

HIST 407

Seminar in 20th Century US History

Fall 2019 | University of Oregon | 222 LIB
Tuesdays, 1:00-3:50



Civil Rights Activists on the march for voting rights, from Selma to Montgomery, March 23, 1965.

Instructor: Steven Beda

sbeda@uoregon.edu

Office: 307 McKenzie Hall

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 3:30-4:30
and by appointment

Course Description

This course is your opportunity to be a historian. Up until now in your undergraduate education you've mostly studied what other historians have written. There's incredible value in this. Before you can do history you have to know what others have said. But to go from being a student of history to a historian you have to do more than just read history; you have to do your own research and produce your own scholarship. This class is designed to guide you through that process.

Over the course of the quarter we will explore different concepts, strategies, and methodologies for producing historical scholarship. We will talk about what makes for a good article-length history project. We will examine different kinds of sources and where to find them. We will discuss writing and the writing process.

But mostly, this class is designed around guiding you through your first major research project and helping you complete the major assignment for this class: a twenty-to-thirty page research paper. While we will indeed spend a good deal of time discussing and thinking about broad conceptual topics and theories, we will spend just as much time discussing practical matters and the best ways to go about tackling a project of this size and scope.

Learning Objectives

Students who take this course can expect:

- A better understanding of historical methodologies and practices;
- A better understanding of historical sources and strategies for finding and using primary source materials;
- A better understanding of the historical writing process;
- To work closely with the instructor and classmates in developing a research question, finding sources to address that question, and producing scholarship that answers that question;
- To complete a twenty-to-thirty page paper of original historical research.



American folk singer Woodie Guthrie, c. 1930s.



Oakland children on their way to school. Behind them, graffiti expresses support for the Black Panther Party, c. 1970.

Course Format

This class meets once a week on Tuesdays. Class meetings will be entirely devoted to discussing readings, methodologies, strategies, and you and your classmates' work.

Most of our meetings throughout the first half of the quarter will focus on questions of methodology and sources. What makes for a good history article? What is a historical source and where do you find it?

Meetings during the second half of the class will mostly focus on the practical aspects of conducting a research project, producing a rough draft, and honing that draft to produce a final paper.

As this description suggests, participation is a major part of this course. Please come to class with all readings complete and prepared to discuss.

Assignments

The major assignment of this class is a twenty-to-thirty page research paper, due by **12:30 pm on Wednesday, December 5th**. The bulk of your grade for this class will be determined by this paper. Specific details and expectations will be communicated throughout the quarter.

Producing a paper of this length can be a daunting task. To make an assignment of this size manageable it's useful to work in stages rather than try and tackle the thing all at once. Therefore, throughout the quarter you will have to complete several smaller assignments intended to guide you through the process of producing a lengthy historical essay:

A **prospectus**, a short one-to-two page explanation of your project, is due by **noon on Friday, October 12th**.

A **rough draft** of your paper is due by **noon on Friday, November 8th**.

Participation is a major part of your final grade in the class. Finally, you will be required to meet individually with me twice throughout the quarter (once to discuss your prospectus, once to discuss your rough draft). These meetings are mandatory. You will also be required to read the rough drafts and meet with a group of your classmates writing a paper on a topic similar to yours. This meeting is also mandatory.



A California dust storm. Photograph by Dorothea Lange, 1942.



"Veterans of a Farm Hill Struggle," Linocut. By Richard V. Correll, 1981. Correll was a prominent Seattle-area artist, Communist Party member, and labor and civil rights activist. His woodcuts and linocuts celebrated workers and working-class activism.

Grading

Grades on each assignment, as well as your final grade for the course, will be given in points. Here is the point-value of each assignment as well as a breakdown of how each assignment will be used in calculating your final grade:

Final Research Paper	500 points (60%)
Participation	200 points (25%)
Prospectus	50 points (5%)
Rough Draft	100 points (5%)
Individual and Group Meetings	50 points (5%)

The following table will be use to translate your point score into your final letter grade:

