

George Mason University
Department of History and Art History

Dr. Jennifer Ritterhouse
Email: jritterh@gmu.edu
Office: Horizon Hall 3113
Office hours: By appointment

Spring 2022
Wednesdays, 7:20-10pm
Peterson Hall 2408

History 615, Section 005: Civil Rights and Immigration in the 20th-Century United States

What are civil rights and who can claim them? What does it mean to be a citizen of the United States? In this class, we will begin with key readings on citizenship and civil rights, including the rights struggles of women and African Americans. Then we will focus on the history of immigration with the goal of understanding not only the restrictive policies of the late nineteenth through mid-twentieth centuries, but also the causes and effects of later immigration reform, especially the Hart-Celler Act of 1965. Often considered an overlooked part of Lyndon Johnson's civil rights agenda, this important law ushered in demographic changes that lie at the heart of much of American political debate in the present day.

Learning objectives:

By the end of this course, students will be able to demonstrate extensive knowledge of civil rights and immigration history. They will understand how the parameters of U.S. citizenship have expanded and contracted over time, especially along race and gender lines, and how citizen activism, especially in the courts, has been crucial to gaining and maintaining rights and equal protection of the laws. They will also comprehend the nation's ambivalent attitudes toward immigrants, gaining insights into a variety of immigrant experiences while developing a strong understanding of key shifts in immigration policy, especially in the twentieth century. Along with increasing their knowledge and understanding of the past, students will develop their critical reading, thinking, research, and written and oral communication skills.

Required books: (see Blackboard for links to additional readings and videos; books marked with an * are available as e-books from Mason Libraries)

Linda K. Kerber, *No Constitutional Right To Be Ladies: Women and the Obligations of Citizenship* (Hill & Wang, 1998).

*Martha S. Jones, *Birthright Citizens: A History of Race and Rights in Antebellum America* (Cambridge University Press, 2018).

*Risa L. Goluboff, *The Lost Promise of Civil Rights* (Harvard University Press, 2007).

Nancy MacLean, *Freedom is Not Enough: The Opening of the American Workplace* (Harvard University Press, 2006).

*Serena Mayeri, *Reasoning from Race: Feminism, Law, and the Civil Rights Revolution* (Harvard University Press, 2011).

*Mai Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Updated edition, Princeton, 2014).

Jia Lynn Yang, *One Mighty and Irresistible Tide: The Epic Struggle Over American Immigration, 1924-1965* (Norton, 2020).

*Adam Goodman, *The Deportation Machine: America's Long History of Expelling Immigrants* (Princeton University Press, 2020).

*Stephanie Hinnertshitz, *A Different Shade of Justice: Asian American Civil Rights in the South* (UNC Press, 2017).

*Andrew Friedman, *Covert Capital: Landscapes of Denial and the Making of the U.S. Empire* (University of California Press, 2013).

Course requirements and grading:

- Active, informed, & thoughtful participation, including once as discussion leader (25%)
- Six book summaries with discussion questions, due by NOON on class days (15%)
- Timeline assignment, due by 7:20 p.m. on 2/16 (10%)
- Essay, 6-7 pages (1800-2100 words), due via Blackboard by 7:20 p.m. on 3/23 (20%)
- Research project, including oral presentation and lecture notes & slides or essay (30%)

Participation and book summaries: I expect students to read each week's assignment thoroughly and come to class prepared to ask questions, raise issues, and engage in a thought-provoking conversation. I will do my best to judge participation more on the intellectual quality than the sheer quantity of a student's comments, but quantity is also important because students who are eager to talk demonstrate familiarity with the readings and provide intellectual stimulation for the whole group.

Over the course of the semester, each student must submit analytical summaries of SIX of the ten books listed above. (Note that a summary of MacLean's *Freedom is Not Enough* would need to cover the whole book even though we are reading only Part One in class). Your work is due by NOON on class days and should include **one paragraph that summarizes the arguments and scholarly contributions of the book and a second paragraph that evaluates it for its sources, methods, and interpretations. Also include 2-3 substantive questions you'd like to discuss in class.**

I will give every student a preliminary participation grade along with my comments on the first assignment.

Timeline assignment: This will be a group project comprised of individual contributions and in-class collaboration on 2/16. The goal is to create a Timeline JS on the Reconstruction amendments and their erosion over the course of the late nineteenth century. Each student will be responsible for researching an assigned topic and producing text, pictures, and citations for inclusion in the group project, as we'll discuss on the first night of class.

