

American Art and Material Culture of the 18th and 19th Centuries

Professor Jennifer Van Horn

Spring 2025

Course Description

This course investigates the creation, display, and reception of art and material culture in the United States from roughly 1650 to 1900. We will ask how paintings, sculptures, buildings, and artifacts of various media represented and shaped notions of “America” and American identities. We will consider how artists, architects, and designers in the United States mobilized diverse European, African, Asian, and Native American traditions in their work and how different groups of Americans—including Euro-American, Indigenous, Black, Asian and Pacific Islander, Latinx, women, and new immigrants—used art and artifacts to express who they were and what they wanted America to be. We will question how art helped to define conceptions of personhood, nationhood, democracy, and citizenship and also promoted colonization, Manifest Destiny, racial and gender disenfranchisement, and attempted cultural genocide. At the same time we will ask how art and artifacts have been incubators for resistance, protest, and redress. We will question how art and design intersect with global trade, environmental change, diaspora, and social reform. We will grapple with the question of what is “American” about American art.

Course Readings

1. Cao, Maggie M. *Painting US Empire: Nineteenth-Century Art and Its Legacies*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2025.
2. Miles, Tiya. *All That She Carried: The Journey of Ashley’s Sack, a Black Family Keepsake*. New York: Random House, 2022.
3. Doezema, Marianne, and Elizabeth Milroy, eds. *Reading American Art*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.

Optional (Supplemental not Required):

1. Van Horn, Jennifer. *Portraits of Resistance: Activating Art During Slavery*. Yale University Press, 2022.

Course Requirements

- Contribute to nine discussion boards
- Complete five short papers (1–2 pages)
- Participate in at least three Q&As
- Complete a 15-page paper or project of appropriate rigor

Learning Objectives

1. Students will describe and critically analyze works of art and artifacts.
2. Students will articulate the importance of class, ethnicity, gender, and race in structuring American society and in shaping how people created and interacted with art and artifacts.
3. Students will understand how ideas about art making, art display, and art viewership have changed over time.
4. Students will interrogate visual and material sources to support interpretations that build from visual and historical evidence.

Class Schedule

Week One: February 6: American Art History's Beginnings and Tools of Art History

Readings

- Karin Wulf, "Vast Early America: Three Simple Words for a Complex Reality," *Humanities* 40, no. 1 (Winter 2019). ([This reading can be accessed through Musselman Library with your Gettysburg College credentials.](#))
- Kirsten Pai Buick, "Seeing the Survey Anew: Compositional Absences That Structure Ideological Presences," *American Art* 34, no. 3 (2020): 24–30. ([This reading can be accessed through Musselman Library with your Gettysburg College credentials.](#))
- Jules Prown, "Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method," *Winterthur Portfolio* 17:1 (Spring 1982): 1–19. ([This reading can be accessed through Musselman Library with your Gettysburg College credentials.](#))
- Edward Cooke, "Introduction," to *Global Objects: Toward a Connected Art History* (2022): 1–20.
- Jennifer Roberts, "The Power of Patience," *Harvard Magazine* (Nov/Dec 2013): 40–43. ([A link to this reading can be found in the Week One module.](#))

Supplemental Readings (for future reference)

- Titus Kaphar, "Can Art Amend History?" TED Talk (2017)
- John Davis, "The End of the American Century: Current Scholarship on the Art of the United States," *The Art Bulletin* 85, no. 3 (2003): 544–80.
- Christina Hodge, "Decolonizing Collections-Based Learning: Experiential Observation as an Interdisciplinary Framework for Object Study," *Museum Anthropology* 41, no. 2 (2018): 142–158.
- Sylvan Barnet, *A Short Guide to Writing About Art*, 113–123.
- *American Encounters: Art History and Cultural Identity* (2018) (open access digital textbook for undergraduate courses)

Assignments

- Discussion Board One
 - First post due: Sunday, February 9
 - Second post due: Wednesday, February 12
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Week Two: February 13: Arts of “Early” America

