



History 109: American History Protest and Democracy in American History

Thursdays, 5:30-7:30pm (Room 104-8)

Instructor: Dr. Ben Shannon

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Program: Onward Odyssey - Division of Continuing Studies

Institution: University of Wisconsin-Madison

Course Description

From the American Revolution to Black Lives Matter, protests have played a key role in American history. In this class, we will talk about how acts of protest shaped important historical events, like the end of slavery and the enfranchisement of women, and how protesting has been foundational to major movements for civil rights, workers' rights, and social justice. We will also link our discussions of the past to our experiences of the present, by examining recent events like the Women's March, the George Floyd protests, and the January 6th uprising. Throughout the course, we will read works by influential thinkers, like Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Susan B. Anthony, Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and Cesar Chavez. By the end of the semester, you will have a better understanding of how protests have been used to preserve, protect, and perfect ideas of freedom, equality, and democracy.

Course Objectives

Upon completing this course, students should be able to:

- Identify key concepts and themes in the history of protest and democracy in America
- Critically analyze sources related to American history
- Construct arguments by comparing primary source documents
- Communicate ideas through discussion and the written word

Student Workload

This 3-credit course meets as a group for 2 hours per week (according to UW-Madison's credit hour policy, each 115-minute class counts as 2 hours). The course also carries the expectation that you will spend an average of at least 2 hours outside of class for every hour in the classroom. In other words, in addition to class time, plan to allot an average of at least 8 hours per week for reading, writing, preparing for discussions, and/or studying for this course.

Grades

Grades are based on the following scale:

100-93 = A
92-88 = A/B
87-83 = B
82-77 = B/C
76-70 = C
69-60 = D
59-0 = F

Final grades will be calculated accordingly:

In-Class Worksheets = 20%
Source Analysis Paper = 15%
Comparative Analysis Paper = 15%
Discussion and Participation = 50%

(For the full version of this syllabus, contact me at btshannon@wisc.edu)