

University of Guelph – Department of History – College of Arts

course site: Courselink
Dr. Susan Nance | snance@uoguelph.ca
(519) 824-4120 ex. 56327

class meeting: Wednesdays, 7:00 – 9:50pm, MacKinnon 311
office hours: 2008 MacKinnon Extension
Wed. 2:00-4:00pm, or by appointment

American Identities

> CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:

This course analyzes how Americans have constructed and enacted identities in the U.S. as citizens and consumers through investigating concepts such as 'race', ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, regional distinctions, and nationalism.

> CONTENT / LEARNING GOALS & OUTCOMES:

This semester, HIST 4180 examines the following paradox: If the United States is exceptional in world history as the one place in which a person may make him or herself into anything he or she chooses to be—even if just as a consumer—why have so many people struggled to express themselves and be heard accurately?

HIST 4180 is an honors research seminar, which means: In order to develop a context and analytical questions for their own research, students in the class will first read a series of scholarly monographs and create critical reading guides for them. You will also lead seminar discussions exploring these books by way of said reading guides and some primary source research appropriate to the topic at hand. Each student will also write a short review paper drawn from those readings interrogating an identity concept and the scholarly debate around it. Thereafter, each of you will pursue research projects on an identity, persona, or expressive practice you find intriguing, giving a short research proposal oral report in Week 8, and a formal research oral report on your findings in one of Week 10, 11 or 12. In consultation with Dr. Nance, you will complete a corresponding research project final paper, due during the examination period.

HIST*4180 also trains students in how to:

- efficiently read and critique historical monographs
- develop substantial bibliographies of scholarly sources on a given topic
- find in archives and critique primary sources to explain their origins, uses, and politics
- analyze debates and cultural conflict in the past, including, where appropriate, the historical perspectives of subaltern or minority persons or groups
- conceptualize problem-based research projects
- demonstrate an advanced grasp of argumentation and evidence-based writing
- independently develop research strategies that employ primary and secondary sources to make an original argument
- lead small seminar discussions
- orally and constructively critique student peers' research

> DR. NANCE'S AVAILABILITY:

Please note my weekly office hours indicated above and the extra office hours that I offer by appointment. I am also happy to help you by email, but please do note that for getting the best help for certain issues – like working through a proposed research topic, research plan or argument, or getting help on revising ineffective prose – it is more productive to see me in person.

> COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Class participation:	15%
Reading notes and seminar leader assignment:	20%
Short thematic essay:	15%
Research project proposal oral report:	5%
Formal research oral report:	10%
Research project final paper:	35%

> REQUIRED TEXTS / READING:

Philip J. Deloria, Playing Indian (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

Laura Browder, Slippery Characters: Ethnic Impersonators and American Identities (Chapel Hill: University of California Press, 2000), 1-46, 171-230.

Peter Boag, Re-Dressing America's Frontier Past (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

Bill Osgerby, Playboys in Paradise: Masculinity, Youth and Leisure-Style (London: Berg Publishers, 2001).

Eithne Quinn, Nuthin' But a 'G' Thang: The Culture and Commerce of Gangsta Rap (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

Orin Starn, The Passion of Tiger Woods: An Anthropologist Reports on Golf, Race, and Celebrity Scandal (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).

* All of these books are available for purchase at University bookstores and online in the regular places, Where possible, there are also either online at UofG Library and/or on reserve at the UofG library in paper copies.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS IN DETAIL

> CLASS PARTICIPATION – 15% of course grade:

Please come to class having completed the reading and ready to discuss it in an informed way with respect to the weekly questions posed in the course schedule and those posed by the seminar leaders for the week. An early discussion section participation grade will be provided for students after week 7.

> READING GUIDE AND SEMINAR LEADER ASSIGNMENT – 20% of course grade:

This course element has two parts:

1. 10% of course grade: In your assigned week for this task, please produce a reading guide for the monograph of the week (yes, the whole book) and hand it in to Dr. Nance on paper **at the beginning of class** the week you also present a discussion of that item. Reading guide length: ca. **1500 words**. You **do not** need to provide “works cited” list at the end of the reading guide, but do include citations or some indication of page numbers. Please do see Dr. Nance for one-on-one help with any aspect of your writing or making sense of the week’s monograph(s). Check our courselink page for a sample reading guide to use as inspiration.

2. 10% of course grade: In your assigned week for this task, using your reading guide as a starting point, you will lead the class in a discussion of the week’s reading by presenting a primary source that illustrates and/or problematizes a phenomenon and argument from the monograph. Students sharing the same presentation week should consult with one another and divide the monograph chapters among themselves in order to avoid overlapping presentations of primary sources and book chapters. The presentation schedule will be organized on our Courselink “Groups” widget following the first class meeting. The eventual presentation schedule will thereafter appear on Courselink in the newsfeed/announcements. Please visit office hours for help in structuring this presentation or the reading notes mentioned above. Please also see our Courselink Newsfeed for a suggested template for structuring your presentation.

