

American Cultural History to 1865
Carr Building, Room 215
Monday, Wednesday, Friday 12:00-12:50pm

Professor Ashley Rose Young
Carr Building, Room 110
ashley.r.young@duke.edu
Office hours by appointment

Class Description: This course covers a broad range of topics, starting with Native American civilization in North America and ending with the Civil War and Reconstruction in the United States. It will highlight diverse groups of people including: politicians, children, restaurateurs, slave families and their descendants, immigrants, and others. The class will approach the history of these people through a variety of historical materials such as: political documents, portraits, songs, photographs, and culinary traditions, focusing on the ways in which these sources can lead us to a better understanding of American cultures and their formation. This course is interdisciplinary at its core and requires a strong commitment on the part of the student to complete readings, engage in class discussion, and conduct primary research.

This course is particularly attuned to the ways in which historians study culture in American history and the meaning of Americans' behaviors, beliefs, and ideas. **The central question: How does the exploration of cultural formation – in both the American historical context and the larger historiography of early American history – influence our understanding of American history and the meaning of American culture(s) through the end of the nineteenth century?**

Throughout the course of the semester we will draw upon the methods of scholars interested in examining visual culture, literature, foodways, and the senses in American history. This course will ground you in the major narrative of American history, while also encouraging you to question conventional understandings of American life through a study of the aforementioned modes of cultural expression. By the end of this course you will gain a new perspective on American history – one that will hopefully shift the way in which you understand your own place in American society and your role in shaping its diverse cultures.

Class Goals:

- Acquire skills to read and analyze historical documents
- Learn to draw important information from first hand accounts, which offer an “on the ground” sense of what American life felt like, and which form the building blocks of historical inquiry
- Gain a foundational understanding of the people, places, and events that shaped American cultural history. Students will think historically about why all these names and dates matter, having them at hand to weave into broader, interpretative arguments about the past.
- Engage in respectful discussion and construct thoughtful, evidence-based arguments based on course readings and lectures.
- Conduct primary research with visual materials found in the Perkins Library special collection and write two well organized, polished historical essays

Reading:

The three books for this course are available for purchase at Regulator Bookstore on 9th Street. They are also on reserve at the library.

- Nancy F. Cott, *Root of Bitterness: Documents of the Social History of American Women*
- Stephen Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage*
- Cynthia A. Kiener, *The Contrast: Manners, Morals, and Authority in the Early American Republic*

All other readings are available on Sakai and can be accessed under Course Documents (organized by lecture). The readings are to be completed before lecture meets.

Grading Distribution

Attendance and Class Participation	20%
Paper 1 (<i>due class 5.2</i>)	15%
Midterm (<i>taken during class 7.2</i>)	15%
Paper 2 (<i>due class 14.3</i>)	25%
Final Exam	25%

"I have great expectations of you, but none higher than you may attain." -Thomas Jefferson

1) Attendance and Class Participation (20%)

If a student expects to miss class, he or she must notify me via email.

Students are expected and encouraged to participate in class discussion. These discussions will draw upon evidence from weekly readings and larger themes, issues, and trends discussed in lecture.

I grade class participation on the following point system:

- 5 points** (excellent, regular participation, always prepared, made perceptive points)
- 4 points** (very good, regular participation, nearly always prepared, made good points)
- 3 points** (regular participation—once weekly—nearly always prepared)
- 2 points** (very little, but some, contribution to class discussions)
- 1 point** (good class attendance but no—or almost no—participation in class discussions)

2) Papers (40%)

I will give you a prompt for writing assignment two to three weeks prior to the assignment's due date. Your paper topics will relate to the special collections visits that we take throughout the semester (see course schedule on page 3 of syllabus). Papers will range between 5 and 7 pages. I expect you to use your most concise prose and conduct sophisticated analysis of the historical material.

Format: Double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, 1-inch margins.

Submission: Turn in your papers via dropbox on Sakai.

Citation: All work must be cited properly using Chicago Style citation footnotes and bibliography.

For citation information please refer to either of the following:

- *The Chicago Manual of Style*
- *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, by Kate L. Turabian

For guidance on writing style please refer to:

- *On Writing Well*, by William Zinsser
- *The Elements of Style*, by Strunk and White

Academic Integrity is of the upmost importance in this class. **Plagiarism is not tolerated.**

Please see the university's plagiarism policy here: <http://library.duke.edu/research/plagiarism/>

3) Midterm (15%)

The midterm will cover class lectures and readings from class 1.1-7.1

The midterm is an in-class exam (40 minutes in length) given during class period 7.2

4) Final (25%)

The final will cover class lectures and readings from class 7.3-14.3

The final is 3 hours in length

Accommodations:

If you have physical, psychological or learning disabilities and require accommodations, please let me know early in the semester so that your course needs may be met. You may also wish to consult the Coordinator of Services to Students with Disabilities, for suggestions and help with your particular needs at this University. All communication with me is confidential.