Readings

- James Walvin, “Cowrie Shells: Slavery and Global Trade,” in *Slavery in Small Things: Slavery and Modern Cultural Habits* (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2017), 37–53.
- Wampum Resources: Lenape wampum belt, National Museum of the American Indian; Marcus Hendricks, “Traditional Wampum Belts,” (PBS); “The Making of the Wampum Belt,” Mayflower 400. ([A link to this reading can be found in the Week Two module.](#))
- Scott Manning Stevens, “Tomahawk: Materiality and Depictions of the Haudenosaunee,” *Early American Literature* 53, no. 2 (2018): 475–511. ([This reading can be accessed through Musselman Library with your Gettysburg College credentials.](#))
- Paul Staiti, “Character and Class: The Portraits of John Singleton Copley,” in *Reading American Art* (1998), 12–37.

Supplemental Readings (for future reference)

- Jennifer Chuong, “Engraving’s ‘Immoveable Veil’: Phillis Wheatley’s Portrait and the Politics of Technique,” *Art Bulletin* 104, no. 2 (2022): 63–88.
- Catherine Girard, “Innu Painted Caribou-Skin Coats, and Other Tales of Elusiveness,” *Journal18* 7 (Spring 2019), <https://www.journal18.org/3498>.
- Ariane Fennetaux, “Women’s Pockets and the Construction of Privacy in the Long Eighteenth Century,” *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* (2008): 307–334.

Assignments

- Discussion Board Two
 - First post due: Sunday, February 16
 - Second post due: Wednesday, February 19
- Short Paper One due: Wednesday, February 19
 - Write a response paper: You can respond to the prompt created by your section professor, or to one of your own design.

Week Three: February 20: "Consumer Revolutions": Global and Cross-cultural Exchanges

Readings

- Dennis Carr, "The Spanish Colonial World in a Microcosm: A Puebla Desk-and-Bookcase," in *Crafting Enlightenment* (2021), 115–145.
- Sophie White, "Geographies of Slave Consumption," *Winterthur Portfolio* 45, no. 2/3 (2011): 229–248. ([This reading can be accessed through Musselman Library with your Gettysburg College credentials.](#))
- Laura Igoe, "Creative Matter: Tracing the Environmental Context of Materials in American Art," *Nature's Nation: American Art and Environment*, exhibition catalog (Princeton: Princeton University Art Museum, 2018), 140–169.
- Jennifer Van Horn, "An Indian Chintz Gown: Slavery and Fashion," *The Junto*, <https://earlyamericanists.com/2018/09/12/an-indian-chintz-gown-slavery-and-fashion/>.

Supplemental Readings (for future reference)

- Anne Lafont, "How Skin Color Became a Racial Marker," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 51, no. 1 (Fall 2017): 89–113.
- Ethan Lasser, "Reading Japanned Furniture," *American Furniture* (2007), <http://www.chipstone.org/article.php/572/American-Furniture-2007/Reading-Japanned-Furniture>.
- Jennifer Van Horn, *Portraits of Resistance* (2022), Introduction and chapter 1, 1–71.

Assignments

- Discussion Board Three
 - First post due: Sunday, February 23
 - Second post due: Wednesday, February 26
- Final Project/Paper Question due: Wednesday, February 26
 - In roughly 1–2 pages, outline the question your final paper or project will attempt to answer. This should include a description of the paper or project you are proposing, some background information and historical context on your topic, a brief description of your research plan, and a justification for why your particular paper or project is worth pursuing.

Q&A Session One: Thursday, February 20, at 8:00 p.m. ET

Week Four: February 27: Enslavement: Material and Visual Perspectives

Readings

- Tiya Miles, *All That She Carried*, read entire book or the following selected chapters: "Introduction: Love's Practitioners," 3–24; "Ruth's Record," 25–56; "Packing the Sack," 91–126; "Conclusion: It Be Filled," 265–278.