> SHORT THEMATIC ESSAY – 15% of course grade:

In order to demonstrate all your hard work in completing the assigned course readings, and your thinking about cultural and identity concepts that you will employ in your own semester research project, please write a short paper drawn from the assigned course readings. Your goal: analyze one or more of the concepts addressed in the course: “race,” class, gender, place, authenticity, “passing,” performance, manhood, consumption, identity, or how two of these are related over time. You will want to account for and critique the ways the monographs have addressed that concept to explain how and why they agree or disagree, and your conclusions about that scholarly dialogue.

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> **SHORT THEMATIC ESSAY – continued:**

Paper length: **1500 words** (*about* 4 pages double-spaced). Please provide footnotes or endnotes according to the Chicago Manual of Style; no MLA or parenthetical citations please. You **do not** need to provide a “works cited” bibliography at the end of this paper. The short thematic essay is due on the date specified in the course schedule. For more details on handing in your paper, see our Courselink newsfeed. A grading rubric is included in the content section of our Courselink page, but please do see Dr. Nance for one-on-one help with any aspect of your writing.

> **BRIEF RESEARCH PROJECT PROPOSAL ORAL REPORT – 5% of course grade:**

During the meeting indicated in the course schedule for “Brief research project proposal reports” each student will give a brief (5 minute max!) report on his or her proposed semester research project outlining the topic, context and historical question he or she will answer and some possible primary and secondary sources he or she will use. Note: research topics may be global in nature and need not document an American case, but must put the topic in a specific historical context as an element of modern global history (ie. no pre-industrial topics, please)

> **FORMAL RESEARCH PROJECT ORAL REPORT – 10% of course grade:**

During weeks 10, 11 and 12, students will give formal reports on their research project final papers— 15 minutes in length (max!). Please explain the topic and context, the project’s main argument and why this topic is important to our understanding of the history of identity, politics, and consumption. You should also discuss some of the primary sources and secondary sources relevant to your project, and any ongoing research puzzles you are still working through. Imagine this as a friendly work-shopping opportunity in which we will all help one another to produce the best possible final work.

Please see our Courselink Newsfeed for a suggested template for structuring your Week 10, 11, or 12 research presentations. It will give you a sense of what Dr. Nance will be looking for.

> **SEMESTER RESEARCH PROJECT FINAL PAPER – 35% of course grade:**

Students will create a research project final paper using secondary and primary sources on their chosen case study of a persona, identity, subculture, cultural phenomenon or performance in world history. Please do come to office hours to talk about this.

Paper length: 4000 words (ca. 15 pages double-spaced). Please provide footnotes or endnotes according to the Chicago Manual of Style; no MLA or parenthetical citations please. Students also **do** need to provide a “works cited” page at the end of this paper. The final paper is due on the date specified in the course schedule. For more details on handing in your paper, see our page on Courselink. A grading rubric is included in the content section of our Courselink page, but please do see Dr. Nance for one-on-one help with any aspect of your writing.

VERY IMPORTANT TECHNOLOGY NOTE: In order to prevent unresponsive projectors, slow computers, etc. from using up class time and short changing those who present in the second half of discussion sections, students choosing to use a computer for their presentations **MUST** use the class laptop and web browser supplied by the instructor. Thus, all Powerpoint presentations or primary source images, moving or still, that students wish to present electronically must be available online at Google Docs, an online archive, or some other location viewable on the internet, or on a flash drive that can be used on the class laptop. Students will, in part, be graded on their ability to manage the technology they choose, so if in doubt, keep it simple.

HANDING IN ASSIGNMENTS (for Dr. Nance):

In this course, there is no rescheduling of any assignment without medical documentation or requests made through the B. A. Counseling Office or the Student Accessibility Services Centre. So stay focused and do watch the schedule since this course requires you to be paying attention and actively participating, week in, week out. With respect to assignments handed in through a Courselink dropbox: if you choose to hand in any assignment late, I will deduct 5% per day after the deadline to a limit of four days (96 hours) at which time all dropboxes will close. If in doubt, hand things in early. I can no longer accept papers by email.

(Department of History policies, updated August 2016):

HANDING IN AND GETTING BACK PAPERS/ASSIGNMENTS:

Unless the course instructor says otherwise, all History papers and assignments are to be handed in at class and returned at class. LATE PAPERS may ONLY be placed through the open slots in the mailboxes of faculty members and Graduate Teaching assistants at the student's own risk. Mailboxes for regular faculty members are located in Room 2009 Mackinnon Extension and are accessible 8.30 a.m. – 4.00 p.m. Mon.-Fri. Mailboxes for graduate students and other instructors are located in the hallway at the 2nd floor entrance to the MacKinnon Extension building from the old MacKinnon building office tower (second floor). Late papers will not be date stamped. The History department and its instructors bear no responsibility whatsoever for late papers. **Under no circumstances should the wire baskets outside professors' offices be used to deposit student papers.**

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE AND USEFUL TOOLS

To avoid distraction, the History Department requests that you turn off wireless connections during class unless requested by the instructor to do otherwise. The Department maintains a web site (<http://www.uoguelph.ca/history>) that will be helpful in various ways to students in History courses - such as conveying names of student award winners, information on undergraduate and graduate programs at Guelph, and the famous History Department Newsletter. There are useful links to on-line resources that include *A Guide to Writing History Research Essays*, which will be valuable to students in all History courses. The University of Guelph History Society operates a number of programs to assist History undergraduates, and information about these programs can be accessed through the Department website or <http://www.uoguelph.ca/~histsoc>.

