

Worcester State College HI 217  
MWF 12:30-1:20, Sullivan Room 106  
<http://www.wschi217.com>

## US Social History

Spring 2009  
Tona Hangen  
Sullivan 327B, x8688  
e: [thangen@worchester.edu](mailto:thangen@worchester.edu)

### Course Description and Objectives:

What is “social history”? How is it different from other historical methods and perspectives? What has this field contributed to the broader discipline of history? And what does it mean to “do” social history?

Let’s begin with the working definition that social history explores the world of ordinary Americans, who often left little record of their own. In this course, we will explore topics in the social history of the United States, through a wide variety of sources including newspapers, periodicals, tracts, photographs, public records (like census and death records), private writings, didactic literature, fiction and oral history. You will gain experience with the work of social history in your readings and assignments. You’ll consider and experiment with ways of writing history that take “the little guy” (and gal) into account.

### Required Texts:

You will need to purchase three books:

Nancy Walker, *Women’s Magazines 1940-1960* (Bedford, ISBN 978-0312102012)

Roy Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours for What We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City 1870-1920* (Cambridge U Press, ISBN 978-0521313971)

Pam Munoz Ryan, *Esperanza Rising* (Blue Sky Press 2002, ISBN 978-0439120425)

We will also be reading material posted online as PDF files. You need (free) Adobe Reader or FoxIt Reader to access these files. I recommend printing them if you own your own printer, or bringing your laptop to class if you choose to read them online.

In addition, we will rely on many online materials, including the free US history textbook online at [www.digitalhistory.org](http://www.digitalhistory.org) and issues of the [Journal of Social History](http://www.historycooperative.org/jshindex.html), available through Academic Search Premier at the [WSC library homepage](http://www.wsc.libraryhomepage) and indexed online at the History Cooperative (<http://www.historycooperative.org/jshindex.html>).

### Course Requirements:

This course involves extensive reading and writing. You will be expected to read 50-100 pages a week (sometimes more), and to write approximately 20-25 pages over the course of the term. You will need to put in consistent effort during the whole semester. You’ll need to have (or learn) basic computer research skills. To take advantage of multiple learning styles, and to help create a community of learning in this classroom, this course will assess your learning in several different ways.

- **Attendance and participation** in class (15%) - I will take attendance in each class session. You should be prompt, present, and ready for discussion each day. I expect class discussion will be lively, respectful, and substantive. Your A&P grade also includes your oral presentation day.

- **Exams (30%)** - we will have 3 closed-book hour-long exams. The last test will take place during the final exam period but will be the equivalent of the other two exams. Your lowest test score is dropped; for that reason there are no makeup exams. Exams will be on March 6<sup>th</sup>, April 10<sup>th</sup>, and May 11<sup>th</sup>.
- **Oral Presentation** (included in class participation grade) - you make one presentation sometime during the term. On that day you'll be presenting your findings in the form of a short paper/blog post for your classmates to consider (graded separately), and an oral presentation in class. More than one person might present on a presentation day. On days you're not presenting, you are responsible for being prepared to contribute supportively to the discussion.
- **Food on Tasting Day (5%)** - for our discussion of American food folkways, bring a food to share on Friday, March 6<sup>th</sup>.
- **Lesson Plan (10%)** - Based on the young adult novel, *Esperanza Rising*, you'll turn in a clear and complete lesson plan for use in an elementary, middle or high school classroom. Guidelines to be given later. Due on April 29<sup>th</sup>.
- **Response papers (15%)** - 3 brief (2-page) papers that represent your thoughtful response to the reading assignments. Some may be posted to the course blog. You'll do three of these throughout the term. The first is due on Friday, January 30<sup>th</sup>. Another one will be on your oral presentation day, and the third will be on a different presentation day of your choosing.
- **Digital Project (10%)** - as a class, we will add new material to an existing digital archive of Worcester local history. We will either be using the local history collection at the Worcester Public Library or the holdings of the Worcester Historical Museum. This will involve a class visit to one of those locations, scanning documentary material, and preparing that material to be uploaded to the internet. Due on February 20<sup>th</sup>.
- **Research paper (15%)** - You will write a term paper (8-10 pages) based on original research. Topic & bibliography are due on April 17<sup>th</sup> and the completed paper is due on May 6<sup>th</sup>.