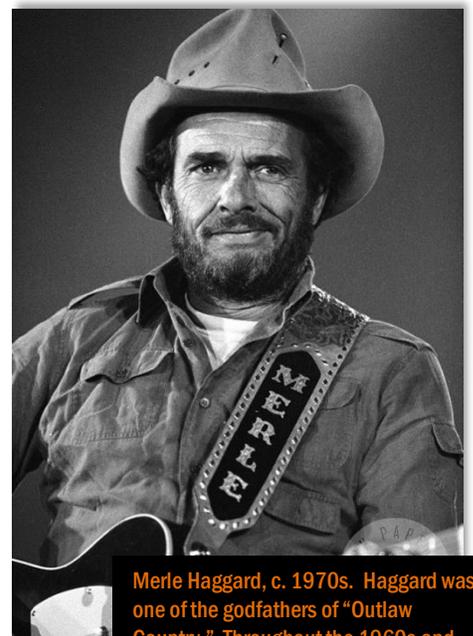
A+	1000-990
A	989-940
A-	939-900
B+	899-870
B	869-840
B-	839-800
C+	799-770
C	769-740
C-	739-700
D+	699-670
D	669-640
D-	639-610
F	609-0

Grading Guidelines

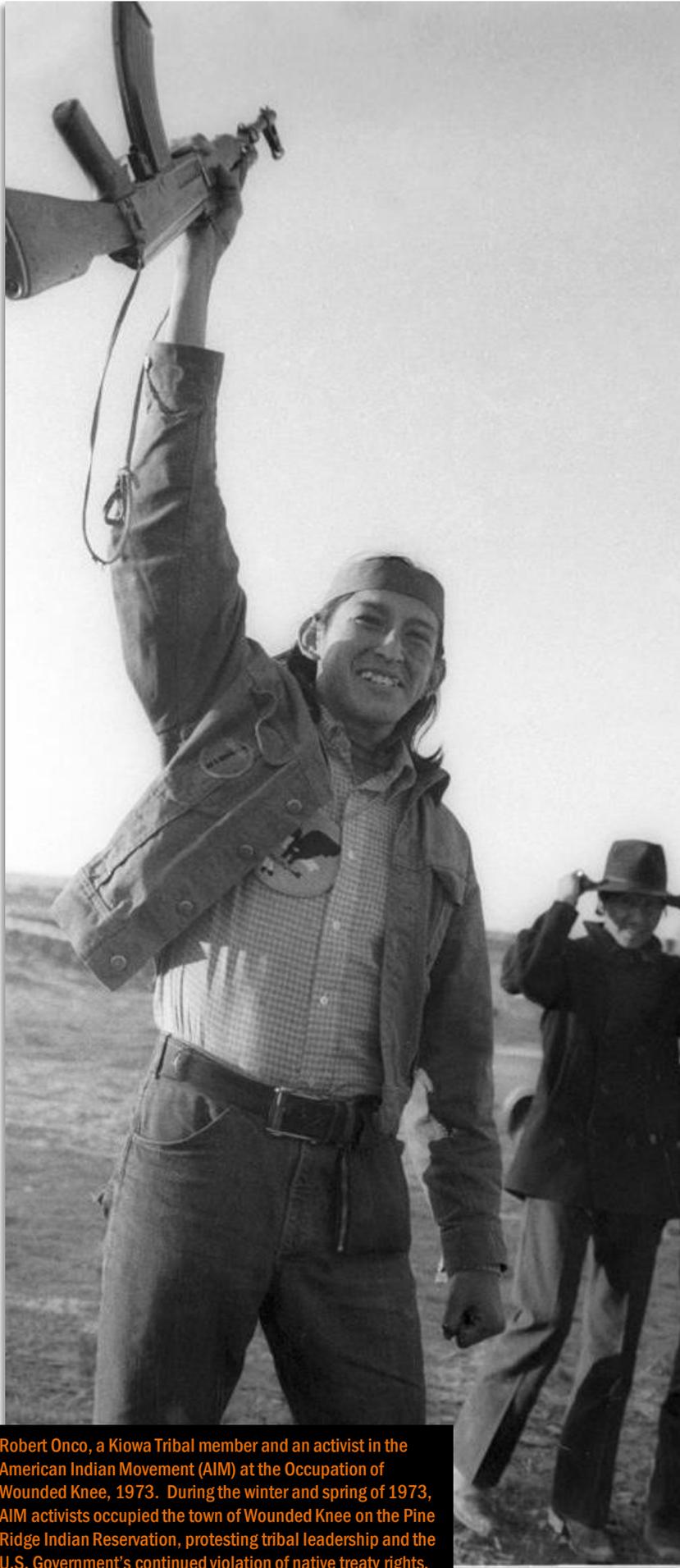
I will follow the guidelines established by the History Department in evaluating your work:

- A+: Work of unusual distinction;
- A: Work that distinguishes itself by the excellence of its grasp of the material and the precision and insight of its argument;
- B: Work that satisfies the main criteria of the assignment, and demonstrates command of the material, but does not achieve the level of excellence that characterizes work of A quality;
- C: Work that demonstrates a rudimentary grasp of the material and satisfies at least some of the assigned criteria reasonably well;
- D: Work that demonstrates a poor grasp of the material and/or is executed with little regard for college standards;
- F: Work that is weak in every aspect, demonstrating a basic misunderstanding of the material and/or is regard for the assigned question.