One Final Note: I strongly encourage students to visit me in my office for informal discussion of the class readings, clarification of course themes, and general interests in American history. Please feel free to email me to set up a time to meet.

Course Schedule

Week 1: Introductions, Scope of the Course, Methods and Thinking Like a Historian

1.1 What is History, and What do Historians do?

Class Reading:

- Class syllabus
- David Brion Davis, "Some Recent Directions in American Cultural History," *The American Historical Review*, Volume 73, Issue 3 (Feb., 1968): 696-707

1.2 Cahokia: The Forgotten City of Ancient North America

Class Reading:

- Henry Marie Brackenridge, *Views of Louisiana together with a Journal of a Voyage Up the Missouri River*. 1962 ed. Quadrangle Books Chicago (187-188)
- Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (excerpts, discussion of 'Indian Mounds')
- T. J. Jackson Lears, "The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities," *The American Historical Review*, Volume 90, Issue 3 (Jun., 1985): 567-593

1.3 The Anasazi: Ancient Pueblo People

Class Reading:

- Vincent Skully, *Pueblo: Mountain, Village Dance* (excerpts: Preface and Chapter 1: Men and Nature: Prehistory and the Present)

Week 2: The Americas in the Age of Exploration

2.1 "Gold, Gold, Gold!": European Motivations for Exploration

Class Reading:

- Paul Freedman, *Out of the East* (Chapter 8: Finding the Realms of Spices: Portugal and Spain, 193-214)
- Christopher Columbus's journal (excerpts from first voyage)

2.2 The Sword and the Cross: Spanish Colonization in the Caribbean

Class Reading:

- Bartolomé de las Casas, "Brevisima relación de la destrucción de las Indias" (excerpts, translated to English)
- 5 images depicting Spanish treatment of Natives (from Bartolomé de las Casas)

2.3 Caribbean Plantation Economy

Class Reading:

- W. J. R. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?* Chapters 1 and 2
- Igor Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as a Process," in A. Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge, 1986)

Week 3: The Atlantic World

3.1 Slave Society and Culture

Class Reading:

- The following readings from *Let Nobody Turn Us Around*
 - Phillis Wheatley “On Being Brought from Africa to America” (7-8)
 - “The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano,” Olaudah Equiano, 1789 (9-17)
- Visit and explore the [Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database](#)

3.2 Skull and Crossbones: Pirates on the High Seas

Class Reading:

- The following sections from Gabriel Kuhn’s *Life Under the Jolly Roger* (2009)
 - 3.2- “Villains of all Nations?; Piracy and (Trans)Nationality” (57-60)
 - 3.5- “Anne Bonny, Mary Read and Co-opted Myth: Piracy and Gender” (71-74)
 - 4.9- “Safe Havens, On sore settlements, Pirate Utopias: Pirates and the Land” (136-146)
- Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Introduction)

3.3 Special Collections Visit 1

Class Reading:

- None

Week 4: Planting Colonies

4.1 Was Walt Disney Right? The History of Pocahontas and British Colonization in North America

Class Reading:

- *Goodwives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs*, Chapter 2: The Anglo-Indian Gender Frontier (42 -74)
- *John Smith's 1616 Letter to Queen Anne of Great Britain*
- T.H. Breen, “Creative Adaptations: Peoples and Cultures.” In *Colonial British America: Essays in the New History of the Early Modern Era*, Jack P. Green & J. R. Pole, eds. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984

4.2 Farming: The Transformation of the North American Landscape

Class Reading:

- *Thomas Jefferson’s letter to John Jay on August 23, 1785*. Julian P. Boyd, ed., vol. 8 of *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1953), 426-428
- Thomas Jefferson, “Query XIX,” in *Notes on the State of Virginia*, reprinted in Peterson, ed., *Thomas Jefferson’s Writings*, 290-293
- Philip Van Doren Stern, ed., *The Annotated Walden* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc./Publisher, 1970), 283-289
- Odell Shepard, ed., *The Heart of Thoreau’s Journals* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1927), 60-70, 119-121

- Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Prologue and Chapter 1: A Highway to the Pacific: Thomas Jefferson and the Far West)

4.3 The Dangers of Frontier Life

Class Reading:

- Margaretta M. Lovell, “Reading Eighteenth-Century American Family Portraits: Social Images and Self-Images.” In *Critical Issues in American Art: A Book of Readings*. Mary Ann Calo, ed. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1998

Week 5: In the Wake of Columbus: Impacts of Colonization on Both Sides of the Atlantic

5.1 America and Daily European Life

Class Reading:

- Selection of recipes from early modern European cookbooks which include New World foods

5.2 Early Atlantic Consumer Culture

- John Worlidge *Description of Chocolate Preparation* (1675)
- Rebecca Earle, “The Columbian Exchange.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Food History*, Jeffrey M. Pilcher, ed. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2012
- Cary Carson, “The Consumer Revolution in Colonial British America: Why Demand?” In *Of Consuming Interests: The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century*, Cary Carson, Ronald Hoffman, and Peter J. Albert, eds. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1994

Paper 1 Due in Class

5.3 Sensing the Past – How Early America Sounded

Class Reading:

- Mark M. Smith, *Sensing the Past: Seeing, Hearing, Smelling, Tasting, and Touching History* (Introduction and Chapter 2: Hearing)

Week 6. The Radicalism of the American Revolution: How Radical Was it?

