

**History Workshop | 506:299:03**  
**Spring 2015**  
**Tuesday 2:50-5:50 p.m.**  
**Hardenbergh B6 (College Ave. Campus)**

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**This syllabus and all course materials will be posted on our course Sakai site:**  
**<https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal>**



### **Course Description**

The History Workshop is designed to teach undergraduate majors the craft of history. Instead of mastering “the facts,” students will learn what it is that historians actually do—discover sources, ask questions about them, and put good ideas into stories, narratives, and other kinds of compelling presentations. Through a variety of in-class activities, homework assignments, and larger projects, students will spend the majority of their time *doing* history rather than studying it.

This section of the History Workshop will ask how we can do history using a short period of time, a specific problem, and a particular place. The course is focused primarily on the 20<sup>th</sup>-century United States and is divided into three units—1945-1959, environmental politics, and Central Park—which will allow us to uncover the

complicated histories of ordinary things in the postwar era, investigate the changing ideas and politics people have attached to nature, and explore the multiple histories of a single landscape.

The first unit will begin by asking how we can understand historical change through everyday experiences of homecoming, mobility, and consumption. The second unit will examine the emergence of environmental politics in the twentieth-century United States, using the first Earth Day in April 1970 as a pivotal historical moment that not only drew together different existing strands of environmental activism but also created a new mode of environmentalism that was global in scope. In the third unit, students will research the histories of Central Park as a public space and use the methods of public history to curate and present their research findings in a collaborative digital form. Throughout the semester we will also consider how 21<sup>st</sup>-century technologies have changed the ways history is done and offer us different avenues into the strange new world of the past.

### **Course Objectives**

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By the end of the semester, students enrolled in the History Workshop will be able to do the following:

#### *Research: How to find things*

- Formulate a research question
- Distinguish between primary and secondary sources
- Locate primary sources by using a variety of online databases (both through the Rutgers Libraries and in the public domain)
- Conduct keyword searches of newspapers, periodicals, and other digitized collections in a logical and systematic way (rather than random Googling)
- Locate secondary sources in print and digital format
- Know how to access sources through the Rutgers Libraries
- Organize research findings and develop a note-taking system

#### *Interpretation: How to make sense of things*

- Analyze and interpret a range of textual, audio, visual, and material primary sources (e.g., government documents, laws, political platforms, speeches, maps, statistics, newspaper articles, essays, magazines, pamphlets, letters, interviews, diaries, memos, novels, paintings, photographs, posters, advertisements, film and television footage)
- Situate a primary source in its historical context
- Critically evaluate websites and other online sources

#### *Explanation: How and why things have changed over time*

- Construct an argument based on evidence from primary sources
- Evaluate different kinds of evidence
- Explain conflicting evidence
- Organize and outline an argument according to a logical sequence of ideas
- Incorporate secondary sources into an argument

- Cite a source correctly according to standard bibliographic conventions
- Paraphrase a source effectively
- Integrate a quotation smoothly and logically into your own prose
- Understand what plagiarism is and how and why to avoid it

*Presentation: Communicating ideas and research to an audience*

- Summarize a primary source and explain its significance to the class
- Write a brief, well-constructed account of research
- Deliver a clear, coherent, and compelling oral presentation
- Use methods and technologies of public history
- Curate a collaborative digital exhibition based on the class's Central Park research

## **Course Requirements**

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### *Attendance Policy*

Students are expected to attend all sessions. In fact, the success of this workshop depends on your completing assignments and on your active and informed participation in our weekly meetings.

**More than 1 unexcused absence (i.e., other than a documented illness, documented emergency, religious observance, or university-approved absence) will have an adverse effect on your grade.** For each unexcused absence beyond the 1 allowed, your final course grade will be lowered by 3 percentage points (e.g., if you accumulate 3 unexcused absences during the semester and have a grade of 85%, your grade will be lowered to 79%). Please note that an excused absence does not mean that you email us an excuse before class; an excused absence means that you provide a note from a doctor, dean, or coach that explains your absence. **All absences, whether excused or unexcused, should be entered into the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/>, where you will indicate the date and reason for your absence.** We will receive an automatic email from this system, so there is no need to send us a separate email regarding your attendance.