Essay: This essay will require you to synthesize our first several weeks of readings with an emphasis on connections among them and the extent to which they represent a coherent body of scholarship.

Research project: This is your chance to research an immigration-related topic of interest to you. Drawing on both our readings and additional primary and secondary source research, you will be striving to gain enough expertise to be able to give a mini lecture of 25-30 minutes to an undergraduate audience—such as my fall class on immigration history. Your presentation for HIST 615 will be an abbreviated version of no more than 10-12 minutes, and your written work should include a slide presentation and detailed notes or, if you prefer, a formal essay of 10-12 pages. In general, I expect to see at least five secondary sources (this can include articles as well as books) beyond our syllabus readings in your bibliography. The number and type of primary sources will vary, depending on your topic, and I plan to work with you individually to define the research project and help you find sources.

Course schedule and readings:

1/26 Course introduction; discuss Rogers Smith, *Civic Ideals*, Introduction (Blackboard) and Nikole Hannah-Jones, “Our Democracy’s Founding Ideals Were False When They Were Written. Black Americans Have Fought to Make Them True,”

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/black-history-american-democracy.html>

2/2 Kerber, *No Constitutional Right to Be Ladies* (ideally, read the whole book, but definitely devote the most attention to chs. 1, 2 & 4)

Recommended resource on the women’s suffrage movement:

<https://www.loc.gov/exhibitions/women-fight-for-the-vote/about-this-exhibition/>

2/9 Jones, *Birthright Citizens*

2/16 **Reconstruction assignment due for further, in-class collaborative work**

2/23 Goluboff, *Lost Promise of Civil Rights*; *Eyes on the Prize*, episodes 1-2 (Blackboard)

3/2 MacLean, *Freedom Is Not Enough*, Part I, pp. 1-113; Bayard Rustin, “From Protest to Politics: The Future of the Civil Rights Movement,” (Blackboard); *Eyes on the Prize*, episodes 3-7 (Blackboard)

3/9 Mayeri, *Reasoning from Race*; discuss *My Name is Pauli Murray* video (Amazon Prime)

Spring Break

3/23 **Essay due**; Roger Daniels, *Guarding the Golden Door: American Immigration Policy and Immigrants Since 1882*, ch. 1 (Blackboard); Yang, *One Mighty and Irresistible Tide*, Prologue, chs. 1 & 2; Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, Introduction & Part One

3/30 Finish Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*; **research plan due; schedule appointments**

4/6 Finish Yang, *One Mighty and Irresistible Tide* and read Michael G. Davis, “Impetus for Immigration Reform: Asian Refugees and the Cold War,” *Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 7:3/4 (1998)

4/13 Articles on Blackboard, including a forum in *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History*, vol. 12, issue 3 (2015), pp. 9-28; Nancy L. Green, “Changing Paradigms in Migration Studies: From Men to Women to Gender,” *Gender & History* 24 (November 2012), 782-98; and Maria Lauret, “Americanization Now and Then: The ‘Nation of Immigrants’ in the Early Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries” *Journal of American Studies* 50 (May 2016), 419-47

4/20 Goodman, *Deportation Machine*

4/27 Hinnershit, *Different Shade of Justice*; **research presentations**

5/4 Friedman, *Covert Capital*; **research presentations**

Written work for research project due Friday, 5/6 by 5 p.m.

Class policies and additional information:Academic Integrity:

I expect students in this course to live up to George Mason University's Honor Code, which states: "Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work." I will pursue any concerns about academic dishonesty and will report suspected students to the University's Honor Board for disciplinary action, which may include a failing grade in the course.

Attendance and late paper policy:

Students may miss a single class without penalty; however, even one absence is strongly discouraged and any additional absences will significantly affect the course grade. If you miss a class when you are supposed to lead discussion or give an oral presentation, there will be no way to make up for the work. Please contact me well in advance of any necessary absence.

I will accept late work with a penalty of half a letter grade for every 24-hour period past the deadline.

Accommodations:

Students who require academic accommodations should contact me promptly and must make arrangements through the Office of Disability Services (ods.gmu.edu; 703-993-2474).

Other useful information:

Writing Center: <https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/> or 703-993-1200

Counseling and Psychological Services: <https://caps.gmu.edu/> or 703-993-2380

Last day to drop with 100% tuition refund: Monday, Feb. 7

Last day to drop with 50% tuition refund: Monday, Feb. 14