

**Historical Scholarship in the 20th Century U.S.:
Difference and State Power
HIGR265C**

*Prof. Rebecca Plant
Spring 2016*

Class Room: HSS 6008
Class time: Wednesdays, 12:00 – 2:50 p.m.
Office hours: Wednesdays, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

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Course Description

This course seeks to introduce students to a range of readings that focus on the rise of the state in the twentieth-century U.S. and how state authority has affected individuals, with particular attention to those marked by difference—members of particular racial and ethnic groups, homosexuals, the poor or unemployed, women. We begin with a synthetic work that analyzes how reformers on both sides of the Atlantic generated and implemented new ideas for a more robust state in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Then we will explore how governmental power—on the federal, state and local levels—evolved in the United States over time, expanding during times of crisis such as the World Wars and the Depression. Part of our concern is to develop a nuanced understanding of state power, one that does not view “the state” as a monolith, but rather as a complex and multifaceted entity that encompasses varied and competing constituencies. Also of major concern will be the shifting relationship between individual identity (sexual, gendered, familial, ethnic/racial) and the construction of citizenship and non-citizenship.

Course Requirements

Participation (20%) is a crucial component of the course. You will take turns introducing the readings throughout the quarter. This entails presenting the work in a manner that situates it historiographically, identifies the theoretical and methodological approach employed, and reviews the major arguments and conclusions. You should also be prepared to offer an evaluative critique of the book:

- What is the central argument?
- Is the argument developed in opposition to a different point of view or a particular work or body of literature?
- Is the argument convincing, and does the evidence support it?
- Is the work well crafted?
- What does the author do particularly well and/or poorly?

- What is new and surprising?

How does the work connect to other readings we have done up for the course?

As part of your presentation, you are also required to come up with **three questions designed to stimulate a substantive discussion. These questions should be circulated to the class and instructor via email** by noon on Monday, so that everyone will have had time to read and contemplate the questions prior to our meeting.

Synopses (30%) For **three weeks** of your own choosing, you are also required to write a 2 to 3-page book review of the main reading.

Review essay (50%) Your major assignment is a paper of 12-15 pages on the following question:

- In both contemporary American politics and U.S. historiography, discussions of “the state” loom large. Yet in light of our federal system of government and the myriad forms of government intervention, discussions of “state power” can be maddeningly imprecise. ***Drawing on the works we’ve read for this course (and others if you so choose), and keeping in mind the diversity of Americans’ experiences, construct an argument about the changing role of government(s) in Americans’ lives, and/or how Americans’ views of government and understanding of citizenship evolved across the twentieth century.***

Books

- Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States*, Harvard University (Belknap) Press, 1995
- Sarah Haley, *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity*, University of North Carolina Press, 2016
- Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen*, Oxford University Press, 2010
- Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America*, Princeton University Press, 2009
- Lisa McGirr, *The War on Alcohol: Prohibition and the Rise of the American State*, W.W. Norton, 2015
- Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*, Princeton University Press, 2005
- Laura McEnaney, *Postwar: Waging Peace in Chicago*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018

- Marisa Chappell, *The War on Welfare Family, Poverty, and Politics in Modern America*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009
- Nancy MacLean, *Freedom Is Not Enough: The Opening of the American Workplace*, Harvard University Press, 2006
- Bethany Moreton, *To Serve God and Wal-Mart: The Making of Christian Free Enterprise*, Harvard University Press, 2009

Schedule

Week 1, April 3: State Power in the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries

- Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States*, Harvard University (Belknap) Press, 1995, focus especially on Parts I and III
- Andrew Wender Cohen, "Smuggling, Globalization, and America's Outward State, 1870-1909," *Journal of American History* 97:2 (September 2010): 371-98

Week 2, April 10: Gender and the Jim Crow State

- Sarah Haley, *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity*, University of North Carolina Press, 2016

Week 3, April 17: World War I and the Expansion of State Power

- Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen*, Oxford University Press, 2010
- K. Walter Hickel, "War, Region, and Social Welfare: Federal Aid to Servicemen's Dependents in the South, 1917-1921," *Journal of American History*, March 2001, 1362-1391

Week 4, April 24: Sexuality, Citizenship and the Law

- Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America*, Princeton University Press, 2009

- George Chauncey, "Christian Brotherhood or Sexual Perversion? Homosexual Identities and the Construction of Sexual Boundaries in the World War I Era," *Journal of Social History* 19 (1985)

Week 5, May 1: Prohibition and the Expansion of State Power

- Lisa McGirr, *The War on Alcohol: Prohibition and the Rise of the American State*, W.W. Norton, 2015

Week 6, May 8: Race and Citizenship: Immigration Restriction, 1924-1965

- Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of the Modern American Citizen*, Oxford University Press, 2010
- Lucy Salyer, "Baptism by Fire: Race, Military Service, and U.S. Citizenship Policy, 1918–1935," *Journal of American History* 91:3 (1994), 847-76

Week 7, May 22: Sacrifice and Obligation: Understandings of Citizenship following World War II

- Laura McEnaney, *Postwar: Waging Peace in Chicago*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018

Week 8, May 29: Race, Gender, and Welfare

- Marisa Chappell, *The War on Welfare Family, Poverty, and Politics in Modern America*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009
- Michael Willrich, "Home Slackers: Men, the State, and Welfare in Modern America," *Journal of American History* 87:2 (2000) 460-89

Week 9, June 5: Enforcing Equality? The Government and Workplace Discrimination

- Nancy MacLean, *Freedom Is Not Enough: The Opening of the American Workplace*, Harvard University Press, 2006

Week 10, June 12: "Family Values," Religion and the Rise of the Service Economy

- Bethany Moreton, *To Serve God and Wal-Mart: The Making of Christian Free Enterprise*, Harvard University Press, 2009