Attendance involves not only physical presence, but also mental presence. Laptops may be used for in-class research activities only. We consider each of you a valuable member of our shared intellectual community this semester, and we expect that you will conduct yourselves accordingly.

### *Academic Integrity*

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The foundation of this course and any scholarly endeavor is academic integrity. We fully expect that all students will adhere to principles of academic integrity in their work. All written work must be a student's own original work. (Collaboration on essay assignments is not permitted.) Any and all references to other sources within your own written work must be properly documented according to the guidelines in the Chicago Manual of Style, which is available at the Alexander Library.

You are responsible for understanding the Rutgers policies regarding academic integrity, as outlined here:

<http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity>

Ignorance of these policies or the consequences for violations is not an acceptable excuse.

The Rutgers Writing Program has an excellent webpage that details some of the subtleties of plagiarism, which we urge you to read carefully:

<http://wp.rutgers.edu/courses/plagiarism>

The Rutgers Libraries have produced an interactive online tutorial, which we also urge you to consult, that provides concrete examples of what is and what is not plagiarism:

<http://www.scc.rutgers.edu/douglass/sal/plagiarism/intro.html>

If you have any questions about quoting, paraphrasing, or referring to the work of others, please ask! It is better to be safe than sorry, better to have too many citations than not enough and thus run the risk of unintentional plagiarism.

**Any and all violations of academic integrity in this course will result in the formal consequences and disciplinary action that are outlined in the Rutgers policy on academic integrity. We have a zero-tolerance policy for plagiarism and refer all violations directly to the Office of Student Conduct.**

### Assignments

In addition to regular class attendance and participation, students will be required to complete weekly writing assignments (1-2 pages), two 5-page analytical essays, and a collaborative digital history project. The reading assignments must be completed for the date on which they are listed. **You will need to bring your readings and your writing assignments to class every single week without exception.**

### Grading

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- 45% 8 short weekly writing assignments in your “lab notebook” (500 or 1200 words); the first assignment is worth 3%, and the subsequent 7 assignments are worth 6% each  
**\*You must bring a hard copy to class each week in order to receive credit.**
- 15% 5-page analytical essay on a postwar magazine (assignment description and magazines to be distributed)
- 15% 5-page analytical essay on the reception of *Silent Spring* (assignment description to be distributed)
- 15% Collaborative digital history project on Central Park
- 10% Class participation

\*The 8 lab notebook assignments will in many ways constitute the intellectual substance of the course. They are not optional, and **we will not accept a major paper assignment from anyone who has any missing lab notebook assignments.** Late penalties will apply to both short weekly assignments and any delayed major paper submissions.

\*Please note that **late paper submissions will be penalized by half a letter grade (e.g., from B+ to B) for each day they are late,** unless you have obtained a letter from a doctor or a dean explaining why you were unable to complete your work on time.

\*If you require specific accommodations due to a disability, please contact us as soon as possible so that we can make arrangements for you. The Rutgers Office of Disability Services has important resources online: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/>

*Required book (at the Rutgers Bookstore and on reserve at Alexander Library):*

Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (Houghton Mifflin Company anniversary edition, 2002).  
Paperback edition. ISBN-10: 0618249060

**Additional course readings and assignments will be posted on Sakai.**

## **Schedule**

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### **Part 1: A TIME: 1945-1959**

Methodological goals: Understanding historiography and the differences between reading primary and secondary sources. Constructing different historical and historiographical narratives of the same process (suburbanization); working with advertisements as a primary source. Interpreting different kinds of sources and contradictory accounts of a single event

#### **1. January 20: Introduction**

##### *In-class activities*

- Sources: What they are, how to find them, and how historians use them
- Lab notebooks: What they are and how to use them
- Interpreting a primary source
- Models for historical analysis: How to write (and not to write) about primary sources
- Research in historical newspaper databases

## 2. January 27: Everyday Life in Wartime: Learning from the Archives

Writing assignment due: In your lab notebook, fill out the note-taking template for Henry Luce, “The American Century” (1941):  
<http://books.google.com/books?id=I0kEAAAAMBAJ&q=luce#v=snippet&q=luce&f=false>