A&P, includes oral presentation	15%
Food on tasting day	5%
Response papers 3 @ 5%	15%
Exams - drop one, so 2 @ 15%	30%
Digital project	10%
Lesson plan	10%
Research paper, 5% topic/bibliography, 10% paper	15%
	100%

### The Fine Print:

- **My in-class technology policy:** we will be busy in every class session, and we don't need any technological distractions. Silence your cell phones before you enter the classroom. If you choose to bring a laptop to class, I expect that you will be using it **only** for taking notes or accessing the course's relevant electronic documents to refer to during discussion. Do not use your laptop in class to surf the internet, check your email, update your Myspace page, or the like.
- On papers and exams, doing your own work is absolutely essential - my general policy is that if you plagiarize a paper or cheat on an exam, you will fail the assignment and you may also fail the class. In your writing, you **must** cite the sources of any information or ideas which are not your own work. Please familiarize yourself with the college policy on Academic Honesty in the Student Handbook.
- If you have a documented disability (learning or otherwise), and you need a reasonable accommodation made for you in this course, please consult with me immediately at the outset of the course so we can design a solution that will help you be successful in the class. Also, we will be having one tasting day, so if you have a food allergy, please let me know.

## **Syllabus:**

Most weeks will follow the same pattern:

Monday - historical context, introduction & overview of the week's documents. Monday reading will be for background & information, in the online digital history textbook or other reference sources. When there's no specific assigned reading, you'll need to show your own independent initiative to find reliable material to read on the assigned topic.

Wednesday - we get into the "meat" of the week's documents, which are the reading for that day. We read & discuss for content - what we learn about ordinary people from this document, and how the document's creators got this information.

Friday - a presentation day. Someone takes a turn presenting her/his own findings, conclusions, and arguments based on the week's material. In our class discussion we work to connect this week's work to other topics and issues we've covered. Exams are also given on some Fridays.

## **Unit One: the Social History of Work and Workers**

### **Week 1**

1. Wed 1/21 - course introduction

2. Fri 1/23 - what is social history? - Discussion Day

Reading: an article from the Journal of Social History & prepare to discuss it in class (see assignment handout)

### **Week 2**

3. Mon 1/26 - social history as history of workers; history of social history as a discipline

Reading: begin reading Gutman's essay

4. Wed 1/28 - Document: Herbert Gutman, "Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America 1815-1919" [pdf]

We will be discussing Gutman's findings for content - what do we learn about industrializing America from 1815-1919? Why those dates? What does it mean to "industrialize"? Whom does Gutman focus on & why?

5. Fri 1/30 - Response Paper #1 due on Gutman (Everyone does this one)

Discussion to be based on your papers & ideas from your reading, focusing on Gutman's scholarly technique and on the importance of this essay in the field of social history.

### **Week 3**

6. Mon 2/2 - Labor and Gender

Possible topics for reading include the Muller v. Oregon case (1908), the Lochner v. New York case (1905), Women and Work, Laundries, Liberty of Contract, the Triangle Fire of 1911

7. Wed 2/4 - Document: Louis Brandeis, *Brief in Muller v. Oregon* <<http://www.law.louisville.edu/library/collections/brandeis/node/235> >

What "extra-legal" data did Brandeis use? What can we learn from this? Why has this brief become important in legal practice? How did Brandeis find and compile this information? What were his findings? What was the effect on the case? On a recent feminist lawyers' blog, one lawyer criticized this brief for being full of "paternalistic drivel." Do you agree?

8. Fri 2/6 - Presentation Day #1

**Week 4**

9. Mon 2/9 - Workers in Worcester

Reading: Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours*, Parts I and II (“Context” and “Culture”)

Discussion will focus on understanding urban working class life in general in this time period

10. Wed 2/11 - Workers in Worcester

Reading: Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours*, Parts III and IV (“Conflict” and “Culture, Conflict and Change”)

Discussion will focus specifically on Worcester & how Rosenzweig used sources to construct a portrait of workers in Worcester. What was it like to live in Worcester at this time period? How do we know? What is Rosenzweig’s argument? How will we go about researching Worcester in the same time period?

11. Fri 2/13 - field trip for sources to Worcester Historical Museum or the Worcester Public Library. Details TBA. We will collect and digitize materials, and obtain permission to publish them.

**Week 5 (No class on Monday the 16<sup>th</sup>)**

12. Wed 2/18 - Digital Project day - we process and create the metadata for our digital project materials.

13. Fri 2/20 - Discussion Day - we discuss our digital findings & explore what’s in the DW archive.

**Week 6**

14. Mon 2/23 - The New South

Reading topics include the “New South,” the cotton industry, mill life, race & class in the 19<sup>th</sup> century South, Lewis Hine

Reading: *Like a Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World* Part 1 [pdf]

15. Wed 2/25 - Document: *Like a Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World*, Part 2 [pdf]. What do we learn about the southern cotton mill world? Why/how is it a “world”? Who peoples it? What is life like? How does it differ from the northern urban working class life we’ve discussed so far, and in what ways is it similar? How did this team of researchers conduct their research?