Supplemental Readings (for future reference)

- Marhia Gruner, "'May the points of our needles prick': Antislavery Needlework and the Cultivation of the Abolitionist Self," *Winterthur Portfolio* 55, no. 2/3 (Summer/Autumn 2021): 85–120.
- Rebecca Ginsburg, "Escaping through a Black Landscape," in *Cabin, Quarter, Plantation: Architecture and Landscapes of North American Slavery* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 51–66.
- Jennifer Van Horn, *Portraits of Resistance*, chapter 4, 172–217.

Assignments

- Discussion Board Four
 - First post due: Sunday, March 2
 - Second post due: Wednesday, March 5
- Short Paper Two due: Wednesday, March 5
 - Write a response paper: You can respond to the prompt created by your section professor or to one of your own design.

Q&A Session Two: Thursday, February 27, at 8:00 p.m. ET

Week Five: March 6: America's First Museums

Readings

- Roger Stein, "Charles Willson Peale's Expressive Design: The Artist in His Museum," in *Reading American Art*, 39–78.
- Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw, "'Interesting Characters By the Lines of Their Faces': Moses Williams's Profile Portrait Silhouettes of Native Americans," in *Black Out: Silhouettes Then and Now*, ed. Asma Naeem (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 61–73.
- Kristine Ronan, "'Kicked About': Native Culture at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello," *Panorama* 3, no. 2 (Fall 2017). ([A link to this reading can be found in the Week Five module.](#))

- Lauren Lessing, Nina Roth-Wells, Terri Sabatos, "Body Politics: Copley's Portraits as Political Effigies During the American Revolution," in *Beyond the Face: New Perspectives on Portraiture*, ed. Wendy Wick Reaves (Giles, 2018), 25–41.

Supplemental Readings (for future reference)

- Chip Colwell, "Why Museums Are Returning Cultural Treasures," TED Talk (July 2017).
- Margaretta Lovell, "Trophy Heads at Monticello," in *A Material World* (2019): 153–176.
- Jessica L. Horton, "Ojibwa Tableaux Vivants: George Catlin, Robert Houle, and Transcultural Materialism," *Art History* 39 (2016): 125–151.

Assignments

- Discussion Board Five
 - First post due: Sunday, March 9
 - Second post due: Wednesday, March 12
- Revised Question and Proposed Bibliography due: Wednesday, March 12
 1. Revise your initial proposal to incorporate your section professor's feedback AND
 2. Create an annotated bibliography containing at least five sources. Each of these sources should be followed by a short paragraph describing the source and what it will contribute to your final project/paper.

Q&A Session Three: Wednesday, March 12, at 8:00 p.m. ET

Week Six: March 13: Neoclassicism and History Painting

Readings

- Wendy Bellion, "Land Shark," and Mónica Domínguez Torres, "Havana's Fortunes: 'Entangled Histories' in Copley's *Watson and the Shark*," *American Art* 30, no. 2 (2016): 2–13.
- Jennifer L. Roberts, "Failure to Deliver: *Watson and the Shark* and the Boston Tea Party," *Art History* 10, no. 4 (2011): 675–695. ([This reading can be accessed through Musselman Library with your Gettysburg College credentials.](#))
- Jennifer Y. Chuong, "The Nature of American Veneer Furniture, circa 1780–1810," *Journal18* (2020). ([A link to this reading can be found in the Week Six module.](#))
- Ann Verplanck, "How We Might View Artists as Businesspeople," *American Art* 33, no. 3 (Fall 2019): 10–13. ([This reading can be accessed through Musselman Library with your Gettysburg College credentials.](#))

Supplemental Readings (for future reference)

- Elizabeth Eager, "Sewn in Place: Gender, Materiality, and Mapmaking in the Early United States," *Art Bulletin* 106, no. 1 (2024): 40–69.
- Joseph McGill, "My Quest to Sleep in Every Former Slave Dwelling in the US," TED talk (June 2017).
- Susan Rather, "Benjamin West, John Galt, and the Biography of 1816," *Art Bulletin* 86, no. 2 (June 2004): 324–345.
- Jennifer Van Horn, *Portraits of Resistance*, 72–122.

