Spring 2018 Syllabus
Overview

Citizenship and Community: Conversations in the Humanities

NOTES: All readings are due on the date listed. Please consult the detailed syllabus for unit descriptions and reading and discussion questions.

A written reading response is due each Monday unless otherwise noted.

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<td>ALL FACULTY</td>
<td>Into the Conversation</td>
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<td>• Declaration of Sentiments, Seneca Falls Convention</td>
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<td>• Thomas Jefferson, Declaration of Independence</td>
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<td>Monday, January 15</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
<td>Happy Martin Luther King Jr. Day – no class tonight!</td>
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<td>• Plato, <em>Republic</em>, Book VII</td>
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<td>Monday, January 22</td>
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<td>Thursday, January 25</td>
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<td>• Plato, <em>Republic</em>, Book IX</td>
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<td>Monday, January 29</td>
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<td>Impersonating Poetry: Imitator, Maker, or User?</td>
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<td>• Response paper 2 due</td>
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<td>CREATIVE WRITING</td>
<td>“Good poems are the best teachers.” –Mary Oliver</td>
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<td>• Selected poems by Clifton, cummings, Hayden, Howe, Lee, and Zagajewski</td>
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<td>• Selected poems by Clifton, Diaz, Hikmet, Levine, Olds, and Roethke</td>
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<td>• Selected poems by Auden, Cisneros, Daniels, Guerrero, and Komunyakaa</td>
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<td>Considering Lines, Titles, Beginnings</td>
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<td>• Selected poems by Bishop, Brooks, Gay, Hughes, O’Hara, and Pinsky</td>
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<td>• “The Energy of Revision” from The Poet’s Companion, Kim Addonizio and Dorianne Laux</td>
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<td>• T.S. Eliot, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”</td>
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<td>Monday, February 26</td>
<td>U.S. HISTORY</td>
<td>Citizenship and Community in U.S. History</td>
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<td>• Selected works by Adams, Jefferson, Hamilton, Madison, and Smith</td>
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<td>U.S. HISTORY</td>
<td>Challenging the Limits of US Citizenship (1820s-1850s)</td>
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<td>• Memorial of the Cherokee Nation, “A Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions,”</td>
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<td>• Selected works by Jackson, Walker, and Douglass</td>
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<td><strong>poetry portfolio due tonight</strong></td>
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<td>Douglass and the Transformation of American Slavery (1830s-1840s)</td>
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<td>• Frederick Douglass, A Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: “Preface,” “Letter,” and chapters I-VII</td>
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<td>• Response paper 4 due</td>
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<td>U.S. HISTORY</td>
<td>Gender and Slavery (1840s-1860s)</td>
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<td>• Frederick Douglass, Narrative, Chapters VIII-IX</td>
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<td>• Harriet Jacobs, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl (excerpts)</td>
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<td>Monday, March 12</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
<td>Enjoy your Spring Break!</td>
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<td>Thursday, March 15</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
<td>Enjoy your Spring Break!</td>
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<td>Monday, March 19</td>
<td>U.S. HISTORY</td>
<td>The Debate over Slavery and the Fracturing of American Political Community (1840s-1850s)</td>
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<td>• Douglass, Narrative, Chapters X, XI, and “Appendix,”</td>
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<td>• selected works by Douglass, Hammond, and Fitzhugh</td>
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<td>ART HISTORY</td>
<td>Picturing Frederick Douglass</td>
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<td>• Frederick Douglass, &quot;Pictures and Progress&quot;</td>
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<td>Monday,</td>
<td>WRITING</td>
<td>First Steps of the Writing Process</td>
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                      |                          | ■ Mairs, “Disability”  
                      |                          | ■ See full syllabus for writing assignment |
| Thursday, March 29 | WRITING                  | **Examples and Conclusions**  
                      |                          | ■ Aaron, *40 Model Essays*, Chapter 3, “Example”  
                      |                          | ■ Klass, “She’s Your Basic L.O.L. in N.A.D.”  
                      |                          | ■ See full syllabus for writing assignment |
| Monday, April 2    | WRITING                  | **Revision**  
                      |                          | ■ See full syllabus for writing assignment  
                      |                          | **Rough draft for Spring Formal Paper due** |
| Thursday, April 5  | U.S. HISTORY             | **Remaking Citizenship After Civil War (1860s-1880s)**  
                      |                          | ■ Selected excerpts and works by Douglass and Sumner |
| Monday, April 9    | U.S. HISTORY             | **Jim Crow, the Dawes Era, and Second-Class Citizenship (1890s-1910s)**  
                      |                          | ■ Selected works from Washington, The Niagara Movement, Wells-Barnett, Pratt, and Ah-Nen-La-Di-Ni  
                      |                          | ■ Response paper 6 due |
| Thursday, April 12 | U.S. HISTORY             | **Immigration and Citizenship (1880s-1960s)**  
                      |                          | ■ The Chinese Exclusion Act  
                      |                          | ■ Selected works from the US Department of Labor, Clancy, readings by and about the Ku Klux Klan, and Guided Activity on the Bracero Program  
                      |                          | **Spring Formal Paper Due** |
| Monday, April 16   | U.S. HISTORY             | **The Civil Rights Movement and Its Legacies, (1960s-present)**  
                      |                          | ■ Selected works by King, Malcolm X, Steinem, The Combahee River Collective, and The Movement for Black Lives  
                      |                          | ■ Response paper 7 due |
| Thursday, April 19 | WRITING                  | **Writing to Reflect**  
                      |                          | ■ See full syllabus for assignment |
| Monday, April 23   | ART HISTORY              | **How Memorials and Monuments Can Shape the Beliefs and Attitudes of a Community**  
                      |                          | ■ Response paper 8 due |
| Thursday, April 26 | CREATIVE WRITING         | **Revisiting Our Stories**  
<pre><code>                  |                          | ■ See assignment sheet for details |
</code></pre>
<p>| Monday             | CREATIVE WRITING         | <strong>How Language Shapes Experience</strong> |</p>
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<td>Final Class Reading</td>
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<td>Thursday, May 10</td>
<td>LAST CLASS</td>
<td>Sharing and Appreciation</td>
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<td>Monday, May 14</td>
<td>ALL FACULTY</td>
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Graduation is tentatively scheduled for Monday, May 21.
DETAILED SYLLABUS
Always read this section to prepare for class.

Thursday, January 11

Spring Orientation

We will start off the semester by previewing the themes, texts, and key assignments that we will journey through together in the months ahead. We’ll take a moment to review our class policies and procedures and dive into our discussion.

Read: The Declaration of Sentiments, Seneca Falls Convention (handout) and the Declaration of Independence

Monday, January 15

In observance of MLK Day, we will not meet for class.

Thursday, January 18

Philosophy Unit with Dr. Matthew Daude Laurents

Unit Overview: Spring Semester: Plato’s Republic Rides Again

This spring semester, we will continue our reading of Plato’s Republic. In the fall, we made our way through books I through VI, in which we traced Plato’s “set-up” for the discussion of the ideal city as a means of discovering the true nature of justice and the identification of justice with the harmony produced when each part of the city (or the soul) is doing its own proper work.

To prepare for the rest of our journey, think back on the themes of our discussions about the first books and review your notes. It might be helpful for you to review the “Read me first” handout from fall, but let me highlight two important principles: (1) Breathe normally, and (2) read all the words in order before you let yourself get bogged down with details.

Remember that I’m your guide (!), so you don’t have to find your way in the dark totally on your own. Our class discussion will be about way-finding in this complex, murky text, so don’t worry too much if you don’t feel confident that you know what’s going on. You will, but it’s important to breathe so you don’t get so frustrated that you close the book.

As was our practice last fall, I’ve given you a reading assignment for each philosophy class, and with that assignment you have two resources. I have indicated passages that will serve as the major theme for our class discussion, and I’ve given you some questions to help you with the reading. Keep these questions in mind as you read the words (in order).