For more information on the History Department's grading guidelines, please see: <http://history.oregon.edu/undergraduate/>



Merle Haggard, c. 1970s. Haggard was one of the godfathers of "Outlaw Country." Throughout the 1960s and 1970s his music captured the feelings and frustrations of the white working-class.



Late Work

Late assignments will automatically be deducted half a letter grade and then penalized an additional half-letter grade for every additional 24 hours they are late.

Exceptions may be made for family or medical emergencies. If you have an issue—any issue—that will prevent you from completing an assignment on time, please talk to me about it as soon as possible.

Academic Dishonesty

Any form of plagiarism or academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and students suspected of academic misconduct may face disciplinary action, as outlined in the Students' Code of Conduct:

<https://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/AcademicMisconduct.aspx>

It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with University policies regarding plagiarism and what constitutes academic misconduct:

<http://library.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/index.html>

Please come see me if you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism or academic misconduct or if you are unsure how to properly cite a source.

Course Website

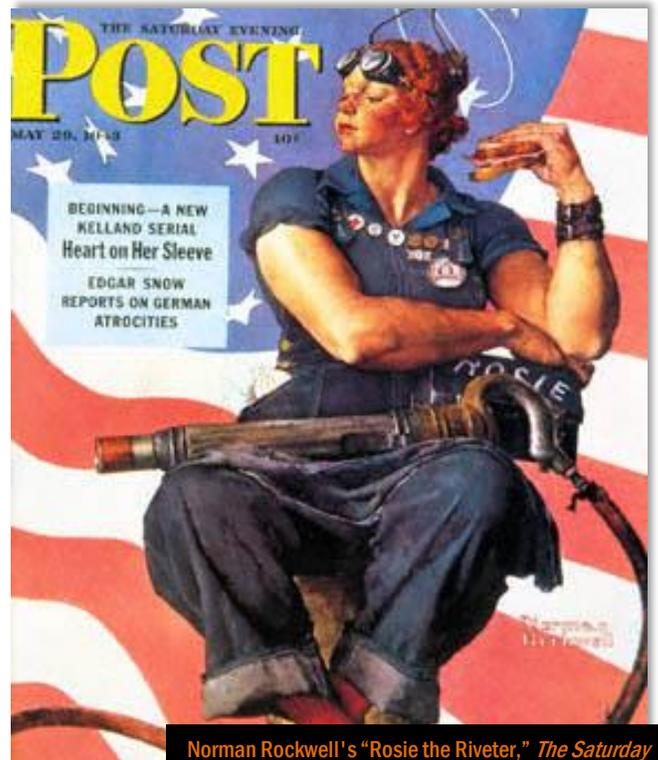
This course uses the Canvas system and you can access the course website via your Canvas front page. The course website contains this syllabus and assignment guidelines. Please submit all written work online, via the course website. I will comment on and grade your written work directly in the Canvas system.

Robert Onco, a Kiowa Tribal member and an activist in the American Indian Movement (AIM) at the Occupation of Wounded Knee, 1973. During the winter and spring of 1973, AIM activists occupied the town of Wounded Knee on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, protesting tribal leadership and the U.S. Government's continued violation of native treaty rights.

Required Texts

You are not required to purchase any books for this course. All readings, audio files, and video clips will be available on the course website.

While you certainly may choose to purchase the books you'll need to complete your research assignment, you certainly don't have to. Any and all texts you'll need are available through the UO libraries.