Assignments

- Discussion Board Six
 - First post due: Sunday, March 16
 - Second post due: Wednesday, March 19
 - Short Paper Three due: Wednesday, March 19
 - Write a response paper: You can respond to the prompt created by your section professor or to one of your own design.
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Week Seven: March 20: Popular Arts: Still Life, Genre Paintings, and Prints

Readings

- Maggie Cao, *Painting US Empire*, 105–148.
- Diana Seave Greenwald, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists? Artistic Labor and Time-Constraint in Nineteenth-Century America," in *Painting By Numbers* (2021): 85–114. ([This reading can be accessed through Musselman Library with your Gettysburg College credentials.](#))
- Christina Michelon, "Touching Sentiment: The Tactility of Nineteenth-Century Valentines," *Common-Place* 16, no. 2 (Winter 2016). ([A link to this reading can be found in the Week Seven module.](#))
- "Chromolithographs," in *Art of the United States, 1750–2000: Primary Sources*, ed. John Davis and Michael Leja, (2020), 63–64.

Supplemental Readings (for future reference)

- Ross Barrett, "Bursting the Bubble: John Quidor's Money Diggers and Land Speculation," *American Art* 30, no. 1 (2016): 28–51.
- Maurie D. McInnis, "Red Flag," *Slaves for Sale* (2011), 86–114.
- Michael Clapper, "'I Was Once a Barefoot Boy!': Cultural Tensions in a Popular Chromo," *American Art* 16, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 16–39.
- Jennifer Van Horn, *Portraits of Resistance*, 122–171.

Assignments

- Discussion Board Seven
 - First post due: Sunday, March 23
 - Second post due: Wednesday, March 26
- Short Paper Four due Wednesday, March 26
 - Write a response paper: You can respond to the prompt created by your section professor or to one of your own design.

Q&A Session Four: Wednesday, March 26, at 8:00 p.m. ET

Week Eight: March 27: Sculpture and Early Photography

Readings

- Michael Hatt, "Sculpture, Chains, and the Armstrong Gun: John Bell's American Slave," *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 15, no. 2 (2016). ([This reading can be accessed through Musselman Library with your Gettysburg College credentials.](#))
- Karen Lemmey, "From Skeleton to Skin: The Making of the Greek Slave(s)," *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 15, no. 2 (2016). ([This reading can be accessed through Musselman Library with your Gettysburg College credentials.](#))
- Jasmine Cobb, "Optics of Respectability: Women, Vision, and the Black Private Sphere," in *Picture Freedom: Remaking Black Visuality in The Early Nineteenth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 66–110. ([This reading can be accessed through Musselman Library with your Gettysburg College credentials.](#))
- Frederick Douglass, "Lecture on Pictures," (1861) ([A link to this reading can be found in the Week Eight module.](#))

Supplemental Readings (for future reference)

- Christine Garnier, "Framing Silver's Void in Timothy H. O'Sullivan's Photographs of the Gould & Curry Mine," *Panorama* 9, no. 1 (Spring 2023).
- Peter Betjemann, "The Ends of Time: Abolition, Apocalypse, and Narrativity in Robert S. Duncanson's Literary Paintings," *American Art* (Fall 2017): 80–109.
- Dell Upton, "An American Architecture?," in *A Companion to American Art*, eds. John Davis, Jennifer Greenhill, Jason LaFountain (2015), 211–227.

Assignments

- Project/Paper Preview due: Wednesday, April 2

- Project: Submissions of the project preview will differ from project to project according to type. Determine an appropriate portion of your final project to turn in with your section professor.
 - Paper: Turn in a rough draft of the first five pages of your final paper
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Week Nine: April 3: American Landscape Painting (East, West, and Beyond)

Readings

- Maggie Cao, *Painting US Empire*, 1–104.