One final thought as we prepare for another dive into Plato: Reading a text is a conversation, and what you get out of any conversation is closely related to what you bring to the table. This implies that you — the real you, with your own perspectives and experiences — need to stay engaged with Plato and what he says, but you also need to try to hear him in what he is saying to you. Hearing is pretty easy; listening is more challenging, and understanding takes work. This is why, in academic conversations of all kinds, we tend to be focused a lot on the text: This is our way of conversing with people who can’t just answer
our questions, because, for instance, they’re dead. Their words, the words they chose to reveal their ideas to us — words are all we have, but we can’t sit passively and let the words wash over us, like lying on the couch and listening to Pink Floyd. We have to be active partners in the conversation, sensitive to the fact that we are engaging another mind with something to say. The opposite of letting Plato wash over you passively is seeing only yourself reflected back, like a big Plato-mirror. Here’s a silly example: If I told you that Book VI of the Republic is really about the best way to cook nutritious meals, you’d probably wonder which Book VI I’d been reading, right? Going back again and again to the words in the text is what keeps us honest about just looking in a mirror!

That’s plenty of advice for now. Get busy with book VII — Plato still has some surprises in store, I’ll bet. Happy philosophizing!


Read: Republic, Book VII. Concentrate on 514a-519e and 535a-536d

Discussion Questions: Why does Socrates tell the story about the Cave? What does this story tell us about the proper education of the philosopher? Why do we call this story an allegory?

Think: Is the city ruled by philosophers complete? (As in, completely complete? We’ve heard this before!)

Monday, January 22

Philosophy Class 7: How bad can things get?

Read: Republic, Book VIII. Concentrate on 544d-546c and 561a-b

Discussion Questions: Why does Socrates think that the ideal city will decline? Into what will the city degenerate? How is the explanation of this decline based on the big letters/small letters argument?

Response Paper Prompt:
What is democracy, according to Socrates? Where does democracy fall in the degeneration of the ideal city? Why? (Hint: What are the five types of “rule” or constitutions by which people might govern themselves?)

Thursday, January 25

Philosophy Class 8: Are you happy now, Thrasymachus?

Read: Republic, Book IX. Concentrate on 580a-c and 583b-588b

Discussion Questions: Which ruler has the best life? Which has the worst? Why?

How does Socrates answer Thrasymachus’ claim about justice and power? Why does he bring up the idea of pleasure? What are the types of pleasures that correspond to the types of ruler? Is a particular sort of pleasure superior to the others? Why?
Monday, January 29

Philosophy Class 9: Impersonating Poetry: imitator, maker, or user?

Read: Republic, Book X. Concentrate on 595a-608b

Discussion Questions: Do poets write about the truth? In what way? Do poets have to know what they’re talking about? Could a poet teach you about virtue? Could a poet teach you to be virtuous?

Think: Why does Plato leave the door open to the possibility that poetry might be rehabilitated (607b-608b)?

The Last Word: Er
Why does Socrates introduce Er at the end of the Republic? Who is Er? What is Er’s story? How does the story of Er complete the argument that Socrates makes against Thrasyamchus?

The End: We made it! You’ve read all of one of the most influential books in Western history!
Welcome to the club.

Response Paper Prompt:
Now, let’s pretend:

You are Socrates, and I’ll be Thrasyamchus. Write a (one-page) letter to me in which you explain your main argument about why my concept of justice as “the advantage of the stronger” is wrong.

Breathe normally, be brief.

Thursday, February 1

Creative Writing Unit with Vivé Griffith, MFA

Unit Overview: I am excited to be back to write with you this spring! We will begin our time together with a unit focused on poetry. We’ll read poetry, and we’ll write some too. Then at the end of the semester we’ll write together to try to interrogate, honor, and express our shared in experience in Free Minds.

The first poems we know of are the great epics, poems like The Odyssey that try to capture the essence of a culture and a people. They were created to be sung, and the rhythm and rhyme we now think of as essential to poetry were part of the song. Those musical qualities also served as mnemonic devices, enabling the bard to remember what to sing. (This still happens today. Think of how you can remember the lyrics of a song you haven’t heard in many years.)

But the epic poems gave us additional gifts. You might say that the themes of citizenship and community were woven through those works. And significant parts of what we know of ancient cultures come through their writing. For example, we know that hospitality was important to the ancient Greeks in part
because in *The Odyssey* the character of Odysseus comes home disguised as a stranger. He is welcomed in and his feet are cleansed with oil, because guests are treated with respect in that world.

Contemporary poetry tends to focus less on the larger questions of culture and more on individual perspectives. Poems are more likely to explore the self, the family, and the local. We have to scratch a little to see how citizenship and community are embedded there. Yet they are, and poems are still the places we grapple with identity, with expressing the human experience on paper. In this unit, we’ll look at how poets do that, and then we’ll work on doing it ourselves. We’ll be driven by craft, exploring what I like to call the “tools of the trade.” We’ll discover how poets create their poems, and we’ll let them guide us into creating our own.

**Texts**

For this unit we will use a packet of selected poems, and we may refer back to *Bird By Bird*, by Anne Lamott

**Assignments**

For each class in this unit, you will have a reading assignment and a writing assignment. The readings may seem short, but poems are rich and require multiple readings. Make sure to read them out loud and to take the time to sit with what they are saying. For the writing assignment, dive in. We will come back to our early drafts and revise them with our growing understanding of poetic craft. The late assignment policy in this unit mirrors that for your response papers – I will only accept late work one class period after it is due, and then for 50% credit.

**Creative Writing Class 4: “Good poems are the best teachers.” –Mary Oliver**

What makes it a poem? Is it a poem simply because of the line breaks? Or is there another thing that makes something considered a poem instead of, say, a story or an essay?

Emily Dickinson is quoted as saying: “If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry.” Do we want to hold it to the same standards?

What makes someone a poet? Does simply writing a poem make a poet, or are there other things that go into deserving the title? (Is it a title?)

In the poetry unit, we’ll play with these questions, looking at a number of poems to determine what holds them together as a genre and considering the act of writing them.

Today we’ll talk about poems by exploring some good ones, and we’ll consider what poet Ted Kooser calls “the poet’s job description.”

**Read:**

- Lucille Clifton, “Won’t You Celebrate with Me?”
- e.e. cummings, “anyone lived in a pretty how town”
- Robert Hayden, “Those Winter Sundays”
- Marie Howe, “What the Living Do”
Write:
For your first assignment, start with a 10-minute free writing, using one of these prompts: “I remember” or “I don’t remember.” Keep your hand moving and don’t worry about making things perfect.

Now, shake out your hand, take a walk around the room, and re-read your free write. What one sentence or idea surprises or excites you? Make it the first line of your poem.

Bring to class a poem of at least 10 lines. Make sure it has line breaks and don’t make it rhyme. (We’ll talk about why in class.) Think about what impressed or moved you in the poems we read for class today. What can you incorporate into your own poem?

Monday, February 5

Creative Writing Class 5: Image and Detail: Helping the Reader See

Two related ideas—image and details—are critical to poetry. They act as counter to abstraction—ideas separated from the concrete like “liberty” and “harmony.” Today we’ll read poems that are rooted in concrete image, painting a vivid picture for the reader. Often, there will be a great deal of emotion in these poems, but the poems don’t talk about emotion. They create emotion by precisely describing something to which we have an emotional reaction.

From The Poetry Dictionary by John Drury:

Image, Imagery (im-idge: Latin, “likeness, semblance, picture, concept, imitation or copy”) A mental picture; a concrete representation of something; a likeness the senses can perceive.

Ezra Pound says that an image “presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time.” A poetic image transfers itself to our minds with a flash, as if projected upon a movie screen. Many images, such as “bracelet in a wheel barrow,” appeal primarily to the sense of sight. But an image can invoke the other senses too, as in “a sniff of perfume,” or a “jangling of banjoes,” or a “scratchy blanket,” or a “tart cherry.” Images serve as the poem’s evidence.

