrar.gmu.edu/ferpa/>) and **Title IX** (<https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/sexual-harassment-policy/>; contact Mason's Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing [titleix@gmu.edu](mailto:titleix@gmu.edu)).

If you are a student with a disability who needs academic accommodations, please see me privately and contact the **Office of Disability Resources** at (703) 993-2474 (<https://ds.gmu.edu/>). All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

## ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Exams: 55% of course grade  
Primary Source Project: 10%

Reading Journal: 15%  
Quizzes: 5%

Participation: 15%

### **Exams**

These take-home essay exams allow you to demonstrate your skills of historical analysis, your ability to synthesize the course materials into a cohesive and logical interpretation. If you keep up with the reading and take good notes in class, you will be well-prepared for the exams. We will also go over exam questions during class time.

I will accept the first two exams with a penalty of one half-grade for each twenty-four hours, or portion of twenty-four hours, that I receive it after the deadline. That is, a “B-” exam will receive a “C+” if I receive it a few minutes, eight hours, or twenty-four hours late. Note as well that you must alert me if you are going to turn in an exam late. Exam 3 is due when the final is scheduled, on May 3, and I cannot accept it late.

### **Primary Source Research Project**

You will examine newspaper coverage of an event from the time period we’re studying that lends itself to the race and gender analysis we are practicing in this course. You will write a short (approximately 700 word) analysis of the primary sources and also present your findings to the class at an assigned time during the last week of the semester. You will choose the event in consultation with me, and I will provide guidance and instructions throughout the semester.

### **Reading Journal**

In your Blackboard journal, you will post responses to the assigned readings. The journal helps you – and me -- prepare for the day’s discussion. Use the journal to reflect, ruminate, raise questions, clarify your own ideas, and draw connections among the readings and larger themes of the course – but not simply to summarize. It’s also a good place to tell me what especially interested or confused you about the assigned readings and what you might like to talk about in class.

To get credit, journal entries must be posted by 2:00pm Monday or Wednesday for that day’s assigned reading, and they must demonstrate at a minimum that you have completed all of that day’s reading. You must post at least three journal entries before the first exam, at least another six before the second exam, and at least eleven total by the end of the semester.

### **Quizzes**

I will occasionally give you an in-class or take-home quiz that will require you to refer to your notes on class discussions and readings. They will always be open-note and open-book. As long as you keep up with all class assignments and meetings and take good notes, you will be prepared for quizzes. Quizzes cannot be made up or rescheduled under any circumstances.

**Participation:** This part of the grade credits you for coming to class well-prepared and for participating actively in discussions. More generally, it reflects my expectation that every student will be a “good citizen,” that is, treat the course and fellow students with attention, respect, responsibility, and professionalism.

The Participation grade is based on:

- attendance at Zoom class meetings
- active participation during class time
- Perusall annotations outside of class time

(I will go over the Perusall app in class, please don't sign up for it)

If you come to every class meeting, on time and prepared, listen respectfully, and offer something substantial to discussions every week, then you will earn at least a “B” for your participation grade, and participation will not lower your course grade. If, however, you miss more than one class meeting (or arrive late), assume you will not earn better than a “C” for participation. Missing more than three class meetings results in an “F” for participation, and if you miss more than five, you will likely not pass the course.

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I look forward to exploring history with you and to learning from our discussions!

Please note:

\*I reserve the right to make changes to the course and to the assignment schedule in ways that I deem in the best interests of the class.

\*It is ***your responsibility*** to use the syllabus, to keep track of any changes, and to make sure you have received all instructions.

\*If you have any questions, concerns, confusions, or worries about the course at any point:

TALK TO ME

## **I. Race, Gender, and American Civilization - on the eve of a new century**

Mon Jan 25 Introductions

Wed Jan 27 Read: Bederman, Chapter 1, "Remaking Manhood"

Mon Feb 1 Read: Bederman, Chapter 2, "The White Man's Civilization on Trial"

Wed Feb 3 Read: Prather, "We Have Taken a City" and Kirshenbaum, "The Vampire That Hovers over North Carolina"

Mon Feb 8 Read: Bederman, Chapter 5, "Theodore Roosevelt," and Brody, "Celebrating Empire"

Wed Feb 10 Read: Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, "Violence" and "Representation"

Mon Feb 15 Watch: *Birth of a Nation*

Wed Feb 17

Exam I

## **II. Reconstructing Gender and Race: New Women, New Men, New Americans**

Mon Feb 22 Read: Jones, "The Politics of Black Womanhood" in *Votes for Women*

Wed Feb 24 Read: "Women Activists," "The New Woman," and "A Woman's Place" in *Votes for Women*

Mon Mar 1 Read: Chauncey, "Christian Brotherhood" and Skidmore, "Harry Gorman's Buffalo"

Wed Mar 3 Read: Skidmore, Chapter 3, "The Trouble That Clothes Make," and Chapter 4, "Gender Transgressions in the Age of Empire"

### **Case Study: Arizona**

Mon Mar 8 Read: Gordon, *Great Arizona Orphan Abduction*

Wed Mar 10 Continue reading: Gordon, *Great Arizona Orphan Abduction*

### **Case Study: Atlanta**

Mon Mar 15 Read: Godshalk, *Veiled Visions*

Wed Mar 17 Continue reading: Godshalk, *Veiled Visions*

Mon Mar 22 TBD

Wed Mar 24 Watch: *The Jazz Singer*

Mon Mar 29 Read: Pascoe, Introduction, Chapter 3, "Configuring Race," and Chapter 4, "The Facts of Race"

Wed Mar 31 Read: Pascoe, Chapter 5, "Seeing Like a Racial State" and selections TBD on Virginia racial purity law

Mon Apr 5

Exam II

### **III. American Century: Great War, Women's Votes, Red Summer, Pandemic**

Wed Apr 7 Bederman, "Tarzan and After," Pascoe, "The Ghost of the Past"

Mon Apr 12 Watch: *Son of the Sheik*

Wed Apr 14 Red Summer, selections TBD

Mon Apr 19 Read: Nursing Clio, "All the World's A Harem," *Lost Prologue* podcast, selections TBD, Bristow, *American Pandemic*, "Introduction: Lost Worlds," Chapter 2, "The whole world seems upside down," and Conclusion, "Reckoning the Costs of Amnesia"

Wed Apr 21 Read: "Compelling Tactics," "Militancy in the American Suffragist Movement," and "The Nineteenth Amendment and Its Legacy" in *Votes for Women* and Cahill & Deer, "In 1920 Native Women Sought the Vote," and Jones, "Tackling a Century Old Mystery"

Mon Apr 26

Primary Source Presentations

Wed Apr 28

Primary Source Presentations

Mon May 3 (Final Exam)

Exam III