Norman Rockwell's "Rosie the Riveter," *The Saturday Evening Post*, 1943

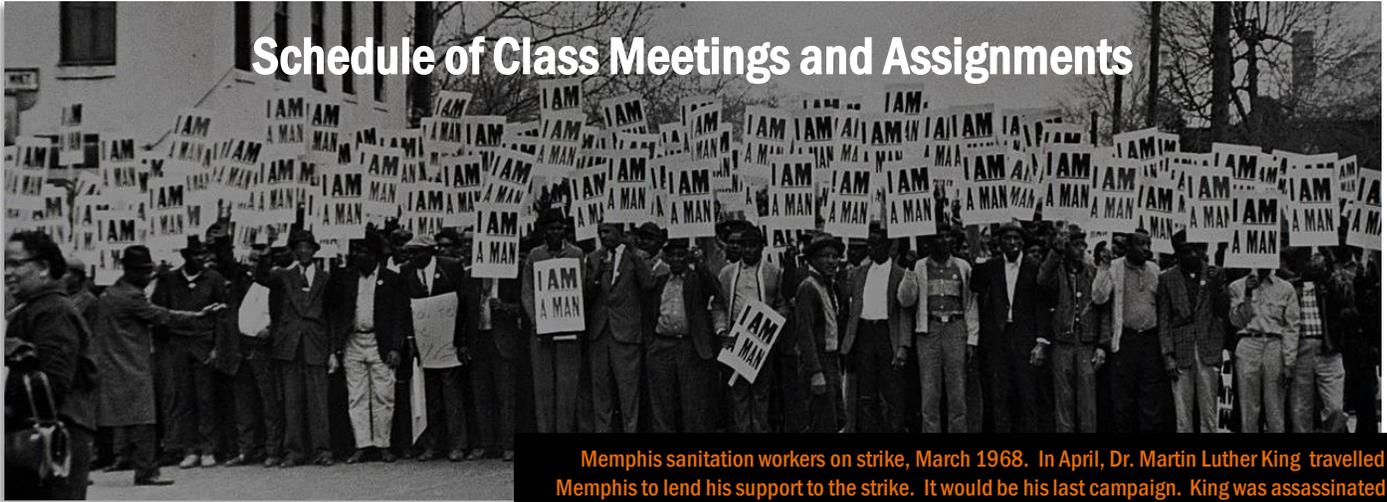


A longshoreman battles a police officer during the Pacific Coast Longshore Strike, San Francisco, 1934.

Instructor Contact

I am here to help you. I encourage you to come see me during my scheduled office hours (Mondays and Wednesdays, 3:30-4:30), or if you can't make those, let me know and I'm happy to find another time to meet. You can come see me to talk about any of the material covered in class, a reading you didn't quite understand, or if there's some aspect of history you'd like to know more about. I'm also more than happy to read early drafts of your paper and make suggestions for improvements. Or, you can just stop by just to chat. Email is the best way to get ahold of me. I will respond to all student emails within 24 hours.

Schedule of Class Meetings and Assignments



Memphis sanitation workers on strike, March 1968. In April, Dr. Martin Luther King travelled to Memphis to lend his support to the strike. It would be his last campaign. King was assassinated in Memphis on April 4th.

October 1: Introductions and Choosing a Research Topic

October 8: The Architecture of the Historical Article and Finding Secondary Sources

For class read: Jules Boykoff and Martha Gies, “‘We’re going to defend ourselves’: The Portland Chapter of the Black Panther Party and the Local Media Response,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 111 (Fall 2010): 278-231;

Marc James Carpenter, “‘Justice and Fair Play for the American Indian’: Harry Lane, Robert Hamilton, and a Vision of Native American Modernity,” *Pacific Historical Review* 87 (Spring 2018): 305-332;

Marcia Chatelain, “The Miracle of the Golden Arches: Race and Fast Food in Los Angeles,” *Pacific Historical Review* 85 (August 2016): 325-353;

William G. Robbins, “The Malheur Occupation and the Problem with History,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 117 (Winter 2016): 574-603.

October 15: Tour of Special Collections and Finding and Using Primary Sources

PROSPECTUS DUE BY NOON, FRIDAY OCTOBER 25th

October 22: No Class—Individual Meetings to discuss Prospectus

October 29: Writing History

For class read: Patricia Nelson Limerick, “Dancing with Professors: The Trouble with Academic Prose,” in Patricia Nelson Limerick, *Something in the Soil: Legacies and Reckonings in the New West* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000), 333-341;

Kate Brown, “Gridded Lives: Why Kazakhstan and Montana are Nearly the Same Place,” *The American Historical Review* 106 (February 2001): 17-48;

Richard White, “Here is the Problem: An Introduction,” *The Journal of American History* 89 (June 2002): 17-19.

November 5: Fun with Footnotes!

ROUGH DRAFT DUE BY NOON, FRIDAY NOVEMBER 8th

November 12 Groups A and B Meetings

November 19: Groups C and D Meetings

November 26: No Class—Work on final Drafts

December 3: Wrap Up
Meet at Falling Sky in EMU

FINAL DRAT DUE BY 12:30 pm, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 5th