Supplemental Readings (for future reference)

- Anna Arabindan-Kesson, "From Poetry into Paint: Robert S. Duncanson and the *Song of Hiawatha*," in *Intermedia* (2022), 86–120.
- Shana Klein, "'Westward the Star of Empire': California Grapes and Western Settlement in the Nineteenth Century," *Southern California Quarterly* 100, no. 2 (Summer 2018): 124–149.
- Naomi Slipp, "Gilded Age Dining: Eco-Anxiety, Fisheries Management and the Presidential China of Rutherford B. Hayes," *Ecocriticism and the Anthropocene in Nineteenth-Century Art and Visual Culture* (2020), 135–144.

Assignments

- Discussion Board Eight
 - First post due: Sunday, April 6
 - Second post due: Wednesday, April 9
 - Short Paper Five due: Wednesday, April 9
 - Write a response paper: You can respond to the prompt created by your section professor or to one of your own design.
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Week Ten: April 10: Representing the Civil War and Emancipation

Readings

- Kirsten Pai Buick, "The Ideal Works of Edmonia Lewis: Invoking and Inverting Autobiography," *Reading American Art*, 190–207.
- Caitlin Beach, "Relief Work: Edmonia Lewis and the Poetics of Plaster," in *Sculpture at the Ends of Slavery* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2022): 113–142.
- Cheryl Finley, "No More Auction Block for Me!" in *Pictures and Progress: Early*

Photography and the Making of African American Identity, ed. Maurice O. Wallace and Shawn Michelle Smith (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 329–348.

([This reading can be accessed through Musselman Library with your Gettysburg College credentials.](#))

- “Photograph and the Face” and “Photographs of Antietam,” in *Art of the United States, 1750–2000: Primary Sources*, 51–56.

Supplemental Readings (for future reference)

- Sarah Jones Weicksel, “Fitted Up for Freedom: The Material Culture of Refugee Relief,” in *War Matters* (2018): 151–175.
- “Roundtable Discussion on Deborah Willis’s *The Black Civil War Soldier*,” *Civil War History* 68, no. 4 (2022): 397–425.
- Alan Trachtenberg, “Through a Glass, Darkly: Photography and Cultural Memory,” *Social Research* 75, no. 1 (2008): 110–132.
- Jennifer Van Horn, *Portraits of Resistance*, 218–261.

Assignments

- Rough Draft due Wednesday, April 16
 - Project: Submissions of the project rough draft will differ from project to project according to type. Determine an appropriate portion of your final project to turn in with your section professor.
 - Paper: Turn in a rough draft of the first ten pages (at minimum) of your final paper.

Q&A Session Five: Wednesday, April 16, at 8:00 p.m. ET

Week Eleven: April 17: The Aesthetic Movement, Realism, and the Gilded Age

Readings

- Maggie Cao, *Painting US Empire*, 149–240.
- Sarah Burns, “Revitalizing the ‘Painted-Out’ North: Winslow Homer, Manly Health, and New England Regionalism in Turn-of-the-Century America,” *American Art* 9, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 20–37. ([This reading can be accessed through Musselman Library with your Gettysburg College credentials.](#))
- Selection from *Whistler v. Ruskin* (1878) in Whistler, *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies* (1890). ([This reading can be accessed through Musselman Library with your Gettysburg College credentials.](#))

Supplemental Readings (for future reference)

- Alan C. Braddock, “Bodies of Water: Thomas Eakins, Racial Ecology, and

the Limits of Civic Realism," in *A Keener Perception: Ecocritical Studies in American Art History*, ed. Alan C. Braddock and Christoph Irmscher (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2009), 129–150.

- Lee Glazer and Stacey Pierson, "Cosmopolitanism and Cultural Translation: A Conversation about James McNeill Whistler's Peacock Room," *Winterthur Portfolio* 57, no. 2–3 (Summer/Autumn 2023): 123–144.
- Allison Matthews David, "Tainted Love: Oscar Wilde's Toxic Green Carnation, Queerness, and Chromophobia," in *Colors in Fashion*, ed. Jonathan Faiers and Mary Westerman Bulgarella (New York: Bloomsbury, 2017): 127–142.