(College of Arts policies, updated August 2016):

EMAIL COMMUNICATION:

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their <mail.uoguelph.ca> email account regularly: email is the official route of communication between the university and its students.

WHEN YOU CANNOT MEET A COURSE REQUIREMENT:

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement due to illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, i.d.# and email contact. See the Undergraduate Calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-ac.shtml>

DROP DATE:

This semester, the last day to drop one-semester courses without academic penalty is **Friday, November 4, 2016**. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the [Undergraduate Calendar](#): <http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

COPIES OF OUT OF CLASS ASSIGNMENTS:

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

ACCESSIBILITY:

The University of Guelph is committed to creating a barrier-free environment. Providing services for students is a shared responsibility among students, faculty and administrators. This relationship is based on respect of individual rights, the dignity of the individual and the University community's shared commitment to an open and supportive learning environment. Students requiring service or accommodation, whether due to an identified, ongoing disability or a short-term disability should contact Student Accessibility Services as soon as possible. For more information, contact CSD at 519-824-4120 ext. 56208 or email sas@uoguelph.ca or see the [SAS website](#): <https://www.uoguelph.ca/csd/>

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Each student at the University of Guelph has rights, which carry commensurate responsibilities that involve, broadly, being a civil and respectful member of the University community. The [Rights and Responsibilities](#) are detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/2016-2017/c01/index.shtml>

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor. The [Academic Misconduct Policy](#) is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml>

RECORDING OF MATERIALS/LECTURES:

Presentations made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

RESOURCES:

The [Academic Calendars](#) (www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/) are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations that apply to undergraduate, graduate and diploma programs.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

> Please come to class prepared to think and talk about the historical and analytical questions indicated below as our goal for each meeting, taking note of specific historical examples that you could use to demonstrate your conclusions.

Week 1: September 14

Introduction and discussion leader assignment for weeks 3 to 7

Week 2: September 21

What is individuation? How are identities created and performed?

How have Anglo-American men used the idea of “Indians” to define white manhood, when and why?

Read: Deloria, Playing Indian (1998).

Week 3: September 28

How is the power of representation a reflection of one’s power in society?

Why have Americans perceived “passing” to be a kind of fraud? When and how are some personae perceived to be authentic?

When and why has race or ethnicity seemed different to Americans than class?

Read: Browder, Slippery Characters (2000), 1-46, 171-230.

Week 4: October 5

Consider how gender and consumption were linked over the 20th century? By this history, has consumerism offered individual freedom or restrictions to self-expression?

Why are we suddenly (since 2010 or so) seeing more public acceptance of transgendered people, although not during the previous periods we have studied?

Read: Boag, Re-Dressing America’s Frontier Past (2012).

Watch: Paris is Burning (1991).

Week 5: October 12

When, why, and how did consumerism become masculine?

Read: Osgerby, Playboys in Paradise (2001).

Week 6: October 19

What is “race”? What is its relationship to gender, class, capitalism, or region?

Read: Quinn, Nuthin’ But A ‘G’ Thang (2004).

Watch: Nas: Life is Illmatic (2014).

Week 7: October 26

What is racism, or “race”? How do we put a person like Tiger Woods into context as a citizen of the later 20th century? How did “race” and celebrity both make and destroy his public persona (or brand)? How does the intersecting cases of Tiger Woods, professional sports, and sports marketing connect to the historical themes of identity and consumption in this course?

Read: Starn, The Passion of Tiger Woods (2011).

> SHORT REVIEW ESSAY due Sunday, October 30
by 11:59:59 pm in the Courselink Dropbox

Week 8: November 2

Brief research project proposal reports, and research project formal oral report scheduling.

Week 9: November 9

Individual consultation / tutoring / writing help:

Please see me for one-on-one help with finding sources, developing outlines and arguments, overcoming writer’s block, revising ineffective prose, etc.

Please schedule a particular time for your visit in advance during regular office hours or our regular class meeting times.

Week 10: November 16

Formal research project oral reports followed by student discussion.

Week 11: November 23

Formal research project oral reports followed by student discussion.

Week 12: November 30

Formal research project oral reports followed by student discussion.

> FINAL PAPER due Friday, December 2 by 11:59pm
(For more details on handing in the Final Paper to our Courselink Dropbox, see our newsfeed on Courselink.)