16. Fri 2/27 - Presentation Day #2

**Week 7**

17. Mon 3/2 - The New Deal/ WPA

Reading topics: the Depression, the WPA, the New Deal, Scott’s Run/ Arthurdale, Subsistence Homestead programs, TVA, Great Migration, Harlem, Harlem Renaissance. For more on the WPA “America Eats” project, see < <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/tri098.html>> and <<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4176589>>

18. Wed 3/4 - Document: Frederick Douglass Opie, “Eating, Dancing and Courting in New York: Black and Latino Relations, 1930-1970,” JSH 42(1), Fall 2008, 79-109.

Discuss Opie’s findings, sources, and what we learn about 20<sup>th</sup> century New York & race relations. How are food, entertainment and sex related and why did Opie use these topics to explore black and Latino life? What foods are important in your family and/or culture?

19. Fri 3/6 - “America Eats” - bring a food that represents an American tradition for our tasting day. We will have Exam #1 during class and enjoy some treats.

## Unit Two: the Social History of American Women

### Week 8

20. Mon 3/9 - The “Pocahontas Problem”

Reading topics: Powhatan Indians, Jamestown and Roanoke colonies, women in native America, Pocahontas

21. Wed 3/11 - Documents: Helen Rountree, “Powhatan Indian Women: the People John Smith Barely Saw” [pdf] and primary sources about Pocahontas [pdf]  
Discuss legends and reality surrounding this singular historical woman. What do we actually know about her? Why has she become such a repository for multiple meanings? In what ways does she or does she not represent other native American women of her time and place?

22. Fri 3/13 - Presentation Day #3

### Week 9 (Spring Break, March 16-20)

### Week 10

23. Mon 3/23 - Separate Spheres & Didactic Literature.

Reading: Joan Wolloch Scott, “Gender: An Important Category of Historical Analysis” [pdf]

24. Wed 3/25 - Documents: Caroll Smith-Rosenberg, “The Female World of Love and Ritual” [pdf] and John S. Abbot, “The Mother at Home: or Principles of Maternal Duty” (American Tract Society, 1833) online at < <http://digital.lib.msu.edu/projects/ssb/search.cfm?TitleID=556>>

Discuss the ideology of separate spheres and what Nancy Cott has called the “canon of domesticity.” What ideas about gender were prevalent in early 19<sup>th</sup> century America? To whom did these definitions apply? What is meant by “proscriptive” literature? Can you think of contemporary examples of proscriptive literature? How does Smith-Rosenberg investigate whether women followed this literature’s prescriptions in their own lives?

25. Fri 3/27 - Presentation Day #4 (if you’re presenting this week, read & use the [pdf] of Barbara Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860,” *American Quarterly* 1966)

### Week 11

26. Mon 3/30 - American Women in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Reading topics: Rosie the Riveter, gender and the 1950s, Cold War, June Cleaver, suburbanization, Levittown.

Reading: Rosalind Rosenberg, *Divided Lives* Ch. 5, “Cold War Fears” [pdf]

27. Wed 4/1 - Documents: Nancy Walker, ed. *Women’s Magazines, 1940-1960*

Discuss themes and ideas raised in women’s magazines of this period. How do these compare & relate to the proscriptive literature of the early/mid 19<sup>th</sup> century? What ideas about gender can you glean? Are women following them, and how could we know? How can historians use these magazines as a source of information about women in this time period? What women are left out, or are defined out of the category of “women”?

28. Fri 4/3 - Presentation Day #5 (if you’re presenting this week, listen to & use the 12/16/08 episode of NPR’s On Point radio show, with Sister Soulja as the guest - how does her voice & perspective expand the notion of American women’s experiences in the 20<sup>th</sup> century?)

