Seminar in Local History

This seminar will approach American history through intensive use of Lancaster city and county (or southeastern Pennsylvania) archives and other local history sources, including newspapers and oral histories. Given the centrality of this region to United States history from the eighteenth through the twentieth centuries, student researchers will have the option to explore almost all types of history: cultural, military, business and economic, social, political, women’s, African American, gay and lesbian, Latino, immigration, intellectual, and more. Participants will read and discuss a range of scholarly studies that interrogate the practice of local history, and key examples of this kind of history-writing from different periods in Pennsylvania’s history, whether of the region, city or state. The majority of classtime will be spent carrying out and reporting back on individualized research. Ultimately students will present their work to the class in draft form, for critique.

READINGS

Please purchase the following books:

Joseph Amato, *Rethinking Home: A Case for Writing Local History*
David Schuyler, *A City Transformed: Redevelopment, Race, and Suburbanization in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1940-1980*
James T. Lemon, *The Best Poor Man's Country: Early Southeastern Pennsylvania*

RULES & REGULATIONS

Since you are all advanced students, I will dispense with the usual stipulations regarding being on time, prepared, and alert. You should only miss a class if you are seriously ill, or have another major personal crisis; in either case, a official note will be required. Otherwise, attendance at every class is mandatory. Equally important is that you do the reading (both the books and then other students’ papers) without fail. I expect you to make this seminar a major priority, and since it is discussion-based, it cannot function unless you are all ready to comment. Finally, please check your email on a regular basis, because I like to send (or post in Blackboard) discussion questions and useful information or tips.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Your research paper of approximately 20-25 pages (plus endnotes and bibliography) will be 60% of your grade. The final version will be due during exam week, but you will need to produce a draft earlier for presentation to the class. You will also need to meet a series of deadlines for choosing the topic and assembling the research, which are specified below in bold caps, and are not negotiable. These include a 1-2 page, single-spaced topic paper, outlining what you intend to research, why you chose it, and how you plan to carry out that research; a complete bibliography with a minimum of five secondary sources (scholarly books and journal articles) and five different types of primary sources (newspapers, contemporary books including memoirs, archival materials, legislative records, legal testimony, oral histories, etc.); and a draft paper made available to other students and me no later than the Friday before your presentation.

2. You will write a critical essay of at least 7 pages, choosing from the three books we will read following Joseph D’Amato’s Rethinking Home; this paper will constitute 20% of your grade. In each case, you will answer the following questions:
   - What is the author’s major argument, and how does he make it?
   - What are the key sources for the argument and how are they deployed?
   - How does this book add to our understanding of what is “the local” in history?

These papers must be handed in before the book is discussed in class—they will not be accepted after that class.

3. Class participation will constitute 20% of your grade. I will pay close attention to who contributes to our discussion, and reward those who ask questions, raise ideas, and dare to disagree (with the author, with me, with each other). In addition, for each week in which we have an assigned reading, one of you will be responsible for preparing a set of questions to guide our discussion (I will give you guidelines in advance).

COURSE SCHEDULE

9/4   Introduction to course and review of syllabus: what is local history?
      Review of possible research topics, scheduling of meetings to discuss individually

[Week of 9/10-14: individual meetings to review topics]

9/11  Theorizing the Local
      Reading: D’Amato, Rethinking Home, Chapters 1-5

9/18  Finish Rethinking Home
      RESEARCH TOPIC PAPERS DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS
      [1-2 pages, single-spaced; please make copies for other students]

9/25  Lancaster—a Place in the Founding of America
Reading: Lemon, *Best Poor Man's Country*, Chapters 1-5

10/2  finish discussion of *Best Poor Man's Country*

10/9  NO CLASS (individual meetings to assess progress in research)

10/23 Interrogating “the state” in the United States
      Reading: Jenkins, *Cold War at Home*, Chapters 1-5
      **PROJECT BIBLIOGRAPHIES DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS**
      [please make copies for other students]

10/30 finish *Cold War at Home*

11/6  Our City, Past and Present
      Reading: Schuyler, *A City Transformed*

11/13 finish *A City Transformed*, possible walking tour of Lancaster

11/20 Presentations and Critique of Papers
        [papers will be due by 11/16]

11/27 Presentations and Critique of Papers
        [papers will be due by 11/21]

12/4  Presentations and Critique of Papers
        [papers will be due by 11/30]
SCHOLARLY JOURNALS

Pennsylvania History

Published by the Pennsylvania Historical Association since 1934, a key source for any research. It has a searchable archive at http://cip.cornell.edu/DPubS/UI/1.0/JourNav?authority=psu.ph&type=home

Pennsylvania Magazine of Biography and History


BOOKS ABOUT LANCASTER

I have copies of all of the following:

“glassmaker, iron master and churchman of colonial PA”

HMJ Klein, *Center Square* (1958)

Klein, *The Army Has a Heart: A War Incident in Lancaster County* (1946)

John WW Loose, *The Military Market Basket* (Revolutionary Lancaster, a series of six in 1976, not footnoted!)

Robert S. Walker et al., *Congress/The Pennsylvania Dutch Representatives, 1774-1974*

*Lancaster Looks Ahead* (1956 forum by City and Mayor Kendig Bare)

*Comprehensive Municipal Plan* (1945)

*Historic Heart of Lancaster* (1963 walking guide)


*History of the Rotary Club of Lancaster* (1944)
Richard D. Altick, *Of a Place and Time: Remembering Lancaster* (1991), personal memoir of the city between World Wars I and II

HMJ Klein, *Lancaster’s Golden Century, 1821-1921* (1921, published by the Hager Co.) (no footnotes!)