Assignments

- Discussion Board Nine
 - First post due: Sunday, April 20
 - Second post due: Wednesday, April 23
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Week Twelve: April 24: The Modern City and Modern Art

Readings

- Sasha Scott, "Georgia O'Keeffe's Hawai'i? Decolonizing the History of American Modernism," *American Art* 34, no. 2 (Summer 2020), 26–53. ([This reading can be accessed through Musselman Library with your Gettysburg College credentials.](#))
- Anna C. Chave, "O'Keeffe and the Masculine Gaze," *Reading American Art*, 350–370.
- Anthony Lee, "Photography and Opium in a Nineteenth-Century Port City," *Companion to American Art*, ed. John Davis, Jennifer A. Greenhill, and Jason D. Lafountain (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2015), 581–598. ([This reading can be accessed through Musselman Library with your Gettysburg College credentials.](#))
- Lee Ann Custer, "The Clean, Open Air of John Sloan's Tenement Paintings," *American Art* 37, no. 2 (Summer 2023): 28–53. ([This reading can be accessed through Musselman Library with your Gettysburg College credentials.](#))

Supplemental Readings (for future reference)

- Ashley Lazevnick, "Never Still! Nonhuman Life in Charles Demuth's *Green Pears*," *Oxford Art Journal* (2022): 269–290.
- Joseph Larnerd, "The Worker in the Window: Class, Cut Glass, and the Spectacle of Work, 1910," *Journal of Modern Craft* 13, no. 2 (2020): 119–136.
- John Ott, "How New York Stole the Luxury Art Market: Blockbuster

Auctions and Bourgeois Identity in Gilded Age America," *Winterthur Portfolio* 42, no. 2/3 (2008): 133–158.

- Jennifer Van Horn, *Portraits of Resistance*, 262–276.

Assignments

- Final Project/Paper due: Wednesday, April 30

Course and Program Policies

It is the responsibility of students to know, understand, and abide by course and program policies.

For a full overview of program policies, review the Gettysburg College–Gilder Lehrman Institute Student Handbook.

Course correspondence

Correspondence with faculty and administrators should be formal. Include a subject line, addressee, and closing. Put the name and number of your course in the subject line.

Plagiarism and AI

This program uses Turnitin to check for instances of plagiarism and AI. Plagiarism and papers composed fully or in part by AI will not be tolerated. This includes self-plagiarism. A student caught plagiarizing or composing papers with AI for the first time may receive a zero on the assignment. A student caught plagiarizing or composing with AI for a second time may be permanently removed from the program.

Your section professor will set the policies for use of AI for research or purposes other than composing your papers.

Late work

Assignments should be submitted no later than 11:59 p.m. Pacific Time on the due date unless otherwise specified by your section professor. If you think you will be unable to submit an assignment on time, it is your responsibility to contact your section professor to ask for an extension before the assignment's due date. Late assignments will be docked 5% if less than a week late, 10% if one week late, and an additional 10% for each subsequent week.

Grading scale

Letter Grade	Number Grade	Grade Points
A	95%–100%	4

A-	90%–94%	3.67
B+	87%–89%	3.33
B	84%–86%	3
B-	80%–83%	2.67
C+	77%–79%	2.33
C	74%–76%	2
C-	70%–73%	1.67
D+	67%–69%	1.33
D	64%–66%	1
D-	60%–63%	.67
F	0%–59%	0

Assignment Descriptions

Short Papers (25% of grade – 5% per short paper)

Students will complete five short papers. Each should be approximately 500 words long. The purpose of these papers is not to merely summarize weekly readings but to demonstrate that you have read them analytically and contextually. Students have the option of responding to a prompt created by their section professor or to one of their own design. Student-created prompts should reflect the themes discussed in course readings and be included at the beginning of the paper. If you need help getting started, you can complete one of the options listed below.

Complete a thesis identification - Select one of your assigned readings and focus on identifying the thesis as well as the evidence the authors use to support that thesis.

Complete a primary source evaluation - Evaluate a primary source from the Gilder Lehrman Collection or elsewhere. Primary sources must be relevant to that week's readings. Keep the following questions in mind:

- Who is the author of this document?
- Who was their intended audience?
- How might both author and audience impact the content of the document?
- For what reason was this document created?