*In-class activities:*

- Discussion of “The American Century”
- Mini-lectures on the WWII home front and food rationing
- Learning to find your way through a database:
  - Rutgers Oral History Archives (ROHA)
  - North American Women’s Diaries and Letters
  - Library of Congress American Memory: After the Day of Infamy

## 3. February 3: Homecomings

Reading assignment due: Excerpt from Glenn Altschuler & Stuart Blumin, *The G.I. Bill: A New Deal for Veterans* (Oxford University Press, 2009) [Sakai]; Margot Canaday, “Building a Straight State: Sexuality and Social Citizenship under the 1944 G. I. Bill,” *Journal of American History* 90, no. 3 (2003): 935-957. [Sakai]

Writing assignment due: Lab notebook: Compare Altschuler & Blumin’s interpretation of the G.I. Bill with Canaday’s (1200 words)

*In-class activities:*

- Discussion: Historical interpretations of the G.I. Bill
- Mini-lecture: Japanese-American internment
- Analyzing a wartime government propaganda film
  - U.S. Office of War Information, Japanese Relocation, 1943 (9:28)  
<https://archive.org/details/Japanese1943>
- Research/discussion: Personal experiences of Japanese-American internment and homecomings
  - Work in groups to find and analyze a primary source from JARDA (Japanese American Relocation Digital Archives) and present your findings to the class  
<http://www.calisphere.universityofcalifornia.edu/jarda/browse/personal-experiences.html>
  - Carey McWilliams, “Strange Homecoming,” *The Nation*, December 30, 1944, pp. 797-98. [Handout]
  - U.S. Department of the Interior, “People in Motion: The Postwar Adjustment of the Evacuated Japanese Americans” (1947), pp. 1-35 and 187-203  
<https://ia902701.us.archive.org/4/items/peopleinmotionpo00unit/peopleinmotionpo00unit.pdf>

#### 4. February 10: Postwar Suburban Landscapes

Reading assignment due: Eric Larrabee, “The Six Thousand Houses That Levitt Built,” *Harper’s*, September 1, 1948, pp. 79-88. [Sakai]

Writing assignment due: Lab notebook: How does Larrabee explain the relationship between Levitt and the veteran? (500 words)

*In-class activities:*

- Discussion of Larrabee essay
- Mini-lecture: “The General Motors of the Housing Industry”
- Screening of *Our Home Town, Levittown, Pa.* (1954) (21:45). What can we not know from this source? What kinds of questions does this source not allow us to answer?
- Discussion of conflicting contemporary narratives of suburbanization:
  - “Race Trouble in the North,” *U.S. News and World Report*, August 30, 1957, 29-32. [Handout]
  - William H. Whyte, Jr., “A Plan to Save Vanishing U.S. Countryside,” *Life* 47 (August 17, 1959). [Handout]
  - Ben H. Bagdikian, “The Rape of the Land,” *Saturday Evening Post*, June 18, 1966, pp. 25-259, 86-94. [Handout]
- Research/discussion: Using advertisements as historical evidence
  - Work in groups of 3 to analyze an advertisement for household technologies in the 1950s [Digital copies of advertisements to be provided] and present your group’s findings to the class

#### 5. February 17: The Kitchen Debate and Cold War Politics of Consumption

**Writing assignment due: Paper #1 (see detailed assignment description on Sakai)**

*In-class activities:*

- Screening of Kitchen Debate  
<http://www.c-span.org/video/?110721-1/nixonkhrushchev-kitchen-debate>  
What kinds of questions do we need to ask to put the Kitchen Debate in its historical context?
- Mini-lecture: Cold War politics
- Discussion: Interpreting presidential speeches
  - The Truman Doctrine (1947) [Handout]
- Discussion: Interpreting confidential sources
  - U.S. Ambassador Llewellyn E. Thompson’s Telegram on Plans for the American National Exhibition, Nov. 17, 1958 [Handout]
  - Jerry Marlatt letter to President Eisenhower, July 10, 1959 [Handout]
- Discussion: Interpreting conflicting published narratives of an event
  - “The Two Worlds: A Day-Long Debate,” *New York Times*, July 25, 1959. [Handout]
  - Ye. Litoshko, “A Talk to the Point,” *Pravda*, July 25, 1959, 1-2. Translation. [Handout]

