**Power and Violence in American History**

This course introduces students to what historians do. We will explore some of the ways historians read, write and think about the past as well as how historians use sources and conduct research. What kinds of questions do historians ask? What types of answers do they offer? How do they make their case, and on what do they base it? We will be looking at histories related to power and violence in the United States to consider these questions and to develop the crucial historian’s skills of critical reading, analytical thinking, and careful writing. You will use these skills in writing your final paper, which will be based on original research in historical documents and will analyze an episode of violence. Many of our readings examine the relationship of violence to race, class, gender and the state. Most of them come from post-Civil War American history.

Readings:

The readings for this course will include primary sources produced in the period studied, secondary sources written by historians. The readings will include articles, excerpts and short pieces as well as several complete books.

Grading:

Participation: 10%

Paper 1 (3 pages): 10%

Paper 2: (3 pages): 20%

Paper 3: (5 pages): 25%

Paper 4: (10 pages): 35%

This course centers on weekly discussion of assigned texts and on writing about them. In order for it to be successful, everyone must do the assigned reading and come prepared to talk about it. Students will substantially revise papers. Successful revisions will improve the recorded grade. We will go over revisions in class and I will also be available to discuss revisions during office hours.

Please purchase and use a copy of: Strunk and White, *The Elements of Style*

Week 1: Thinking Historically about Violence

Tuesday 1/17: Introduction

Thursday 1/19: Hobsbawm, “The Rules of Violence”; Graham, “The Paradox of American Violence: A Historical Appraisal”; Bellesiles, *Lethal Imagination: Violence and Brutality in American History*, introduction; Williams, “Violence” in *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*

Week 2: Thinking about Violence in Primary Sources

Tuesday1/24:

Reading: Maya Angelou, *Gather Together in My Name*

Thursday 1/26: **Due: 3-page diagnostic paper (on an incident of violence in *Gather Together in My Name*)**

Reading: Selected primary sources

Week 3: Violences of Conquest and Imperialism

Tuesday 1/31: John Murrin, “Beneficiaries of Catastophe: The English Colonies in America.” Russell Thornton, *American Indian holocaust and survival : a population history since 1492*, selections. Veracini, Lorenzo. “Settler Collective, Founding Violence and Disavowal: The Settler Colonial Situation.” *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 29, no. 4 (November 1, 2008): 363-379.

Thursday 2/2: Andrea Smith, “Christian conquest and the sexual colonization of native women.” Antonia Castañeda, “Engendering the History of Alta California, 1769-1848: Gender, Sexuality, and the Family.” *California History* 76, no. 2/3 (July 1, 1997): 230-259. McCormack, Brian T. “Conjugal Violence, Sex, Sin, and Murder in the Mission Communities of Alta California.” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 16, no. 3 (2007): 391-415

Week 4: Representations of Violence

Tuesday 2/7: Kenny, “The Molly Maguires in Popular Culture”; Leach, “Chaining the Tiger: The Mob Stigma and the Working Class, 1863-1894.” Linda Heidenreich, “Mobilizing Linear Histories: Violence, the Printed Word, and the Construction of Euro-American Identities in an ‘American County’.” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 23, no. 3 (April 1, 2004): 41-77.

**Due: Revisions, Paper 1**

Thursday 2/9:Guha, “The Prose of Counterinsurgency”; selected primary and secondary sources on the 1862 Minnesota Sioux Uprising

Week 5: Vigilantism

Tuesday 2/14: Gordon, “Vigilantism” (and other selections in The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction); Mike Davis "What is a vigilante man?": white violence in California history”; article on Anti-Chinese violence in the west

**Due: Paper 2**

Thursday 2/16: Clarke, James W. “Without Fear or Shame: Lynching, Capital Punishment and the Subculture of Violence in the American South.” *British Journal of Political Science* 28, no. 2 (April 1, 1998): 269-289. Christopher Waldrep “Word and deed: the language of lynching, 1820-1953”; selected primary sources, incl. images from Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America; Billie Holiday, “Strange Fruit.”

Week 6: Gender, Sexuality and Violence

Tuesday 2/21: Davis, “Rape, Racism, and the Myth of the Black Rapist.”; Kelly, “In the Heart of Trouble: Race, Sex, and the International Workers Defense League” in *Hammer and Hoe;* Jew, Victor. “‘Chinese Demons’: The Violent Articulation of Chinese Otherness and Interracial Sexuality in the U.S. Midwest, 1885-1889.” *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 2 (December 1, 2003): 389-410.

