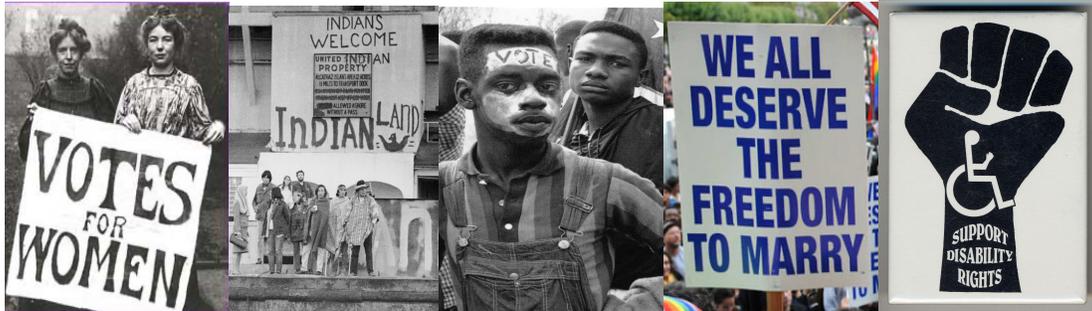


**History 615**  
**Civil Rights and Citizenship in Modern America**

**Fall 2022**



**Professor:** Dr. Suzanne Smith  
**Office:** Horizon Hall 3115  
**E-mail:** [smisuze@gmu.edu](mailto:smisuze@gmu.edu)

**Course Time and Place:**

Mondays, 7:20-10:00 pm, Innovation Hall, Room 336

**Office Hours:**

Wednesdays, 2:00-4:00 pm and by appointment via Zoom.

**Course Description:**

In this course, we will examine the history of civil rights *and* citizenship in modern America. *Civil rights history* is often most closely associated with the African American struggle for racial equality. Nevertheless, the fight for civil rights in the United States has never been simply a struggle about the needs of one racial group. Throughout this semester, we explore how many different minority groups in American have fought for their rights in a democratic society that tends to favor the majority. We will study a wide range of issues including: women's rights, immigration, Native American rights, disability rights, LGBTQ rights, poor people's movements, and prison rights.

*Citizenship* is also a broad, and sometimes slippery, term or concept. Moreover, historians often study citizenship in ways that are quite different from the ways in which historical people experience it. For this reason, this class will engage both with the ways in which people in the past understood it and the ways in which historians have analyzed the concept.

On the one hand, historians have been known to define the term “citizenship” expansively. This definition includes a wide variety of claims to belonging that can encompass rhetorical arguments as well as direct action including: transgressing public segregation, holding parades that assert communal identity, and other public engagement. In addition, historians also examine citizenship as a legal concept (e.g. the relationship

between formal citizenship and the right to vote, processes of naturalization, and how official/state practices of citizenship work to both *include and exclude*). Therefore, Citizenship may be discussed in relation to *the state* (or states), but it may also be discussed in relation to local communities or the nation in ways that have more to do with culture than with law. Finally, historians who write about citizenship almost always use it as a way of exploring differences and hierarchies of race, gender, class, and/or sexuality, as well as status as native-born or new(er) arrival.

By examining and comparing different social and political movements as well as larger theoretical questions about what defines civil rights, we will develop a deeper understanding of the nature of citizenship--both its rights and obligations--in American society. What does it mean to be a citizen of the United States? Who decides who is considered a citizen and who is not? The overall goals of the course will be: 1) to develop a historic understanding of how minority groups build social and political movements to advance their needs in modern American society and 2) to understand how America's sense of nationhood is inextricably connected to contested ideas of citizenship.

### **Learning and Teaching in 2022:**

I would like to begin this course with an acknowledgement that all of us continue to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic. George Mason University's current COVID preventative recommendations are as follows:

- Get your vaccine series and any eligible boosters to lessen your risk of severe disease. You can schedule an appointment to be vaccinated at Mason: [vaccine.gmu.edu](https://vaccine.gmu.edu)
- Avoid very crowded places and opt to wear a mask if you must be in a crowded place or indoor area with others.
- If you are not having symptoms but wish to test after a possible exposure/event, prior to seeing someone who is especially at risk, for general reassurance, or to help contribute to mitigation of spread on campus, please utilize our surveillance testing program at Fenwick A, Colgan Hall (SciTech), or Van Metre Hall (Mason Square).
- If you are having symptoms, seek out a diagnostic PCR test. These are free and available to you on campus for students at Student Health Services.
- Consider utilizing an at-home rapid test if you have any questionable symptoms. (Vaccinated, low-risk people often have mild symptoms that can be mistaken for allergies, yet they are actually infectious and at risk of spreading COVID to others).
- Continue to report COVID illnesses through the Mason COVID Health Check tool at: [healthcheck.gmu.edu](https://healthcheck.gmu.edu). This is a required step when utilizing Mason's testing facilities.