- Discussion: How can we form a research question about the connection between the Kitchen Debate and cultural politics of consumption? What kinds of sources would we need to answer our question? What did your magazine suggest about consumption in the postwar era?
  - Screening of *Buying Food* (1950) (11:14)
  - Alex Henderson, “Why We Eat Better,” photograph from *Better Living* magazine, November 1951
  - V. Ye. Semichastny, Speech on Communist Youth and Consumerism, *Pravda*, January 30, 1959. Translation. [Handout]
  - Jean Harris, “You Have 1001 Servants in Your Kitchen,” *House Beautiful*, March 1951, 74-77, 150. [Handout]

## Part 2: A PROBLEM: Environmental Politics in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

Methodological goals: Using textual and visual sources as historical evidence. Using government documents to research legislative history. Comparing archival and media accounts of an event; explaining how and why an event (Earth Day) happened as it did. Explaining the origins and evolution of a social movement (environmentalism); exploring the possibilities and challenges of writing recent history

### 6. February 24: Environmental Narratives

Reading assignment due: Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*, chapters 1-6

Writing assignment due: Lab notebook: Analyzing sources on “The Great Cranberry Scare.” See assignment description on Sakai. (1200 words)

#### *In-class activities:*

- Mini-lecture: Histories and Representations of Nature
- Research/discussion: Using Artstor
  - Work in groups of 3 to find and analyze paintings and photographs that reveal an American landscape tradition [List of artists to be provided]. What kinds of arguments might you make using your particular image?
  - Present your group’s visual analysis to the class
- Discussion: Ideas about nature
  - Excerpt from John Muir, *My First Summer in the Sierra* (1911) [Handout]
  - Gifford Pinchot, *The Fight for Conservation* (1911), chapter IV (“Principles of Conservation”), pp. 40-52.  
<https://archive.org/details/fightforconserva00pinc>
  - Excerpt from Aldo Leopold, *Thinking Like a Mountain* (1949). [Handout]
  - Excerpt from Barry Commoner, *The Closing Circle* (1971). [Handout]



## 7. March 3: Environmental Legislation

Reading assignment due: Carson, *Silent Spring*, chapters 7-12

Writing assignment due: Lab notebook: questions on *Silent Spring*. See assignment description on Sakai. (1200 words)

*In-class activity:*

- Library session on government documents with History Librarian Tom Glynn (**\*\*\*Class will meet in Alexander Library, Room 413.\*\*\***)
- Use the Rutgers Libraries' congressional databases to research legislative histories and debates over one of these major pieces of environmental legislation: the Wilderness Act (1964), the Clean Air Act (1970), the Clean Water Act (1970), or the Endangered Species Act (1973).

## 8. March 10: Earth Day and Environmental Politics

Reading assignment due: Carson, *Silent Spring*, chapters 13-17

Writing assignment due: Lab notebook: Position paper in the persona of a lawmaker arguing for or against your chosen piece of legislation. (500 words)

*In-class activities:*

- Mini-lecture: Earth Day, 1970
- Interpreting archival documents from the Senator Gaylord Nelson collection
  - *The Gaylord Nelson Newsletter* (November 1969). [Handout]
  - United Auto Workers leaflet (October 1970). [Handout]
  - David Hendin, "Man and His World: Black Environmentalists See Another Side of Pollution," *Enterprise Science Service*, 1970. [Handout]
  - News Release Plan for Nelson April Speaking Tour (April 1970). <http://content.wisconsinhistory.org/cdm/ref/collection/tp/id/29642>
  - Madison Earth Day Speech, 1970. <http://content.wisconsinhistory.org/cdm/ref/collection/tp/id/29642>
  - "Earth Day 1970--Mass Movement Begins," *The Gaylord Nelson Newsletter* (Washington, D.C.: G. Nelson, 1970). <http://content.wisconsinhistory.org/cdm/ref/collection/tp/id/49116>
- Screening and discussion of the CBS News feature on the first Earth Day, 1970 <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3480E41AA956A42B>
- Discussion: How can we understand different modes of environmental politics?
  - Gaylord Nelson to Frank Stanton, 7 April 1971, Gaylord Nelson Collection. [Handout]
  - Denis Hayes, "The Beginning," in Steve Cotton, ed., *Earth Day—The Beginning* (New York: Bantam Books, 1970), xiii-xv. [Handout]
  - "39 Ways to Save the Earth," *Whole Earth Catalog* (July 1970). [Handout]
  - Dave Foreman and Bill Haywood, eds., *Ecodefense: A Field Guide to Monkeywrenching* (1985), pp. 8-11, 18-21. [Handout]