Poetry without images, or with too few, seems vacant, generalized, uncompelling. But stale images are no substitute for the real thing, which must hit us as a discovery, however small. …

When reading the poems in today’s assignment, pay very close attention to how they use image. You might underline specific images as you read.
Read:
- Richard Blanco, “Looking for the Gulf Motel”
- Rita Dove, “Daystar”
- Ross Gay, “Ode to Drinking Water from My Hands”
- Langston Hughes, “Harlem”
- Miller Williams, “Let Me Tell You”
- William Carlos Williams, “The Red Wheelbarrow”
- James Wright, “Lying in a Hammock at William Duffy’s Farm in Pine Island, Minnesota”

Write:
Write a poem about a single day. It might be a full day, like Rita Dove’s “Daystar.” It might be a moment within that day, when revelation came, or didn’t, like James Wright’s “Lying in a Hammock...” It might be the way a day in the past felt, like Ross Gay’s poem.

Choose your day and make a list of sensory details from that day. What did it taste like, smell like, feel like, look like, sound like? What about images? What would bring the day to life for your reader?

Now write your poem. Make sure it is full of detail and image and doesn’t include abstractions like “hope,” “pain,” “longing,” or “liberty.” If you want us to feel something, let the details and images offer that to us.

Thursday, February 8

Creative Writing Class 6: The Self and Community

Poets today often plumb their personal experience to find material for poems. This, however, doesn’t mean that the poems exist simply to be therapeutic, or that their personal experience exists in isolation. We relate to each other through personal experience, and the best poems resonate for us because what they are revealing is relevant not just for the poet, but for the reader too. Often, these personal poems speak to our larger world and communities as well. Look for that familiarity in the poems you read for tonight.

Read:
- Lucille Clifton, “Homage to My Hips”
- Natalie Diaz, “No More Cake Here” and statement about “No More Cake Here”
- Nazim Hikmet, “Autobiography”
- Philip Levine, “You Can Have It”
- Sharon Olds, “Language of the Brag”
- Theodore Roethke, “My Papa's Waltz”

Write:
Notice the way the poets we read for today bring stories of their own lives into their poems, and the way they strive to be universal while doing so. When we write about ourselves, we explore who we are. When we write about ourselves, we give voice to our communities and worlds.
For today, write a poem based on Nazim Hikmet’s poem “Autobiography.” Title your poem “Autobiography” and make sure that, like Hikmet, you include names and places, and very specific, concrete details. And remember, each of our lives is far larger than what can be contained in a single poem, writing an autobiography requires that you choose your details with care. Learning to choose the right details or image or metaphor is key to every poem you write.

Monday, February 12

Creative Writing Class 7: Writing About Art

We have a great opportunity this spring to explore ekphrastic poetry. The word comes ekphrastic from the Greek “ek” and “phrasis,” “out” and “speak” respectively. The verb “ekphrastein” means to proclaim or call an inanimate object by name (according to Wikipedia). In simple terms, it is poetry that responds to another work of art, most often to visual art. Ekphrastic poetry has a long history, going back thousands of years. American poets have often written ekphrastic poetry, and you will join that tradition through our visit to the Blanton Museum.

Read:
- W.H. Auden, “Musée de Beaux Arts” and William Carlos Williams, “Landscape with the Fall of Icarus,” both in response to Pieter Bruegel’s “Landscape with the Fall of Icarus”
- Sandra Cisneros, “My Wicked Wicked Ways,” in response to a personal photograph
- Kate Daniels, “War Photograph,” in response to Vietnam War photograph by Nick Ut
- Yusef Komunyakaa, “Facing It,” in response to the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, DC

Write:
Find an image you love. Maybe it’s something that Janis shared with you in the Art History unit this year. Maybe it’s a print you have on your wall or something made by a family member or friend. You can consider paintings, photographs, sculptures, any piece of art.

Now, write a poem of response. Maybe you want to do that by writing very descriptively about the work. Maybe you want to write a story that connects to it instead. Maybe the art elicits an experience from your own life – write it! Maybe you have something you want to say to the artist.

We’ll spend a lot of time looking at different ways to write ekphrastic poems. To begin with, follow your instincts. Let the art inspire you.

Thursday, February 15

Art History Class 7: Visit to the Blanton Museum of Art on UT Campus

No writing or reading due in class tonight. See Blanton trip handout for details and enjoy the museum!
Monday, February 19

Creative Writing Class 8: Considering Lines, Titles, Beginnings

How do we make someone care about our poem? How do we draw someone in and get them to keep reading? How do we decide where to begin?

All of these questions sit at the core of the writing experience, and they can either halt us from writing or make us dive in. Today we'll look at how a number poems to help us determine how a good poem invites the reader in. As you read, consider:

- Does the title intrigue me? Why or why not?
- How does the title relate to the rest of the poem?
- How does the poet invite the reader in?
- What clues do we get that the writer is aware of his or her reader? In other words, how do we know that he or she has considered the audience?

We will also talk today about line breaks and look at how a poem changes based on how the lines are broken. Pay attention to that in the poems you read for today.

Read:
- Elizabeth Bishop, “One Art”
- Gwendolyn Brooks, “We Real Cool”
- Ross Gay, “Ode to Buttoning and Unbuttoning My Shirt”
- Langston Hughes, “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” and “I, Too”
- Frank O’Hara, “The Day Lady Died”
- Robert Pinsky, “Shirt”

Write:
Tonight you will turn in two poems! First, you’ll have drafted a poem at the Blanton Museum. Please turn that in, in addition to one more poem inspired by today’s reading.

The poems we’re reading today deal with a series of topics – loss, race, the death of a famous person, a specific place. Two of them focus on shirts (in very different ways). Let these topics guide you in choosing something to write about for tonight. The choice is yours, but I suggest you try to stay small. Look at how Ross Gay can create an entire world from something as small as buttoning and unbuttoning a shirt. See if you can do something similar.

Your poem should be at least 10 lines long and contain a thoughtful title and opening.

Thursday, February 22

Creative Writing Class 9: Revision: Seeing Again

“I have never thought of myself as a good writer. But I’m one of the world’s great rewriters.” James A. Michener
Interviewer: How much rewriting do you do?
Hemingway: It depends. I rewrote the ending of Farewell to Arms, the last page of it, 39 times before I was satisfied.
Interviewer: Was there some technical problem there? What was it that had stumped you?
Hemingway: Getting the words right.

The main thing I try to do is write as clearly as I can. I rewrite a good deal to make it clear.(E.B. White, The New York Times, August 3, 1942)

Revision is literally and figuratively the act of “seeing again” or, as Natalie Goldberg says, “envisioning again.” We are asked to remember that writing is a process and that pieces evolve over time. We must see our work in a new light and rework it to bring it closer to completion.

All writers revise, and the best writers revise a lot. The short story writer Raymond Carver wrote 20 to 30 drafts of his stories before he was satisfied. “It’s something I love to do,” he said, “putting words in and taking words out.”

Today we will explore the act of revision and work through exercises to help revise the six (or more) poems we’ve written this semester. Try to approach revision with an openness to the idea that the finished poem may look very different from the one you started with.

Read:
- “The Energy of Revision” from The Poet’s Companion, Kim Addonizio and Dorianne Laux

Write:
Read through the six poems you’ve written during this unit. Look at and consider my comments on your poems. Then start revising. Mark out words that aren’t working, add lines or stanzas as needed. Use the tips in today’s reading to help you along.

Then make a list of at least three additional revisions you believe each poem needs. Bring those to class with you. We’ll work on them together.
U.S. History Unit with Dr. Shirley Thompson

Unit Overview: Citizenship and Community in US History

What visions of community have driven the history of the United States? How have individuals and groups defined the status and duties of citizens? On what basis have people and groups been excluded from citizenship and belonging in American society? At the nation’s inception, the founders of the U.S. took it upon themselves to articulate explicitly the meaning and scope of American politics, and subsequent generations continued to draw boundaries separating those who mattered and those who didn’t. Over the years, members of excluded groups—African-Americans, women, Native Americans, immigrants, the poor, etc.—have formulated their own visions of community. From the founding of the nation to the present day and points in between, we will engage with thinkers from the past as they defined, contested, and refined the categories and values that govern political and social life in the United States.