Complete a book review - Focus on one of the secondary sources assigned in this course and critique it. Keep the following questions in mind:

- What is the author's argument?
- Does the author adequately support their argument?
- Are you convinced of their argument? If not, why not?
- How does this source fit into the larger discussion of its topic?

Discussion Board Posts (18% of grade – 2% per discussion board)

Students will interact in nine discussion boards in this course. Discussion boards are led by section professors, who will provide specific instructions for participation in their section. You are required to make at least one post to each discussion board and respond to **at least two other students**.

Question-and-Answer Sessions (15% of grade – 5% per reaction)

Throughout the semester the lead professor of each course will conduct five Q&As. Students **MUST** attend at least three of these sessions for each course they are taking. **In order to receive credit for attending each Q&A, you must attend the session live and complete a 1–2-paragraph Q&A Reaction within 24 hours of participation.** Note: If you cannot attend three of the five Q&As, you may receive credit by viewing archived Q&As and completing a 500-word review of topics covered for each missed Q&A. **Makeup assignments must be completed within two weeks of the missed Q&A.**

Final Project/Paper (42% of grade)

For the final assignment of each course, you will choose to complete either a research project or 15-page research paper. Research projects are a public-education tool designed for the general population, teachers, and/or students of varying ages. Sample projects include (but are not limited to) vodcasts and podcasts, documentary editing and transcription, websites, annotated readers, walking tours, or museum exhibits. Lesson plans *will not* be accepted. A 5-page paper narrative must accompany the project. Your section professor must approve research projects.

The research paper can be a traditional position paper that uses original research to prove a thesis statement or a historiography paper that critically examines how American historians have interpreted the same event differently and why shifts in historical debates may have occurred.

Both final assignment options require you to ask an open-ended historical question (something that does not have an easy yes or no answer) that you do not yet know the answer to. You will then use the research process (pulling from a variety of resources, mostly primary source documents) to explore that question and create a thesis-driven answer. Regardless of whether you choose to pursue a project or paper, finals are scaffolded throughout the semester. This method breaks up a large grade into smaller constituent grades and allows time to incorporate instructor feedback into assignments.

Scaffolded Assignments

- Final Project/Paper Proposal (2%)

In roughly 1–2 pages, you should outline the main question, topic, or purpose of your final project or paper. This should include a description of the project or paper you are proposing, some background information and historical context on your topic (answer the questions who, what, where, and when), a brief description of your research plan (this does not need to be super specific, but should outline how many weeks you plan to research, if you need to schedule research trips or if your sources are published or available digitally, and when you plan to begin writing) and a justification for why your particular project or paper is worth pursuing (what is the significance of this topic? What does it add to our historical knowledge? Are you filling a gap that other historians have overlooked such as considering race, ethnicity, or gender?).

- Revised Proposal and Annotated Bibliography (3.5%)

This assignment will give you the opportunity to incorporate the feedback you received on the first draft of your proposal. In addition to incorporating your section professor's comments, you will also submit a proposed bibliography listing five sources you plan on utilizing in your research for your final product. Each of these sources should be followed by a brief summary (3–5 sentences) of the source and what it will contribute to your research process.

- Project or Paper Preview (5%)

This will give you the opportunity to show the progress you have made on your final project or paper and get some early-stage feedback from your section professor. For a final project, determine with your section professor an appropriate portion of your final submission to turn in. For a final paper, this should be roughly the first five pages of what will ultimately be your final submission.

- Rough Draft (10.5%):

For a final project, determine with your section professor an appropriate portion of your final submission to turn in. For a final paper, this should be, at minimum, the first ten pages of what will ultimately be your final submission.

- Final Product (21%):

Final Project: Much like the final paper option, a final project is meant to prove that you have mastered the content covered by this course. We encourage you to be creative in your approach to this project, though it should be equivalent in rigor and workload to a final paper.

Final Paper: Final papers should be at least fifteen pages in length. These can take the form of research papers or historiography papers.