Given these circumstances, and the fact that the general stress of the past two years can be cumulative, I would like to emphasize a few points:

- 1) If you are feeling overwhelmed, having difficulty keeping up with assignments, or become physically sick, please communicate with me directly as soon as possible so I can assist you in making thoughtful decisions about how to manage the situation and complete your assignments and the course.
- 2) If you need more direct help, please contact the GMU Counseling and Psychological Services Center: <https://caps.gmu.edu/>.

**For a complete list of GMU Graduate Student Resources, please see:**

<https://historyarthistory.gmu.edu/graduate/mason-resources-for-graduate-students>

### **Grading and Assignments:**

In this course you will be graded in **four major areas**:

- 1) **Class participation** (20%)
- 2) **Written assignments:**
  - Discussion Board Post (25%)
  - Book Review Essay (10%)
- 3) **Leading Class Discussion** (20%)
- 4) **Final Exam** (25%)

### **Grade Assessment:**

- **Class participation:** Class participation is crucial to one's overall grade and will be assessed by attendance and *active* participation in class discussions. Evidence of preparation (i.e. completing the reading and offering discussion questions), quality of discussion, engagement with other students' ideas, and appropriate behavior all factor into the class participation grade.
  - **Class Blog (5 points each):**  
As a part of class participation, I have set up a class blog. **By noon on Mondays**, I would like each student to post 1-2 discussion questions on the assigned book to share with the class. These questions will assist discussion leaders as they plan to guide conversation on that week's reading.
- **Written Assignments:**
  - **Discussion Board Post (10 points each):**  
You are responsible for writing **eight discussion board posts** over the course of the semester. You are free to choose the weeks you would like to write your posts, but you must complete **eight** posts by the end of the semester. Posts should be approximately 1.5 to 2 pages (or 450-700 words) and are due **by 7:00 pm on Mondays**.

Discussion board posts should open with a brief summary of the book's main arguments and its main objectives, but **the majority of the post should address your critical response to the book's argument and its historical evidence.** Please remember that "critical" does not necessarily mean negative, but commentary that reflects engaged, analytical, thought. Your post should focus on substantive intellectual and interpretative issues as well as addressing how the book fits into the larger themes of the course. In addition, as the semester progresses, you might compare the book's analysis to other books we have read in the course.

- **Book Review Essay (100 points):** In addition to your discussion board posts, you will write one longer book review essay (6-7 pages). The essay should *not* be a detailed summary of the book's contents, but an advanced level of analysis of the book's argument and method. Your discussion should engage with the primary and secondary evidence the author uses to advance the book's thesis. For this essay, you can, but are *not* required to, find a relevant scholarly article that you could contrast or discuss in relation to the book assigned. You are free to pick the week to submit your book review essay beginning with **Week 3**. The essay is **due on Blackboard by 7:00 pm on the week the book is assigned.**
- **Leading Class Discussion:**  
Beginning in **Week 3**, teams of 2-3 students each will be responsible for leading class discussion **twice** during the semester.

**The assignment involves two parts:**

- 1) In the first half of class, the team will spend approximately 5-10 minutes providing some historical and/or historiographical context on the assigned book, and then highlighting key questions or themes to spark the class's analysis of the book. All students will be offering discussion questions on the class blog each week. Discussion leaders are encouraged to use those suggestions to frame and guide class discussion.
- 2) In the second half of class, the team will present two primary sources from the assigned book that illuminate the author's arguments in a new way. The team will guide discussion about these sources in the last hour of class.

**Final Note:** For this 2-part assignment, the team is free to decide how to divide the labor. One student can be in charge of the first half of class and the other student or students can present a primary source or each task can be shared. Since each team will lead twice in the semester, tasks can be rotated. For complete details on this assignment, please see Blackboard.

- **Final Exam:** For the final exam for this course, I will provide you with an essay prompt that will offer you an opportunity to demonstrate your comprehensive

knowledge of course themes and content. The final exam essay will be 12-15 pages in length.