Even though we will proceed roughly chronologically and I provide historical context and background for each class, our goal will not be simply to learn what happened when. Rather, our aim is to get a sense of how contentious history has been, and to practice the historian’s craft of reconstructing the debates and motives of past generations to have a clearer understanding of what is at stake in the debates of today. To that end, we will be conducting close and contextualized readings of primary documents, the evidence that historians use to make their arguments about the significance of events and issues in the past. You will notice that many of these documents are speeches, declarations, addresses, statements—consciously public utterances that reflect the civic and persuasive demands of citizenship and community-building.

U.S. History Class 1: Paradoxes of Slavery and Freedom in the New Republic (1770-1780s)

Background: On July 4, 1776, after more than a year of intense fighting, the thirteen colonies of British North America formally broke from the England to form the United States of America. Eleven years later, the leaders of the new nation would further shape the political and economic structure of the US by writing and adopting a Constitution which separated, extended, and enumerated the powers of the federal government. From its origins, the country wrestled with the paradoxes of slavery and freedom. Even as the founders defended their right to “independence” by using the language of “freedom,” “liberty,” and “equality,” they held people of African descent as slaves and denied women equal citizenship rights. The right to vote, among the most coveted of these citizenship rights, was reserved for propertied men in most states. When England raised taxes on the American colonists through tariffs on imported goods, colonists resisted what they considered to be the “tyranny” of taxation without representation and boycotted English merchandise, in one famous instance dumping large amounts of tea into Boston Harbor. In recent years, American colonists had become major players in the lucrative transatlantic trade in slaves, sugar, and rum, and many influential colonists understood the fight for “independence” as the quest to pursue that trade independently of England.

The primary documents for this week provide several windows into this paradoxical context of freedom and slavery. The Declaration of Independence (DOI), was issued and signed by a majority of representatives to the Second Continental Congress, the body created to coordinate negotiations with
and war against Great Britain. Pay special attention to the two paragraphs at the beginning and the two paragraphs that close the document, while skimming the long list of “grievances.”

The Letters you will read are between Abigail Adams, a well-read woman from a prominent Massachusetts family and her husband John Adams—a Massachusetts lawyer, delegate to the Continental Congress, one of the authors of the DOI, and eventually 2nd President of the US. Their brief exchange illustrates an early conflict over the role of women in social and political life.

Another of the principal authors of the DOI and future President, Thomas Jefferson composed Notes on the State of Virginia in 1785 in response to a set of questions posed to him by a French diplomat. (The chapters are named “Query 1, 2, etc.” in response to these questions.) The excerpts you will read detail Jefferson’s conflicted thoughts on the institution of slavery and on the character of black people. The subject of Query 14 is “Laws,” but in writing about a recent (failed) attempt of some VA lawmakers to abolish slavery, Jefferson goes off on an extraordinary tangent about “the blacks” that lays the basis for the development of scientific expressions of racism in the next century. In Query 18, Jefferson worries about the moral impact of slavery on slaveowners, their families, and the nation in general. In 1787, the US Constitution was sent to the states to be ratified, a process that inspired heavy debate among its supporters and those who objected to a more powerful and structured federal government.

Under the alias “Publius,” Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, wrote a series of articles in a New York newspaper arguing for the adoption of the Constitution. These articles were eventually collected as The Federalist Papers. The excerpt “Federalist 54” details the rationale behind the “3/5ths clause,” the passage in the Constitution that defines an enslaved person as 3/5ths of a person for the purposes of calculating the burden of taxation and representation in the House of Representatives for any given state.

Finally, you will read the brief narrative of Venture Smith, who had been captured in West Africa and transported to the US on a Rhode Island-based slave ship. He was enslaved by a succession of masters in Rhode Island and Connecticut from 1739 to 1765, when he was able finally to purchase his freedom. He spent the next decade or so purchasing his family and land. He dictated his narrative and had it printed by a local Connecticut newspaper in 1798.

Read:  
The Declaration of Independence (1776) 4 pgs.
Letters between John Adams and Abigail Adams (1776) 2 pgs.
Thomas Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia, excerpts from Queries 14 and 18 (1784) 5 pgs.
Publius (Alexander Hamilton or James Madison), The Federalist Papers, “Federalist 54” (1788) 3 pgs.
Venture Smith, A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Venture, A Native of Africa (1798) 13 pgs.

Discussion Questions:
• According to the Declaration of Independence, what is the role of government?
• Why does the DOI begin by affirming the equality of all men (people)?
• What are the inherent contradictions of this document in a society that was built on slavery and gender inequality?
• How does Abigail Adams express her frustrations with these contradictions and in what terms does John Adams respond?
• Why does Thomas Jefferson think black people, when freed, would not make good US citizens? Why and in what way is Jefferson worried about the moral life of masters and the moral health of the nation?
• What does it mean, according to the author of Federalist 54, to regard a slave as having a mixed character, containing elements of property and personhood?
• How does Venture Smith’s narrative reflect and refute these views about the character of slaves and of black people in general?

Response paper prompt: In the last paragraph of Query 18 of Notes on the State of Virginia, Thomas Jefferson writes: “I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just.” How does he characterize the moral consequences of slavery for masters and the nation? How do you square these reflections with the tone and message of the Declaration of Independence which Jefferson also helped to write?

Thursday, March 1

U.S. History Class 2: Challenging the Limits of U.S. Citizenship (1820s-1850s)

Background: By the 1820s, the United States had expanded well beyond the original thirteen states as far west as Missouri, the “Arkansas Territory,” and Louisiana and as far North as the “Michigan Territory” on the Great Lakes. By way of treaties and open warfare, the US pursued a policy of clearing the land of Indian claims and moving various nations to the west of the Mississippi River. The various states had done away with property qualifications for voting, making the US into what political scientists call a “herrenvolk democracy” (democracy of the “folk” or “race”), where only adult white men enjoyed full citizenship status. In this climate of geographical expansion and an electorate broadened by class but exclusive by gender and race, frontiersmen such as the “Indian killer” and slaveholding General Andrew Jackson held wide political appeal.

As President, Andrew Jackson continued to spearhead Indian Removal to “make room for the whites” as he argued in this 1830 Message to Congress. The Cherokee mounted a particularly public campaign against removal. Over the course of the early 1800s, the Cherokee nation had adopted markers of “civilization,” such as forming a national government modelled on that of the US and developing a written Cherokee language; however, the Cherokee insisted on their sovereign status, their national borders now encompassed by Georgia and the Carolinas, and their right to self-determination as a foreign nation. In the early 1830s, the US Supreme Court in Cherokee v. Georgia (1831) would reclassify Indian nations as “domestic dependent nations.” In their own message to the US Congress, the 1829 Memorial of the Cherokee Nation, Cherokees use the language and legacy of the US founders to resist US policy.

Women and African-Americans also developed powerful critiques of U.S. society. Born to an enslaved father and free mother in North Carolina, Walker eventually moved to Boston where he was active in the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the emerging abolitionist movement among Northern free blacks. In his 1829 pamphlet Walker’s Appeal, he imagines a black political community bound by a politics of freedom beyond the scope and interests of the United States. We will read a lot more about Frederick Douglass, but for now, notice how his speech, “What to the Slave is the 4th of July?” wages rhetorical war on slavery and other national hypocrisies. Meanwhile middle-class women in the
Northeast, many of whom were active in a wide variety of Christian reforms, such as anti-slavery, began to organize on their own behalf. A group of women and men met in Seneca Falls, NY in 1848, to protest constraints on women’s political voice and the notion that men and women should occupy “separate spheres” of social, economic, and political life. Historians have argued that their “Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions” represents the beginning of US feminism.