<<http://www.onpointradio.org/shows/2008/12/sister-souljah/>>

## Week 12

29. Mon 4/6 - the Women's Movement

Reading topics: "second-wave" feminism, women's movement, women's lib, NOW, Gloria Steinem, MS magazine, Roe v. Wade, ERA, International Women's Year (1975) and see also < <http://www.washingtonwomenshistory.org/themes/womensrights/default.aspx>>

30. Wed 4/8 - Document: "Notes from the First Year," The New York Radical Women, 1968.

Duke University Women's Lib Collection: < <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/wlm/notes/>>

31. Fri 4/10 - Exam #2 in class

## Unit Three: Who is America? Social History as Ethnic & Immigration History

## Week 13

32. Mon 4/13 - Immigration & Migration

Reading topics: slavery, immigration, Ellis Island, historiography of immigration studies, melting pot, Jacob Riis, muckrakers  
< [http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/historyonline/ethnic\\_am.cfm](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/historyonline/ethnic_am.cfm)>

33. Wed 4/15 Documents: Undistinguished Americans < [http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/social\\_history/social\\_history.cfm](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/social_history/social_history.cfm)>

You'll read 2 stories & we'll divide up the essays so that not everyone reads the same ones. Our class discussion will focus on these immigrant voices - who are they? Why did they come? What were pushes and pulls? What were their experiences after arriving in America? What does it mean to be an immigrant? Is America a pluralistic society or a "melting pot" (the term used as the title of Israel Zangwill's popular 1908 stage play)? See also Schoolhouse Rock, "The Great American Melting Pot" < <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZWJ4udW41Ns>>

34. Fri 4/17 - Presentation Day #6 - **Research Paper Topic & Bibliography Due for everyone**

## Week 14 (No class Monday 4/20)

35. Wed 4/22 - Mexican-Americans, Hispanics, Latino/as in the US

Reading topics: Mexican-American war, Texicans, Hispanic, Latino, LULAC, Cesar Chavez, Chicano/a, Bracero program,

37. Fri 4/24 - Document: Pam Munoz Ryan, *Esperanza Rising* (entire).

Discussion - what do you learn from this text about Mexican-American migrant worker experiences? Does the fact that this is based on the author's own family story give this work of fiction special authority or power? What are some of the themes and symbols explored in this book?

## Week 15

37. Mon 4/27 - Asian-Americans

Reading topics: "Golden Door," Yellow peril, Chinese Exclusion Act, *Yick Wo v. Hopkins* (1886), anti-Chinese riots, Rock Springs Wyoming riot (1885), Chinatowns, Japanese immigration, Isei/Nisei, anti-miscegenation laws, 1924 Oriental Exclusion Law

38. Wed 4/29 - Documents: from JARDA, Japanese-American Relocation Digital Archive < <http://www.calisphere.universityofcalifornia.edu/jarda/>>

Discussion will focus on the experiences of Japanese-Americans interned during WW2. What sorts of sources are available to historians? What can we learn about the experience of Asian-Americans in the 20<sup>th</sup> century? What customs, cultural practices, or worldviews clashed in the internment process? Were interned Americans able to maintain some of their cultural practices? **Due in class - lesson plan based on *Esperanza Rising*.**

39. Fri 5/1 - Presentation Day #7 - compare the experiences of Mexican-Americans and Japanese-Americans in the agricultural regions of the American west.

**Week 16**

40. Mon 5/4 - Black America

Reading topics: slavery, slavery reparations, Emancipation Proclamation, 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment, Civil Rights Act 1965, civil rights movement, lynching, Ida B. Wells, Scottsboro Trial, *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), CORE, SCLC, Black Panthers, SNCC, Martin Luther King Jr, Malcolm X, Fannie Lou Hamer, Emmett Till

41. Wed 5/6 - Documents: Speeches from the 1963 March on Washington, and 3 articles from 2008 on “post-racial” society - see links online  
**Due in class - Research Paper**

Final Exam will be on May 11<sup>th</sup>, 12:30 pm

Summary of Due Dates

Date	What's Due	It's worth
1/30	Gutman Response Paper	5%
2/20	Digital project	10%
3/6	Exam #1 (lowest of 3 is dropped)	15% if kept
3/6	Food on tasting day	5%
4/10	Exam #2 (lowest of 3 is dropped)	15% if kept
4/17	Research topic & bibliography	5%
4/29	<i>Esperanza Rising</i> lesson plan	10%
5/6	Research Paper due	10%
5/11	Exam #3 (lowest of 3 is dropped)	15% if kept
Dates tba	2 additional response papers @ 5 % each	10%
<b>Presentation Days</b> (on your day: 2 <sup>nd</sup> response paper & oral presentation are due) You will need to choose another presentation day to turn in your 3 <sup>rd</sup> response paper		
2/6	#1 - Labor and Gender/ Brandeis Brief	
2/27	#2 - New South/ Like a Family	
3/13	#3 - Pocahontas/ early native women	
3/27	#4 - Separate Spheres/ Didactic Literature	
4/3	#5 - 20 <sup>th</sup> Century American Women	
4/17	#6 - Immigration/ the “Undistinguished”	
5/1	#7 - Mexicans and Japanese in the West	