Thursday 2/23: Chauncey, “Epilogue: The Strange Career of the Closet” in *Gay New York*; John C. Pettegrew, “Homosociality and the legal sanction of male heterosexual aggression in the early twentieth century”; Linda Gordon, “Family violence, feminism, and social control”

Week 7: Class and Violence

Tuesday 2/28: Taft and Ross, “American Labor Violence: Its Causes, Character and Outcome,”; Kenny, *Making Sense of the Molly Maguires*, intro and first chapter

**Due: Revisions, Paper 2**

Thursday 3/1: Kenny, *Making Sense of the Molly Maguires*, chapts. 2-5

Week 8: Class and Violence continued

Tuesday 3/6: Kenny, Making Sense of the Molly Maguires, chapts. 6-9

**Due: Paper 3, Analytic Essay on Making Sense of the Molly Maguires**

Thursday 3/8: Kelly, Prologue and Chapt. 2 “Organize or Die: Communists and Anti-Radical Violence” in Hammer and Hoe;Andrews, *Killing for Coal: America’s Deadliest Labor War*, first 3 chapters

**Handout: Some Episodes of Violence in American History** (to facilitate selection of a topic for your final paper)

Week 9: Violent Environments

Tuesday 3/13:Andrews, *Killing for Coal: America’s Deadliest Labor War*, last chapters

Thursday 3/15: Valerie Kuletz, “Invisible spaces, violent places: Cold War nuclear and militarized landscapes.”; S. Ravi Rajan, “Toward a metaphysic of environmental violence: the case of the Bhopal gas disaster.”; Mathur, Chandana. “Twice Poisoned Bhopal: Notes on the Continuing Aftermath of the World’s Worst Industrial Disaster.” *International Labor and Working-Class History* 62, no. 1 (October 1, 2002): 69-75.

Week 10: Violence and the State

Tuesday 3/20: Hannah Arendt, “War making and state making as organized crime.”; Leo Kuper, “The genocidal state: an overview.”;” Julie Skurski and Fernando Coronil “States of violence and the violence of states.”

**Due: Paper 3, Revisions**

Thursday 3/22: Mazower, “State Violence in the Twentieth Century”; course reader

**Week 11: SPRING BREAK –no class**

Week 12: The Violence of Policy

Tuesday 4/3: Russel Lawrence Barsh, “Ecocide, nutrition, and the "vanishing Indian"”; Davis, “A world’s end: Drought, famine and imperialism (1896-1902).” *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 10, no. 2 (June 1, 1999): 3-46; Shiva, Vandana. “Geopolitics of Food: America’s Use of Food as a Weapon.” *Economic and Political Weekly* 23, no. 18 (April 30, 1988): 881-882.

Thursday 4/5: Davis, “The Case for Letting Malibu Burn.”; Largent, Mark A. “‘The Greatest Curse of the Race’: Eugenic Sterilization in Oregon, 1909-1983.” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 103, no. 2 (July 1, 2002): 188-209; Drive-By-Truckers, “Puttin’ People on the Moon.”

**Due: Final paper research question and annotated bibliography.**

Week 13: Violent Spaces

Tuesday 4/10: Pagan, Eduardo Obregon. “Los Angeles Geopolitics and the Zoot Suit Riot, 1943.” *Social Science History* 24, no. 1 (2000): 223-256. Hobsbawm, “Cities and Insurrections”

Thursday 4/12: Dennis Childs, “Angola, convict leasing, and the annulment of freedom: the vectors of architectural and discursive violence in the U.S. "slavery of prison"”; Loewen, *Sundown Towns*, selections

Week 14: Violent Resistance

Tuesday 4/17: Freehling, “Denmark Vesey’s Antipaternalistic Reality”; Williams, “Negroes with Guns.”

Thursday 4/19: Hobsbawm, *Bandits*, selections. Davis, “The People’s Airforce.”

Week 15: Recent Violences

Tuesday 4/24: Akers, “Militarizing the border : death warrant for migrant workers”; Joy James, “Erasing the spectacle of racialized state violence.”;

**Due: Final paper rough draft**

Thursday 4/26: Conclusions. Wypijewski, “A Boy’s Life: For Matthew Shepard’s killers, what does it take to pass as a man?” *HARPERS* 299, no. 1792 (1999): 61-75.; Kim, “Home is Where the Han is: A Korean American Perspective on the Los Angeles Upheavals.”; Sublime “April 26, 1992”

Week 16: Reading Review and Recitation Week:

Tuesday: **Edited Final Paper Drafts Returned** (and discussion of suggested revisions).

Thursday: I will be available during class time to help you with your final papers. I encourage you to come in and talk about your papers, but attendance is not mandatory.

**Day of Final Exam: Paper 3 Due (10 pages)**