### **Course Technology and Logistics:**

- Activities and assignments in this course will use the Blackboard learning system, available at <https://mymason.gmu.edu>. Students are required to have regular, reliable access to a computer with an updated operating system (recommended: Windows 11 or Mac OSX 12.5 or higher) and a stable broadband Internet connection (cable modem, DSL, satellite broadband, etc., with a consistent 1.5 Mbps [megabits per second] download speed or higher. You can check your speed settings using the speed test on this website.)

### **Course Materials and Privacy:**

- All course materials posted to Blackboard or other course site are private to this class; by federal law, **any materials that identify specific students** (via their name, voice, or image) ***must not be shared with anyone not enrolled in this class***. Any violation of this policy will be directed to the appropriate GMU university administrators.

### **Mason E-mail and Communication policies:**

- **Mason requires that Mason email be used for all courses.** I will be sending messages to your Mason email and you are responsible for making sure you have access to these messages.
- You may forward your Mason email to other accounts but **always use your Mason e-mail when communicating with me to allow verification of your identity.**
- You are required to check your Mason email account regularly and to keep your mailbox maintained so that messages are not rejected for being over quota.
- When you email me, you can expect a response within 24 hours except on weekends when my response may be delayed for up to 48 hours.
- **Gender identity and pronoun use:** If you wish, please share your name and gender pronouns with me and how best to address you in class and via email. I use [she/her/hers] for myself and you may address me as “**Dr. Smith**” in email and verbally.
- When you email me, please remember to include **HIST 615** at the beginning of the subject heading to alert me that I have received a message from one of my students.

### **Class Policies:**

- 1) **Punctuality:** Please make every effort to arrive in class on time; arriving late to class is disruptive.

- 2) **Honor Code:** *All of George Mason University's academic policies and honor code apply to this course.* Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving proper credit. Self-plagiarism involves recycling papers from previous coursework. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me. Violators will be brought before the University's Honor Committee for disciplinary action.
- 3) **Disability Accommodations:** If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Resources at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations are arranged through that office.
- 4) **Add and Drop Deadlines:**
- |                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Last Day to Add:                 | <b>August 29, 2022</b>                          |
| Last Day to Drop without Penalty | <b>Sept. 6, 2022</b>                            |
| Drop Deadline with Penalty       | <b>Sept. 13, 2022 (50% Tuition penalty)</b>     |
| Unrestricted Withdrawal:         | <b>Sept. 14-27, 2022 (100% Tuition penalty)</b> |

**Required Reading:**

Martha S. Jones	<i>Birthright Citizens*</i>
Linda Kerber	<i>No Constitutional Right to Be Ladies</i>
Mae M. Ngai	<i>Impossible Subjects*</i>
Stephanie Hinnershitz	<i>A Different Shade of Justice*</i>
Sonia Song-Ha Lee	<i>Building a Latino Civil Rights Movement</i>
Margot Canaday	<i>The Straight State*</i>
Lizabeth Cohen	<i>A Consumer's Republic</i>
Annelise Orleck	<i>Storming Caesar's Palace*</i>
Jeffrey Gonda	<i>Unjust Deeds*</i>
Camille Walsh	<i>Racial Taxation*</i>
Joseph P. Shapiro	<i>No Pity: People with Disabilities</i>
Mikaëla Adams	<i>Who Belongs? Race, Resources, and Tribal Citizenship*</i>
Dan Berger	<i>Captive Nation*</i>

\*Book available online via the GMU Library Catalog

**Final Note:**

**I reserve the right to modify or revise assignments as needed to adapt the class to help everyone succeed.** Any changes will be announced both in class and on Blackboard. Please be **patient and flexible.**