Read: Andrew Jackson, “Message to Congress on Indian Removal” (1830)
Memorial of the Cherokee Nation (1829)
David Walker, “Preamble,” Walker’s Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World... (1829)
Douglass, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July”? (1852)
“A Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions” (1848)

Discussion Questions:
- How does Andrew Jackson characterize the Indians?
- How do you feel about his use of the terms “civilization” and “savage”?
- How does the Cherokee Nation negotiate and work within these commonly held opinions about their national/racial community?
- Who is Walker speaking to and for? What about Douglass?
- What does the Seneca Falls “Declaration of Sentiments” reveal about the lives and status of middle-class women?
- How do the Cherokee, Walker, Douglass, and authors of “A Declaration of Sentiments” make use of the founding ideals and texts of the United States?

Poetry Portfolio is due in class tonight.

Monday, March 5

U.S. History Class 3: Douglass and the Transformation of American Slavery (1830s-1840s)

Background: As the result of the availability of land in the Southern interior of the U.S., the invention of the cotton gin (a machine making it easier to separate the cotton boll from the plant), the introduction of vastly more efficient steam-powered boats, and a high demand for cotton in industrializing parts of the world, the shape and scope of American slavery transformed in the decades leading up to the Civil War. Over 1.2 million enslaved people were “redistributed” through the domestic slave trade from the upper South (Virginia, Maryland, Kentucky, etc.) to areas of increased demand for slaves such as Mississippi and Louisiana. The crops produced by slave labor and enslaved people themselves as currency and capital formed the basis of the nation’s growing economy.

Born around 1817 in Maryland, Frederick Douglass came of age during this transformation. The movement to abolish slavery gained steam when Northern whites such as William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips joined black activists to raise public awareness about the evils of slavery. However, their efforts were met with considerable resistance. Abolitionist literature, such as Walker’s Appeal and Garrison’s newspaper, The Liberator, was declared illegal in the South. Southern Congressmen used their political power to table all antislavery petitions in Congress, a policy that lasted from the mid-1830s until the War with Mexico (1846-1848) forced the issue. From the 1830s-the Civil War, abolitionists built their movement by publicizing narratives by former slaves and other eyewitnesses to slavery and by providing formerly enslaved people a public platform to speak out against slavery.
Because the laws in Southern states barred enslaved people from learning to read and write, their accounts were often regarded with suspicion. Slave narrators had to strike a fine balance between being very particular about their own experience and claiming to speak about the problem of slavery in general. Frederick Douglass was among the most popular of these fugitive and formerly enslaved narrators and activists. After the publication of his *Narrative* in 1845, he became so well known that he had to move to England to avoid recapture. Upon his return in 1847, he moved to Rochester, NY where he published his own anti-slavery newspaper, *The North Star*. He was present at the nearby Seneca Falls Convention for women’s rights, and participated widely in anti-slavery and reformist politics.

Read: Frederick Douglass, *A Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845)  

Discussion Questions:
- Why does Douglass’s *Narrative* begin with a preface and a letter?  
- What does this tell you about what you are about to read? The intended audience?  
- What are the circumstances surrounding Douglass’s birth?  
- Why is the violence of Aunt Hester’s beating so vividly portrayed?  
- Why was literacy so important to Douglass?

Response Paper Prompt:  
Describe Douglass’s childhood. What does his account tell us about the role and status of children in a slave society? What effect do you think this description had on his reading audience?

Thursday, March 8

**U.S. History Class 4: Gender and Slavery (1840s-1860s)**

**Background:** Douglass’ *Narrative* was prominent when it was published and it has been consistently read ever since. His story and the narratives of other enslaved men have long informed historians’ interpretations of the slave experience. It wasn’t until the 1980s that historians began to recover and incorporate the perspectives of enslaved women into an understanding of the institution of slavery. Harriet Jacobs’ 1861 narrative, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* is one of the most widely read and vivid of those accounts. Born in North Carolina in 1813, Jacobs endured a decade of sexual abuse at the hands of her master in 1842. Before making her way by boat to freedom in Philadelphia, she spent seven years hiding in an attic so that she could keep an eye on her children. She dedicated her life to the abolitionist cause and died in 1897.

Read: Frederick Douglass, *Narrative*, Chapters VIII-IX  
Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (excerpts)

Discussion Questions:
- Based on what you have read in Douglass’s *Narrative* so far, what were some of the challenges facing enslaved women?  
- How would you compare Jacobs’s narrative with Douglass’s, especially comparing her predicament with that of Douglass’s Aunt Hester?
How are they similar or different in intent and audience?
Pay attention to the tone and writing style of Jacobs’s autobiography. Does her tone or style change when discussing certain topics? Which topics and why?
Jacobs says “slavery is terrible for men, but it is far more terrible for women.” What do you think she meant by this statement?

Monday, March 19

U.S. History Class 5: The Debate over Slavery and the Fracturing of American Political Community (1840s-1850s)

Background:
After the end of the Mexican-American War in 1848 and the cession of a large portion of what was once Northern Mexico to the United States by the Treaty of Guadeloupe Hidalgo, the issue of the expansion of slavery erupted in fierce debate in American political life. The abolitionist movement finally had some political traction, and anti-slavery activists began to look for allies among others who supported “free soil” expansion into the West. Pro-slavery forces also became more vocal and forceful in national politics. Thomas Jefferson would have called slavery a “necessary evil;” the pro-slavery thinkers of the 1840s and 1850s thought that slavery was a “positive good.” Free soil and pro-slavery forces clashed throughout the decade and a half leading up to the Civil War which broke out in 1861. The two sides engaged in open warfare in Kansas beginning in 1854, and a Representative from South Carolina beat the anti-slavery Senator from Massachusetts with a cane on the Senate floor. With the Dred Scott decision in 1857, the Supreme Court declared that slavery was legal everywhere in the U.S. and the black Americans had no “rights which the white man was bound to respect.”

James Henry Hammond was a lawyer from South Carolina who married into a slave owning family and held several political offices including US Representative, Governor of SC, and US Senator. His family life was wracked with scandal after it was discovered that he had sexually abused his young nieces. His diaries also reveal that he systematically raped a number of women that he held as slaves. His 1858 address to Congress, “Mudsill Theory” represents a classic pro-slavery argument.

George Fitzhugh was a reclusive lawyer from Virginia who developed an elaborate pro-slavery, anti-capitalist philosophy. This excerpt from one of his most famous works Cannibals All! (1857) compares life under slavery in the South favorably to the life under an industrial economy in the North and England.

Douglass’s Narrative and the rest of his public writing, including “A Letter to My Former Master” (which he published in his newspaper The North Star in 1848 and then again in his second autobiography, My Bondage and My Freedom in 1855) aim to refute these influential pro-slavery arguments.

Read: Frederick Douglass, Narrative, Chapters X, XI, and “Appendix”
George Fitzhugh, excerpt from Cannibals All! (1857)

Discussion Questions:
Think about the various places Douglass lived: what are the differences between slavery in an urban area (Baltimore) and slavery in a rural context (Eastern Shore of Maryland)?
• In what terms does Douglass imagine what “freedom” must be like?
• How did the battle with Covey shape Douglass’ understanding of himself and the institution of slavery? Why do you think Douglass included so much detail about the violence? Is there a comparable moment in Jacobs’ text?
• If we read Douglass’s narrative as an anti-slavery document, what can we learn about the abolitionist movements arguments against slavery? How does this square with what Douglass tells his former master in his 1848 letter?
• What arguments do Hammond and Fitzhugh offer to defend slavery and argue for its social benefits?

**Response Paper Prompt:** Should historians treat the accounts of Douglass, Jacobs, and other enslaved and formerly enslaved narrators as fiction, propaganda, or history?