6.1 The Republicanization of Monarchy

Class Reading:

- Thomas Jefferson, *A Summary View of the Rights of British America* (105-122)

6.2 The Seeds of Conflict and the Roots of Loyalty: Reluctant Revolutionaries

Class Reading:

- Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*, 1776 (experts)
- James Chalmers, *Plain Truth*, 1776 (experts). Loyalist response to *Common Sense*
- The following documents in *Root of Bitterness*:
 - Abigail Adam’s Letters from the Home Front (71-76)
 - An Adolescent’s Wartime Diary (77-82)

6.3 Special Collections Visit 2

Class Reading:

- Cynthia A. Kiener, *The Contrast: Manners, Morals, and Authority in the Early American Republic* (Introduction, Royall Tyler's *The Contrast* Act 1-3)

Week 7. What are the United States of America?

7.1 Defining America in the Wake of Revolution

Class Reading:

- *The Constitution* (excerpts)
- Cynthia A. Kiener, *The Contrast: Manners, Morals, and Authority in the Early American Republic* (Royall Tyler's *The Contrast* Act 4-5)

7.2 MIDTERM

Class Reading:

- None

7.3 A Noteworthy Rivalry: Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton

Class Reading:

- Joseph J. Ellis, *Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation*, Chapter 2: *The Dinner* (48-80)
- Alexander Hamilton, *To Edward Carrington, Mary 1792* (736-751)
- Alexander Hamilton, *An American No. I* (755-759)
- Thomas Jefferson, *The Anas*, excerpt (671)
- Thomas Jefferson, *First Inaugural Address* (492-496)

Week 8. Fall Break

Week 9: American Exceptionalism

9.1 Defining and Imagining Nature: The Adventures of Lewis and Clark and the Expression of American Sublime in Art

Class Reading:

- Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (164-172; 184-192)
- Thomas Jefferson, *Instruction to Captain Lewis*, (1126-1132)
- Thomas Jefferson, *Sixth Inaugural Address* (excerpt: 527-528)
- Thomas Jefferson, *News of Captain Lewis* (1158-1160)
- Thomas Jefferson, *Bones for the National Institute*, (1189-1192)
- Elizabeth Alexander, *American Sublime* (poem):
<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/art/blog/2009/01/weekly-poem-american-sublime.html>
(click link to listen to a reading of the poem)

9.2 Special Collections Visit 3

Class Reading:

- None

9.3 The Frontier Thesis and its Beginnings

Class Reading:

- Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History”

Week 10. A Different Perspective of the Nineteenth Century – Women and American Culture

10.1 Beyond Hoop Skirts and Floral Prints

Class Reading:

The Following articles from the *Ladies' Garland and Family Wreath Embracing Tales, Sketches, Incidents, History, Poetry, Music etc* Journals. Published in October, 1847. Each article is 1-2 pages in length.

- The english tax. (1847, *Ladies' Garland and Family Wreath Embracing Tales, Sketches, Incidents, History, Poetry, Music, etc.(1837-1850)*, , 0_1. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/136964901?accountid=10598>
- Article 1 -- no title. (1847, *Ladies' Garland and Family Wreath Embracing Tales, Sketches, Incidents, History, Poetry, Music, etc.(1837-1850)*, , 131. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/136961283?accountid=10598>
- A gamester, with a wife too good for him. (1847, *Ladies' Garland and Family Wreath Embracing Tales, Sketches, Incidents, History, Poetry, Music, etc.(1837-1850)*, , 106. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/136958866?accountid=10598>
- RICE, D. (1847, "The sickness of children.". *Ladies' Garland and Family Wreath Embracing Tales, Sketches, Incidents, History, Poetry, Music, etc.(1837-1850)*, , 103. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/136958931?accountid=10598>

10.2 Moral Decay, Temperance, and Labor Reform

Class Reading:

- The following documents in *Root of Bitterness*:
 - Sarah Grimké on the Condition of Women in the United States (123-127)
 - Petition for a Ten-Hour Workday (156-160)
 - A Moral Reformer Makes Her Rounds (198-203)
 - A Daughter of Temperance Exhorts Her Sex (208-212)
 - An Appeal to the Women of the Nominally Free States (246-251)