**Class Schedule:**

**Week 1: Aug. 22**     **Course Introduction**

**Week 2: August 29**     **Citizenship, Race, and Nationhood**

**Reading:**

Martha S. Jones, *Birthright Citizens*

**Assignment:**

**Blog Post Discussion Questions:** Posted by **noon on Monday.**

**Discussion Board Post:** Due by **7:00 pm on Monday.**

**Week 3: Sept. 5**

**Labor Day: No class.**

**Week 4: Sept. 12**

**Women and the Obligations of Citizenship****Reading:**

Linda Kerber, *No Constitutional Right to Be Ladies*

**Assignment:**

**Blog Post Discussion Questions:** Posted by **noon on Monday.**

**Discussion Board Post or Book Review:** Due by **7:00 pm on Monday.**

**Week 5: Sept. 19**

**Immigration and Citizenship****Reading:**

Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*

**Assignment:**

**Blog Post Discussion Questions:** Posted by **noon on Monday**

**Discussion Board Post or Book Review:** Due by **7:00 pm on Monday.**

**Team 1:** Leading Discussion

**Week 6: Sept. 26**

**Asian American Rights****Reading:**

Stephanie Hinnertshitz, *A Different Shade of Justice*

**Assignment:**

**Blog Post Discussion Questions:** Posted by **noon on Monday**

**Discussion Board Post or Book Review:** Due by **7:00 pm on Monday.**

**Team 2:** Leading Discussion

**Week 7: Oct. 3**

**Latino American Rights****Reading:**

Sonia Song-Ha Lee, *Building a Latino Civil Rights Movement*

**Assignment:**

**Blog Post Discussion Questions:** Posted by **noon on Monday**

**Discussion Board Post or Book Review:** Due by **7:00 pm on Monday.**

**Team 3:** Leading Discussion

- Week 8: Oct. 11**      **Sexuality and Citizenship** (**NOTE: Class meets on Tuesday**)  
**Reading:**  
 Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America*  
**Assignment:**  
**Blog Post Discussion Questions:** Posted by **noon on Tuesday**  
**Discussion Board Post or Book Review:** Due by **7:00 pm on Tuesday**.
- Team 4:** Leading Discussion
- Week 9: Oct. 17**      **Citizenship in a Consumer's Republic**  
**Reading:**  
 Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic*  
**Assignment:**  
**Blog Post Discussion Questions:** Posted by **noon on Monday**  
**Discussion Board Post or Book Review:** Due by **7:00 pm on Monday**.
- Week 10: Oct. 24**      **The Politics of Poverty**  
**Reading:**  
 Annelise Orleck, *Storming Caesar's Palace: How Black Mothers Fought Their Own War on Poverty*  
**Assignment:**  
**Blog Post Discussion Questions:** Posted by **noon on Monday**  
**Discussion Board Post or Book Review:** Due by **7:00 pm on Monday**.
- Week 11: Oct. 31**      **Race and Real Estate**  
**Reading:**  
 Jeffrey Gonda, *Unjust Deeds*  
**Assignment:**  
**Blog Post Discussion Questions:** Posted by **noon on Monday**  
**Discussion Board Post or Book Review:** Due by **7:00 pm on Monday**.
- Team 1:** Leading Discussion
- Week 12: Nov. 7**      **Taxpayer Citizenship**  
**Reading:**  
 Camille Walsh, *Racial Taxation: Schools, Segregation, and Taxpayer Citizenship, 1869-1973*  
**Assignment:**  
**Blog Post Discussion Questions:** Posted by **noon on Monday**

**Discussion Board Post or Book Review: Due by 7:00 pm on Monday.**

**Team 2:** Leading Discussion

**Week 13: Nov. 14**

**If You Can't Stand Up, Stand Out!: Disability Rights**

**Required Reading:**

Joseph P. Shapiro, *No Pity: People with Disabilities Forging a New Civil Rights Movement*

**Assignment:**

**Blog Post Discussion Questions:** Posted by **noon on Monday**

**Discussion Board Post or Book Review: Due by 7:00 pm on Monday.**

**Team 3:** Leading Discussion

**Week 14: Nov. 21**

**Native Americans and Tribal Citizenship**

**Required Reading:**

Mikaëla Adams, *Who Belongs? Race, Resources, and Tribal Citizenship in the Native South*

**Assignment:**

**Blog Post Discussion Questions:** Posted by **noon on Monday**

**Discussion Board Post or Book Review: Due by 7:00 pm on Monday.**

**Team 4:** Leading Discussion

**Week 15: Nov. 28**

**The History of the Prison Rights Movement**

**Reading:**

Dan Berger, *Captive Nation: Black Prison Organizing in the Civil Rights Era*

**Assignment:**

**Blog Post Discussion Questions:** Posted by **noon on Monday**

**Discussion Board Post or Book Review: Due by 7:00 pm on Monday.**

**Final Exam:**

**Due Monday, December 12, by 11:59 pm.**

**Please note:** No late exams will be accepted under any circumstances.