**Thursday, March 22**

**Art History Unit with Dr. Janis Bergman-Carton**

**Art History Class 8: Picturing Frederick Douglass**

**Background:** There are only a handful of moments in history we can point to that changed everything. The invention and adoption of the printing press in the 15th century was one such moment. The invention of photography in 1839 was another. In the U.S. photography flourished and radically altered the way Americans viewed themselves as subjects and citizens. For many African Americans, in particular, photography served not only as a means of representation but also as a political tool with which to claim a place in public and private spheres defined by race. No African American figure in the 19th century was as eloquent and enthusiastic about the potential of photography than Frederick Douglass. Douglass sat for over 160 different photographic portraits (We only know of 126 for which Abraham Lincoln sat), and he wrote more extensively about photography than any of his American peers in the 1840s, 50s, 60s, 70s and 80s. We will read one of his most influential essays on photography and consider how Douglass viewed the potential of the photographic portrait as a catalyst for social change.

**Read:** *Frederick Douglass, "Pictures and Progress,"* [speech], 1861.

**Discussion question:**
• Describe the “right vision” Douglass believes photography can provide and its potential to challenge the ideas upon which slavery was justified.

**Monday, March 26**

**Writing Unit with Amelia Pace-Borah, MA**

**Unit Overview:**

In our spring analytic writing unit, we will build on the work we began together in fall.

We will continue to practice using **writing as a tool to understand** what we read and what we think, and we will also work toward **writing as a tool for communicating with readers**, so audiences outside of our
own heads can understand what we think and even be persuaded to our point of view. We will dedicate

time to looking at models of good writing, and we’ll consider writing as a process that takes us from

prompt to finished product.

Last fall, you wrote three short essays in three specific genres of writing: a character profile, a
description, and a summary. This semester, you will write one longer essay (3.5 – 4 pages) with the aim

of bringing together the skills of college writing into one paper. Your spring formal paper assignment will

ask you to respond to the reading you do in the U.S. History unit. In that paper you will make a point, re-

state another thinker’s ideas, incorporate and explain quotations as evidence for your own ideas, and

organize your thoughts so they flow.

Our theme for this year is Citizenship and Community: Conversations in the Humanities. We will continue
to consider how writing functions as a way of establishing communities, how writing can appeal to
particular audiences, and how, by learning the established practices of academic writing, we can
understand and contribute to conversations in the academic community.

Texts:

Graff and Birkenstein, They Say, I Say
Lunsford, EasyWriter
Course packet selections

**Writing Class 7: First Steps of the Writing Process**

**Focus:** Tonight we will discuss the first steps for diving into a writing project, and we’ll do some

brainstorming and free writing to generate ideas in class. You will leave tonight’s class with a working

main point or thesis statement, and we’ll work with the idea of “storyboarding,” creating a visual outline

to help guide our writing.

**Read:**

- Chapter 2, “Exploring, Planning, and Drafting” EasyWriter
- “Disability,” by Nancy Mairs (course packet)

**Write:** Before you come to class today, please write out several lists of questions. Look closely at the

assignment sheet for your spring formal paper assignment, reviewing options 1 and 2. Imagine that you

are going to write about option 1. What questions will you need to answer in order to fully address the

prompt? What questions do you think this paper will need to answer in order to be successful? Do the

same thing for option 2, writing a separate list of questions that you think your paper will need to

answer in order to fully address the prompt. Then you’ll write one more list of questions about the

paper itself—write any question you have about how to approach this assignment.

**Bring:** The assignment handout for your Spring Formal Essay, EasyWriter, course packet, Narrative of the

Life of Frederick Douglass
Thursday, March 29

Writing Class 8: Examples and Conclusions

**Focus:** Tonight is all about exploring how to effectively use examples to make a point. We will discuss how Perri Klass does it in her essay, and we’ll discuss ways to explain the examples we have selected so they direct readers back to our main point or thesis statement.

**Read:**
- Chapter 3, “Example,” *40 Model Essays* (course packet)
- “She’s Your Basic L.O.L. in N.A.D.” by Perri Klass (course packet)
- Chapter seven, “So what? Who Cares?” *They Say, I Say*

**Write:** Look back at any notes you have taken for the spring formal essay, including your lists of questions, working thesis statement, and outline from last class. Using *They Say, I Say* as your guide complete the following template:

My point in this paper (that... (insert working thesis statement here) should interest those who __________________________. Beyond this limited audience, however, my point should speak to anyone who cares about the larger issue of ________________.

**Bring:** The assignment handout for your Spring Formal Essay, course packet, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, They Say, I Say*

Monday, April 2

Writing Class 9: Revision

**Focus:** Now that we have words on the page, we will spend this class improving what we have already written. Think of these words as pieces to a puzzle with many possible rearrangements. We’ll zoom in to the sentence level to consider how we can clarify, simplify, make our work grammatically correct, and in some cases, re-organize. Make sure you have a rough draft with you tonight—however rough it may be—so that we can use this as the basis of our work in class.

**Read:**
- “The Top Twenty,” pages 1-15, *EasyWriter* (You do not have to complete the exercises; just the reading)
- Chapter 4, “Reviewing, Revising, and Editing,” *EasyWriter*
- Based on feedback you have received in Free Minds and observations about your own writing, spend some time considering which areas of writing you most need to improve. Choose one or two sections of the *EasyWriter* book to read that you find most helpful, and come prepared to share what you read and why.

**Write:** a rough draft of your formal essay. Remember that drafts can be messy, disorganized, a jumble of thoughts. Please get as many ideas on the page as possible—you will receive better feedback and be further along in the process if your draft is more complete.
Bring: The assignment handout for your Spring Formal Essay, *EasyWriter, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass.*

Thursday, April 5

U.S. History Class 6: Remaking Citizenship After Civil War (1860s-1880s)

**Background:** With wholly Northern support, Abraham Lincoln was elected President in 1861 without even campaigning in the Southern states. Surmising that Lincoln would not support their interests, most of the slaveholding states seceded from the United States and formed the Confederate States of America, a move that prompted four years of horrific but transformational war. Although Lincoln, whose primary goal was to preserve the Union, had not planned on freeing the slaves, it became apparent early in the conduct of the war that enslaved people were fleeing their masters and freeing themselves. As the War dragged on and with the urging of advisers like Frederick Douglass, the U.S. began to admit black soldiers into the Union Army, including two of Douglass's sons. By the end of the war, almost 180,000 black troops had served.

When the Civil War ended in 1865, the United States was in a state of transition. Reconstruction, as this period in history is usually called, refers to the rebuilding of the South as well as the intense reordering of the entire nation in the aftermath of the war. There was especially intense disagreement over whether or how to secure the freedom and status of formerly enslaved people. A flurry of legislative activity followed with the passage of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution from 1865 to 1870. These amendments outlawed slavery, defined American citizenship, and granted voting rights to black men. Southern states responded with repressive legislation, known as Black Codes; Southern white citizens organized violent vigilante organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan and the White League. Black Americans also organized, built schools, held office, and advocated for their interests. Frederick Douglass's "What Does the Black Man Want?" published in 1865 encapsulates some of these goals.

Pushing the Reconstruction era amendments through Congress required that advocates for and expanded citizenship for African Americans cooperate with those who represented the corporate interests and large-scale industry who had profited immensely from the waging of war. In fact, the 14th Amendment was particularly beneficial for national corporations, especially railroad, steel, oil, and communications industries which grew exponentially in the decades after the war. The conflict between business interests and workers was explosive during this era of increased social and economic stratification. Especially in times of economic downturn such as the Panic of 1878, industrial workers began to organize themselves and engage in collective action against their employers. The *Constitution of the Knights of Labor* details this period from the perspective of workers, and William Graham Sumner’s influential 1883 book *What the Social Classes Owe Each Other* provides a window into the mindset of an economically secure proprietor.

**Read:**
- US Constitution, Amendments 13, 14, and 15 (1865-1870)
- Mississippi Black Codes (1865)
- Frederick Douglass, “What Does the Black Man Want?” (1865)
- *Constitution of the Knights of Labor* (1878)
- William Graham Sumner, *What the Social Classes Owe Each Other*, excerpt
Monday, April 9

U.S. History Class 7: Jim Crow, the Dawes Era, and Second-Class Citizenship (1890s-1910s)

Discussion Questions:

- How did the Reconstruction-era amendments, the 14th Amendment in particular, define citizenship?
- What were the issues that were most important to African-Americans after slavery ended?
- How did this vision contrast with the vision of a post-slavery society as expressed in the black codes?
- Should freedom and equality have an economic component to them? Discuss the differences in how the Knights of Labor and Sumner would approach the issue of economic disparity and the notion of economic rights.