10.3 Violence and Violent Women

Class Reading:

- The following documents on Sakai
 - Cornelia's Life on a Tennessee Farm
 - Rose Williams' Forced Marriage in Texas
 - Fannie Moore's Memories of a South Carolina Childhood
 - Two Letters from Enslaved Women
- The following documents in *Root of Bitterness*:
 - Narratives of Escaped Slaves (252-257)
 - Slave Writes her Former Mistress (260-262)

Week 11. Antebellum Slavery

11.1 How Race is Made – Revisiting the History of Senses

Class Reading:

- Lyle Saxon, *Fabulous New Orleans* (excerpts)

- “The Old French Market,” *The Daily Picayune*, May 15, 1859

11.2 The “Science” of Slavery: Photography and Examination

Class Reading:

- Brian Wallis, “Black Bodies, White Science: Louis Agassiz’s Slave Daguerreotypes” in *American Art*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Summer, 1995): 38-61

11.3 Special Collections Visit 4

Class Reading:

- Begin reading Stephen Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage* (for next Monday’s class)

Week 12. Civil War

12.1 The Deadliest War in American History

Class Reading:

- Continue reading Stephen Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage* (for Wednesday’s class)

Exchange Draft of Paper 2 for Peer Review

12.2 Industrial Warfare: The Role of Railroads, Steam Ships, The Telegraph, and Mass Produced Weapons

Class Reading:

- Stephen Crane, *Red Badge of Courage*

12.3 Women and the War Effort

Class Reading:

- The following documents in *Root of Bitterness*:
 - Union Women in Wartime (268-273)
 - Gertrude Clanton Thomas’s Civil War Diary (274-280)
 - A Freedwoman before the Southern Claims Commission (281-285)
 - The Race Problem—An Autobiography (286-292)
 - Condition of Women in Rural Alabama (367-371)

Week 13. Rebuilding America After War

13.1 What Now? A day in the post-Antebellum Kitchen

Class Reading:

- Ken Albala, “Cookbooks as Historical Documents.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Food History*, Jeffrey M. Pilcher, ed. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2012
- *The Picayune Creole Cook Book* (1901), introductory essays
- Mary Farmer-Kaiser, “The ‘Agony and Strife’ of Civil War Louisiana” in *Louisiana Women’ Their Lives and Times*
- Rhys Isaac, “Ethnographic Method in History: An Action Approach.” In *Material Life in America, 1600-1860*, Robert Blair St. George, ed. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988

13.2 Reconstruction

Class Reading:

- Henry Glassie, “Meaningful Things and Appropriate Myths: The Artifact’s Place in American Studies.” In *Material Life in America, 1600-1860*, Robert Blair St. George, ed. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988

13.3 Ethnic Notions

Class Reading:

- Begin reading J. Sanford Rikoon, *Rachel Calof's Story: Jewish Homesteader of the North Plains* for Friday’s discussion

Week 14. Immigration and Ethnic Identity

14.1 Immigration and Discrimination

Class Reading:

- Collection of newspaper adds and cartoons targeted towards Irish immigrants in the 19th century (selections)
- Continue reading J. Sanford Rikoon, *Rachel Calof's Story: Jewish Homesteader of the North Plains* for Friday’s discussion

14.2 Who or What is “American?”

Class Reading:

- J. Sanford Rikoon, *Rachel Calof's Story: Jewish Homesteader of the North Plains*
- *The American Frugal Housewife* By Lydia Maria Child With Introduction by Jan Longone introduction (1832) (introduction)
The American Home Cook Book, with Several Hundred Excellent Recipes by an American Lady (1854) (introduction)

14.3 Review and Reflection

Class Reading:

- None

Paper 2 Due in Class

A century ago, the major American historian of the South supported slavery. His name was Ulrich B. Phillips, and his *American Negro Slavery*, first published in 1918, was "central to proslavery historiography." So writes scholar Gaines M. Foster in his exploration of the history of the notion that Southern slaveholders felt guilt about slavery even as they maintained it. Phillips was born in Georgia in 1877. He earned his doctorate at Columbia and taught at Tulane, the University of Wisconsin, the University of Michigan, and Yale. He was "a leader in systematically researching plantation records for indigenous Americans, Latin Americans, minorities of Latino or Hispanic descent, and Spaniards and Portuguese, the sense of connection is strong." For an exploration of these questions in the context of the recent history of professional historical knowledge, and the significance of work on Africa and Latin America, see Stern, Steve J., "Africa, Latin America, and the Splintering of Historical Knowledge: From Fragmentation to Reverberation"™, in Cooper, Frederick et al. , *Confronting Historical Paradigms: Peasants, Labor, and the Capitalist World System in Africa and Latin*.