Spring 2013
Instructor: Prof. Kate Epstein

Class Times: Th 5:00 – 7:40 p.m.
Class Location: Cooper Street Classroom Building 203
Email: kce17@camden.rutgers.edu
Office Location: 429 Cooper St., Room 204
Office Hours: Tu, 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. / Th, 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Course Description: This is a research seminar in U.S. History, 1898–1945. It follows from the Fall 2012 reading seminar in U.S. History, 1898–1945. In this seminar, students will produce an original research paper.

We’ll meet five times as a class over the course of the semester, on Jan 31 (Week 2), Feb 21 (Week 5), Mar 14 (Week 8), Apr 4 (Week 11), and Apr 18 (Week 13). I will of course be available to meet with you one-on-one as well. Written work will be due to me by email a week before each of these meetings—meaning that your first written assignment will be due on Jan 24 (Week 1). The complete schedule, along with a description of the assignments, appears below. The purpose of these assignments is to break down the research and writing process into manageable chunks.

For each assignment, you’ll be responsible for providing written feedback for three of your classmates. Thus, in addition to feedback from me on each assignment, you’ll receive three pieces of peer review. This feedback will be due in class the week after the assignment is due. The week’s lead time between the due date and the class discussion is to give everyone time to review the assigned work before we meet. I’ll take responsibility for emailing you the work that you’ll be peer-reviewing as soon as I have it by email. Guidelines for peer review appear below for each assignment. Please bring TWO copies of each piece of peer review to class—one for your peer, and one for me.

For the purposes of peer review, I’ve divided the class into one group of four and two groups of five according to scientific principles (i.e., where you sit). You’ll stay in the same group throughout the semester so that you can familiarize yourself with your classmates’ projects and not have to start from scratch with each assignment. The groups are as follows:

Group 1: Jacob, Lauren, Josh, Ed, and Will
Group 2: Andrew, Melissa, Tom, Bob, and Ben
Group 3: Matt, Hugh, Jim, and Leslie

If you’re in the group of four, the three people you’ll be peer reviewing for each assignment are the other three people in your group. If you’re in one of the groups of five, you’ll be responsible for three other people in the group, as follows:

Group 1
Jacob: review Lauren, Josh, and Ed
Lauren: review Jacob, Ed, and Will
Josh: review Jacob, Lauren, and Will
Ed: review Jacob, Josh, and Will
Will: review Josh, Lauren, and Ed

Group 2
Andrew: review Melissa, Tom, and Ben
Melissa: review Andrew, Bob, and Ben  
Tom: review Andrew, Melissa, and Bob  
Bob: review Andrew, Tom, and Ben  
Ben: review Melissa, Tom, and Bob

Additional guidelines for peer reviewing appear under each assignment below, and in a document on Sakai.

**Final Paper:** I’ve put the guidelines for the final paper in a separate document on Sakai.

**SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS**

**Week 1 / Jan 24**
DUE (by email): Revised research proposals (3-4 pp).

These revised proposals should include four elements:
1) Topic: Describe the topic of your research and the questions you hope to answer about it.  
2) Evidence: Describe the primary and secondary sources you plan to use, being as specific as you can. For secondary sources, indicate the literature(s) you’ll be engaging.  
3) Plan: Describe what time you’ll be devoting each week to research and / or writing.  
4) Difficulties: Describe any problems you’re worried about—finding sources, narrowing your topic, etc.—and let me know how I can help.

**GUIDELINES FOR PEER REVIEW:** Think about what you would find helpful. Are there questions your classmates haven’t asked that occur to you in reading their proposals? Sources they haven’t mentioned that they might consult? Aim for a page.

**1) Week 2 / Jan 31**
CLASS MEETING: Discussion of revised research proposals / Peer reviews of research proposals due.

Each of you will get 10 minutes of discussion devoted to your research proposals. Be prepared to speak for 2 minutes on what you plan to do; I’ll cut you off ruthlessly at 2 minutes. The remaining 8 minutes will be spent on feedback.

**Week 4 / Feb 14**
DUE (by email): Written description of key concepts (2-3 pp).

This document should describe the key concepts that will appear in your paper and define the main terms you’ll want readers to know. These will likely appear in the introduction to your paper.

**GUIDELINES FOR PEER REVIEW:** Are there any aspects of your classmates’ descriptions that you find unclear? Terms you wish they had defined but didn’t? Aim for a page.
2) Week 5 / Feb 21  
CLASS MEETING: Discussion of key concepts / Peer reviews of key concepts due  
In addition to discussing your descriptions of key concepts, we’ll discuss how to use the secondary literature to contextualize your own work and to provide background information.

Week 7 / Mar 7  
DUE (by email): Draft of section of paper dealing with place in literature (aim for 5-7 pp)

GUIDELINES FOR PEER REVIEW: Do line edits for the first page (line edits means detailed work like correcting punctuation or grammar), but not for the whole section, since that would take too long. Line editing someone else is boring but one of the best methods for improving your own writing. Other than line-editing the first page, focus on the bigger picture—paragraph or section-level stuff, plus any recurring strengths or weaknesses (such as good or bad topic sentences, or excessive use of the passive voice). Is the section clear? Are there literatures that the author might have considered but didn’t? Does the section flow well? Is it easy to understand why paragraph breaks happen where they do? Aim for a page.

For the line edits, you can either do them on a printed hard copy and bring xeroxes to class, or you can do them on an e-copy using the “track changes” function in Microsoft Word and then print it out showing the changes.

3) Week 8 / Mar 14  
CLASS MEETING: Discussion of historiography sections of papers / Peer reviews of historiographical sections due

Week 10 / Mar 28  
DUE (by email): Draft of section of paper dealing with primary sources (aim for 20-25 pp)

GUIDELINES FOR PEER REVIEW: As for the historiographical section of the paper, line edit the first page, otherwise focus on the bigger picture. Does the author provide evidence for all claims that need evidence? Are the citations specific enough that another scholar could locate the source? Does the section flow well? Is it easy to understand why paragraph breaks happen where they do? Aim for a page.

4) Week 11 / Apr 4  
CLASS MEETING: Discussion of drafts of primary-source section of papers / Peer reviews of primary-source sections due

Week 12 / Apr 11  
DUE (by email): Complete rough drafts (30-40 pp)
GUIDELINES FOR PEER REVIEW: As for the historiographical and primary-source sections, line edit the first page, otherwise focus on the bigger picture. Do the historiographical and primary-source sections connect well with each other? Does the paper flow well? Any weaknesses or strengths that jump out at you? Aim for a page.

5) Week 13 / Apr 18
CLASS MEETING: Discussion of rough drafts / Peer reviews of rough drafts due

Week 16 / May 9
DUE: Final papers.