Background: The rights of black people were protected in the South only as long as the Union army occupied the region. In 1877, as part of a compromise to settle the extremely close presidential election, the troops pulled out of the southern states leaving black Americans to fend for themselves. As the political climate shifted, Southern legislatures began to impose severe restrictions on African American’s civil liberties, including disenfranchisement and the legal segregation of public spaces. Segregation, or “separate but equal” was affirmed as the law of the land by the US Supreme Court in Plessy v. Ferguson (1896). The number of Lynchings and other forms of terroristic violence against black people skyrocketed and would remain a prominent feature of Southern life for several decades.

Black leaders responded to these developments in a wide variety of ways. Arguably one of the most significant leaders of the late 19th early 20th century, Booker T. Washington (1856-1915) was born a slave in Virginia and was educated at Hampton Institute, a school which trained African Americans in the practical skills needed to make a living in the segregated South. In 1881, he started a similar school in Alabama called Tuskegee Institute. He advocated for black institutions and businesses, and brokered power relationships between black leaders and sympathetic whites at the turn of the century. His 1895 “Atlanta Compromise Speech" catapulted him to fame, chiefly because it was recognized as a blueprint for how white and black Southerners might accommodate each other’s interests under segregation.

Other black leaders challenged Washington’s vision. His chief rival, William Edward Burghardt DuBois (1868-1963), was born and raised in Massachusetts. DuBois was educated at Fisk University a historically black college in Nashville, Tennessee and became the first African American to receive a doctorate in History from Harvard University. In 1905, he and other activists founded the Niagara Movement which issued its Declaration of Principles. In 1909, this group helped to form the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the nation’s leading civil rights organization during the first half of the century.

The feminist reporter and newspaper editor, Ida B. Wells-Barnett (1862-1931), was one of the earliest activists directly addressing the violence facing black communities in the South (and also a founding member of the NAACP). After her friends were lynched in Memphis, Wells-Barnett traveled the South to investigate subsequent lynchings. She issued numerous pamphlets, including Southern Horrors (1892) aimed at publicizing these crimes and seeking justice for the victims.
While African Americans were being forced into a status of “second class citizenship,” Native Americans faced a different but related set of struggles. After the Civil War, the US military turned its attention to conquering Native American territory and peoples in the Western portion of the United States, a process that culminated in the massacre of the Lakota Sioux at Wounded Knee, South Dakota in 1890. The US began to pursue a policy that defied Native American sovereignty, by surveying their commonly held tribal lands, parceling them out to individuals or heads of family, and confiscating what was left. In an effort to further assimilate Native Americans into mainstream US society, officials placed Indian youth in boarding schools in order to undermine their tribal traditions. You will read the speech “Kill the Indian and Save the Man,” by Captain Richard Pratt, founder and superintendent of the U.S. Training and Industrial School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, followed by a firsthand account from a Native American who attended one of the boarding schools, “An Indian Boy’s Story” by Ah-nen-la-de-ni.

Read: Booker T. Washington, “The Atlanta Compromise Speech” (1895)  
The Niagara Movement, Declaration of Principles (1905)  
Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Southern Horrors, excerpts (1892)  
Pratt, “Kill the Indian, Save the Man” (1892)  
Ah-Nen-La-Di-Ni, “An Indian Boy’s Story” (1903)

Discussion Questions:
• Why do you think a black leader such as Washington would support segregation? What were its advantages as he saw them?
• How do the leaders of the Niagara Movement define the political goals of the African American community?
• Washington and the Niagara Movement leaders are concerned with the problem of labor and the rights and conditions of black workers: how do they frame their respective economic arguments?
• What are the duties of citizens in each vision?
• How do the conditions that Wells-Barnett describes complicate these visions of community?
• What connection was made between education and citizenship for Native Americans?

Response Paper Prompt:
How would you describe the different pressures faced by African Americans and Native Americans from mainstream US society in this era? What was at stake for African Americans and Native Americans in trying to maintain separate social, economic, and political spaces for their communities? What about in trying to integrate into American political, social, and economic life as full citizens?

Thursday, April 12

U.S. History Class 8: Immigration and Citizenship (1880s-1960s)

Background: The United States is often spoken of as a “nation of immigrants,” but what does that actually mean? Native Americans descend from people who were indigenous to the North American continent, and the ancestors of African Americans were forced to migrate to the Americas as cargo in the transatlantic trade. Under what condition have people come to the U.S. and under what terms have they “become Americans”?
There have been several periods of intense immigration to the US, including the 1840s when the Irish fled the potato famine and Central Europeans fled revolution seeking opportunity and the dawn of the twentieth century when a largely unskilled population of over three million immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe flooded U.S. cities. Immigrants have provided crucial labor in an expanding nation; but their presence, and their racial, religious, linguistic, and/or cultural differences, have also provoked extreme anxiety and violence from native-born Americans.

Aimed at Chinese immigrants, who had been instrumental in building the transcontinental railroad and in the mining industry, the first formal restrictions on immigration, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 reflects this racism and the feeling that immigrants should be able to assimilate or eventually “blend in” to the citizenry. In the wake of World War I, the Immigration act of 1924 and the debate surrounding it also had strong racist overtones and concerns over racial and cultural assimilation. You will read the US Department of Labor’s argument for the act and Senator Robert Clancy’s argument against it. In the 1920s, the debate over immigration also inspired as many as 5 million US citizens to become active in the Ku Klux Klan, which had been recently revived in the South to enforce segregation and to instill terror in the black community. You will read contemporary accounts of and by the KKK.

To meet the continued demand for low-wage immigrant labor in this era of immigrant restriction, the U.S. government entered into bilateral agreements with Mexico to create a guest worker program, known as the Bracero program, first in the World War I period and, to more widespread effect, from 1942-1964. In class, we will work with a series of documents, photos, and oral histories collected by the Bracero History Archive project. This project is a good example of the how historians not only use archives to interpret history but create and maintain archives so that as many stories as possible might be preserved and shared.

Read: Chinese Exclusion Act (1882)
US Department of Labor, “The Need for Immigration Restriction” (1923)
Robert Clancy, “The Immigration Act of 1924” (1924)
Assorted Readings by and about the Ku Klux Klan (1920s)
Guided Activity on the Bracero Program (1940s-1960s)

Discussion Questions:
- How do the authors of these documents depict immigrants?
- What do these documents tell us about the circumstances and contexts of immigration? What factors have pushed migrants from their countries and/or pulled them to the United States in particular?
- How does the U.S. Department of Labor justify restricting immigration to the United States?
- On what terms does Clancy defend immigration?
- How does the Bracero program fit into the debate over immigration in practice and in policy?
- What do the various archival materials tell us about the varied experiences of Mexican guest workers? What are the benefits and limitations of oral histories and photos as evidence?

Final Spring Formal Essay is due tonight.

Monday, April 16

U.S. History Class 9: The Civil Rights Movement and Its Legacies, (1960s-present)
Background: The Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Bd. of Education of Topeka* (1954) overturned the legal doctrine of separate but equal; however, the battle for equality for people of color and women was far from over. Indeed the 1960s witnessed an explosion of social movements engaged in a tactic called non-violent direct action social protest, which saw people challenging the legal and extra-legal practices of discrimination in the places where it occurred. With the popularization of television, images of peaceful, non-violent protestors being attacked by police dogs and water hoses had a powerful impact across the nation and around the world. The leadership and persuasive oratory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. came to symbolize this movement, though it is important to note that the movement was much larger than King. His “I Have a Dream” speech, delivered at the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom is perhaps his best-known speech. The actions of civil rights protestors put pressure on President Lyndon Baines Johnson’s administration to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Civil Rights Act of 1968, also known as the Fair Housing Act.