## 9. March 24: Climate Change

Reading assignment due: Paul Sabin, “‘The Ultimate Environmental Dilemma’: Making a Place for Historians in the Climate Change and Energy Debates,” *Environmental History* 15, no. 1 (2010): 76-93. [Sakai]

**Writing assignment due: Paper #2 (see detailed assignment description on Sakai)**

*In-class activities:*

- Discussion: *Silent Spring* and its reception
- Mini-lecture and discussion: Climate modeling and the politics of global warming
- Screening and discussion of PCC Fifth Assessment Report Synthesis Report, Dec. 2, 2014 (15:53)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F-Hcu3jH8G4>
- Research/discussion: How would you explain the historical context for the People’s Climate March (Sept. 21, 2014)? Work in groups of 3 to determine what kinds of sources exist on the People’s Climate March. Can we use them as historical evidence? How?
- Discussion of Sabin article and the role of historians in present-day environmental politics

## Part 3: A PLACE: Central Park

Methodological goals: The last section of the course will use the research skills you have developed this semester to gather materials on specific aspects of Central Park, work collaboratively to present and explain those materials in a digital format, and present your findings to the class. The final project will be a collaborative WordPress site with a map, timeline, texts, and images.

## 10. March 31: Seeing Central Park

Reading assignment: Colin Fisher, “Nature in the City: Urban Environmental History and Central Park,” *OAH Magazine of History* 25:4 (2011): 27-31. [Sakai]

Writing assignment due: Lab notebook: According to Fisher, how does Central Park complicate the boundary between nature and culture? (500 words)

*In-class activities:*

- Discussion of Fisher essay
- Exploration of materials in digital collections at New-York Historical Society, New York Public Library and [www.centralparknyc.org/](http://www.centralparknyc.org/)
- Reading maps of the city
- Assigning topics and dividing into research teams.

Homework assignment: Find and analyze an image, map, or film clip of Central Park

**11. April 7: Parks and Recreation: Controversies**

Reading assignment: Marta Gutman, "Race, Place and Play: Robert Moses and the WPA Swimming Pools in New York City," *JSAH* 67:4 (December 2008): 532-554.  
[Sakai]

Writing assignment: 2 lab notebook entries: (1) Analyze your image, map, or film clip of Central Park (500 words); (2) What are Gutman's major arguments? (500 words)

*In-class activities:*

- Discussion of Gutman article: What do swimming pools teach us about the racial politics of the 20<sup>th</sup> century?
- Exploring the Park's famous controversies
- Screening of clips from *The Central Park Five* (2012)

Homework assignment: Choose and analyze two primary sources related to your topic

**12. April 14: Putting Primary Sources in Historical Context**

Writing assignment: Lab notebook: Analyze your primary sources. Why have you chosen these particular sources? What makes them interesting/important? What can you learn from them? What can't you learn? In other words, start to imagine a broader context for the information you have found. (1200 words)

*In-class activities:*

- Rutgers Digital Humanities Librarian Francesca Giannetti on an introduction to WordPress
- Collaborative work in research teams
- Finding and analyzing secondary sources

**13. April 21: Creating a Digital History of Central Park**

Writing assignment due: First draft of 3 paragraphs of your team's section of the WordPress site [Bring hard copy and digital copy to class]

*In-class activities:*

Assembling and curating materials

Editing commentary

Writing for a public audience. What do you want readers to learn?

**14. April 28: Presentations and Celebration**