King’s non-violent direct action was not the only strategy for achieving black rights, however. Voices of opposition to the heavily Christian influenced Civil Rights organizations emerged, especially in the northern and western states recognized that the flurry of legislative activity did little to address the effects of *de facto* segregation in their lives. One of the more influential voices was that of Malcolm X, who gained prominence as a spokesman for the Nation of Islam before launching out on his own. His 1964 speech, “The Ballot or the Bullet” distills some of these alternate visions for black politics and cultural life. Malcolm X influenced a younger generation of Civil Rights leaders who became disillusioned with the slow pace of change after the flurry of legislative action.

The civil rights movement also had an impact well beyond the African American community. Non-black activists, many of whom worked in civil rights campaigns, began using the tactics and strategies they learned in the Black freedom struggle to create social movements among students, Latinos, Native Americans, women, and the LBGTQ community. A leader in the American feminist movement and co-founder of the influential Ms. Magazine, Gloria Steinem published “After Black Power, Women’s Liberation” which charted the link between the two calls for social justice and galvanized a generation of women activists. In seeking to bring women from different racial, cultural, and class backgrounds together, the feminist movement was often divided and divisive. Black feminists often took the lead in trying to find common ground forming the Combahee River Collective to do “political work within our own group and in coalition with other progressive organizations and movements.” You will read their “Black Feminist Statement” issued in 1977.

What are the legacies of the social movement politics and organizing of the 1960s and 1970s? Many have argued that the election of Barack Obama as President in 2008 represented a fruition of the Civil Rights era. Others have pointed out that the black community and other communities of color continue to suffer disproportionately from economic inequality, police brutality, disparities in the criminal justice and education systems, etc. In 2013, the momentum for a new social movement, #BlackLivesMatter, began to build as a response to a rapid succession of highly publicized police shootings of young African American men and women. I have included “A Vision for Black Lives,” the policy statement of the Movement for Black Lives as part of the reading for this class period.

Read:    
Martin Luther King, Jr. “I Have a Dream,” (1963) 
Malcolm X, “The Ballot or the Bullet,” (1964) 

Discussion Questions:
- How do King and Malcolm X articulate the goals and ideology of the black freedom struggle?
- What do you think accounts for their different approaches?
- What do women mean by “liberation,” according to Steinem? And which “women” is she referring to primarily? How do these women perceive of themselves?
- How do the women of the Combahee River Collective define the goals and challenges of the women’s movement?
- Do you see the impact of these formulations and debates in our contemporary society? Which aspects of these visions have yet to be realized?

Response Paper Prompt:
What does the current “Vision” for Black lives share with these earlier visions, dreams, and demands? What is different about this newest social movement?

Thursday, April 19

Writing Class 10: Writing to Reflect

Focus: In this class, we will discuss how to approach your last big writing assignment of Free Minds—the portfolio essay assignment. We will work on narrowing down what pieces to include, looking at some previous student essays, and exploring how to use our own writing as evidence.

Write: Set a timer for 7 minutes and free write in response to your portfolio essay prompt: “How have I grown as a thinker, reader, or writer during Free Minds?” Then choose one piece of writing that you plan to include in your portfolio. Re-read the piece, set your timer for 5 minutes, and free write in response to this piece of your own writing. Some questions you can consider are, “What does this demonstrate about who I used to be as a thinker, reader, and writer? OR What does it demonstrate about how I have grown?” You will turn in this free writing for feedback.

Bonus (optional) assignment: Ask somebody close to you if they have seen any changes in you over the past year as you have participated in Free Minds. This could be a trusted family member or friend—someone who knows you well and will be thoughtful in their response. Record notes about what they say.

Bring: Final Portfolio assignment sheet, a selection of 4-6 pieces of your own writing that you are considering for inclusion in your portfolio.

Monday, April 23

Art History Class 9: How Memorials and Monuments Can Shape the Beliefs and Attitudes of a Community
Background: The removal (and destruction) of confederate monuments across the United States following the white nationalist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia on August 12, 2017 that turned violent has put the enormous power of images front and center.

The removal of monuments in Austin, Dallas, Baltimore, New Orleans, and many other U.S. cities in 2017 stands in a long history of removing, defacing, and destroying images that inform the history of art. It is important, however, to acknowledge that the present crisis is, in many ways, historically unique. Images have long had a role in war and its aftermath, but the circumstances and meaning can vary widely. Unlike the present turmoil, the destruction or confiscation of cultural property has been used frequently in the past to punish enemies and assert dominance, as when the ancient Persians destroyed the temples on the Athenian Acropolis. Wholesale destruction can even be used to intentionally erase history: in the sixteenth century, the main Aztec temple, the Templo Mayor, was razed and buried under Spanish colonial architecture only to be discovered centuries later below present day Mexico City. Or, conversely, treasures taken as war booty can be showcased to emphasize victory. When the Romans destroyed the Second Temple in Jerusalem they carried off its sacred objects and triumphantly paraded the spoils through the streets of Rome.

The Confederate monuments that have been removed in 2017 provide another example of the complex ways that images can be used in the aftermath of war, but in this case there was a significant delay in the construction of these monuments. The majority of Confederate monuments were created many decades after the defeat of the Confederacy. They were the product of “The Lost Cause of the Confederacy” Movement, an early 20th century movement that described the Confederate cause as a heroic one against great odds despite its defeat. The Lost Cause belief system views the American Civil War as an honorable struggle for the virtues of the Southern way of life, while minimizing or denying the central role of slavery. But for many (and for us), those monuments erected many decades after the Civil War served as a constant reminder that although the Confederacy lost, its brutal racial legacy lives on.

The statues of Robert E. Lee, Jefferson Davis, and other Confederate figures, largely erected during the first half of the twentieth century, put on a pedestal the nation’s violent racist legacy of repression. As the mayor of New Orleans stated on the occasion of that city’s removal of Confederate memorials, “These statues are not just stone and metal. They are not just innocent remembrances of a benign history. These monuments purposefully celebrate a fictional, sanitized Confederacy; ignoring the death, ignoring the enslavement, and the terror that it actually stood for.”

Tonight we will discuss Mayor Landrieu’s speech about his decision to remove Confederate monuments from New Orleans and the broader question of how monuments and memorials can shape the identity and attitudes of a community.


Response Paper Option 1: Analyze what you consider to be the strongest argument Landrieu makes for removal of the Confederate monuments, and explain why you find it persuasive.
Response Paper Option 2: Analyze what you consider to be the weakest argument Landrieu makes for removal of the Confederate monuments, and explain why you find it unpersuasive.

Thursday, April 26

Creative Writing Class 7: Revisiting Our Stories

As the Free Minds year nears its close, we will come full circle. We began by writing our stories together, and we will end in the same way. For our final classes, we will design and complete creative projects that will help us reflect and synthesize our experiences over the past nine months. We will give voice to our journeys. We will consider our futures and explore how language can be a tool for growth and change. Then we will honor each other in a final class reading.

How will all this happen? Stay tuned! Before this unit begins, you’ll receive a packet of assignments and readings that will guide you through the process.

Monday, April 30

Creative Writing Class 8: How Language Shapes Experience

See your assignment sheet for details.

Thursday, May 3

Creative Writing Class 9: Wrapping It All Up

See your assignment sheet for details.

Monday, May 7

Creative Writing Class 10: Final Class Reading

We will devote tonight to honoring and celebrating each other and our words by coming together for a final class reading. Bring your strong voices (and maybe some tissues)! And keep an eye out for a final, optional bonus assignment.

Thursday, May 10

Class wrap up, sharing, and celebration

On our last class around the table, you will hand in your portfolio assignment, receive instructions for your portfolio conference; we’ll wrap up final class business, and appreciate and celebrate one another.

Final portfolio and portfolio essay are due tonight.
Monday, May 14

One-on-one Portfolio Conferences

Graduation is tentatively scheduled for Monday, May 21.